

Male and Female Interaction: Communication Strategies

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ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce se zabývá komunikačními strategiemi, konkrétně porovnáním jejich použití u mužů a žen. V první kapitole teoretické části jsou objasněny pojmy gender, genderové rozdíly, identity a stereotypy. Druhá kapitola teoretické části popisuje vztah mezi jazykem a genderem, pojem komunikace, verbální komunikace a verbální komunikační strategie, neverbální komunikace a neverbální komunikační strategie. Analytická část se skládá z korpusové analýzy dialogů Americké televizní talk show Late Show with David Letterman. V rámci této analýzy jsou porovnávány komunikační strategie mužů a žen.

Klíčová slova: gender, genderové rozdíly, genderová identita, genderové role, genderové stereotypy, komunikace, verbální komunikace, neverbální komunikace, komunikační strategie

ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis deals with communication strategies in comparison regarding male and female usage of such strategies. The first chapter of the theoretical part defines gender, gender differences, gender identities and stereotypes. The second chapter of the theoretical part describes the connection between language and gender, communication, verbal communication and verbal communication strategies, nonverbal communication and nonverbal communication strategies. The analytical part consists of several dialogues of an American television talk show Late Show with David Letterman that are subsequently analyzed via a corpus analysis providing a comparison of male and female communication strategies.

Keywords: gender, gender differences, gender identity, gender roles, gender stereotypes, communication, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, communication strategies

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INTRODUCTION

“I’m a great believer that any tool that enhances communication has profound effects in terms of how people can learn from each other, and how they can achieve the kind of freedoms that they’re interested in.”

Bill Gates (BrainyQuote.com, 2014)

Are men from Mars and women from Venus? How do men and women communicate? Do they really communicate differently? Numerous books and researches describing the similarities and differences between male and female conversation specifics, their stereotypical behavior and communication strategies exist. However, I argue that the present society has changed over the past years and most men and women do not interact according to the stereotypes anymore.

The bachelor thesis in hand is divided into two parts: the theoretical part and the analytical part. In order to understand the analysis, it is necessary to become familiar with the related theory. In the theoretical part, I therefore focus on gender, gender differences, roles, identities and stereotypes and the relation between gender and language. I also focus on verbal and nonverbal communication and the reason of usage of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies.

The analysis works with a corpus based on the transcripts of an American television talk show called the Late Show with David Letterman. The aim of my research is to show that some men and women do not necessarily communicate and behave according to the gender stereotypes.

I. THEORY

1 GENDER

Gender is defined as “the male or female sex” or “the state of being either male or female” (Cambridge dictionary). It could also be characterized as “the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex” (Merriam Webster dictionary). Many similar definitions exist in a variety of dictionaries describing what it means to be a man or a woman. Several popular theories claim that men are from Mars and women are from Venus, effecting how they communicate, behave, act, listen, or think. Gender differences mostly depend on social and cultural background, race, ethnicity, class, age, education etc. Gender is characterized as a cultural and social construct in which roles of men and women are stereotyped for a long period of time. For example, typical stereotyped professions of male gender are businessmen, managers, politicians or doctors because these professions require, authority, good communication skills and abilities to act like leaders (Aries 1996). By contrast, female gender is mostly predestined to take care of children and households. Although there have been new transitions in the society, stereotyped professions of female gender are for example teachers, nurses, social workers or hairdressers (Kimmel, 2007).

Deborah Tannen demonstrates differences between men and women and their usage of language as follows. Men use language which represents prestige, self-sufficiency and power. On the contrary, women use language which shows association, friendship and understanding. Tannen simply claims that men and women speak in “different genderlects” which means the conversation between men and women is “cross-cultural” (Tannen 1990, 42).

The term *cross-cultural* refers to “involving two or more different cultures and their ideas and customs” (Cambridge dictionary). It is evident in the case of communication among particular genders because both male and female gender applies different ways of communicating from early age. We grow up in the same society, attend the same schools or live in the same towns but still there are distinctions between how we are influenced in our childhood (Tannen 1990). Parents teach their children how to behave, communicate and play with others and they have various expectations from their sons and daughters. For example, parents expect sons to play with other boys, play with toy-cars and behave more lively and rascally. On the other hand, they expect daughters to play with other girls, play with dolls and behave more kindly and obediently. The term *genderlect* suggests that men and women have different communicative ways not only in their childhood but it is possible that such communicative ways last the whole life, and appear in everyday

conversations. I believe that most men talk about actual events and topics (news, sport, work, hobbies, etc.), they prefer not to share their problems while most women talk about everyday life and they do share their problems because as I mentioned above, women tend to value association and understanding.

Tannen distinguishes different children's communities where boys and girls create mainly same-sex associations but it is not excluded that these associations could be mixed-sex. Typical characteristics of boy's community according to Tannen (1990):

- Community of more members (not just one or two)
- Community based on hierarchy
- One boss of the group who makes decisions
- Preference of the outdoor games
- Preference of the team games
- Differentiate between conquering and defeated ones
- Telling funny jokes
- Strict rules
- Disagreements who is the boss

And typical characteristics of girl's community according to Tannen (1990):

- Community of fewer members (mostly just pairs)
- Typically two girls
- Preference of the indoor games
- Relationship based on the proximity
- Do not differentiate between conquering and defeated ones
- Making the suggestions
- Do not tell jokes
- Do not have rules or orders

It is possible that different kinds of behavior of boys and girls in communities, serve as a reason they have different language and intercommunication. A possible limitation of this characterization is that it does not involve exceptions, i.e. those are just general characteristics of each community. It is not based on evidence that every boy and every girl behave according to these stereotyped distinctions.

Another term worth explaining is speech community which is characterized as "a group of people sharing characteristic patterns of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation"

(Merriam Webster dictionary). Tannen provides many prototypical dialogues between boys and girls where speech communities of different genders are shown. Boys have tendency to act like leaders and give orders to other children, so their typical communication strategy would be: “Do this”, “Come on” or “Give it to me” (imperatives). On the other hand, girls have tendency to make suggestions, they try to communicate without orders so their typical communication could be: “Let’s do this”, “We gonna do this” or “Maybe we could ask” (Tannen 1990). Why is it so? It supports the hypothesis that male gender is more powerful and that men need self-sufficiency or control. On the other hand, female gender values associations and understandings.

1.1 Gender identity

Gender identity provides an answer to the question what it means to be a man or a woman. Identity of every individual associates with a particular cultural and language connection and it creates the notion or picture of masculinity and femininity in the society. We create our identity from early childhood. For example girls are more likely to play with dolls and boys with toy-cars. Our parents help us to create our identity as mothers dress daughters in typical girl colors (such as pink clothes) and sons in typical boy clothes (blue clothes). And according to this distinction of colors the society is able to recognize if the baby is boy or girl. Our society also helps us create our identity, for example through children’s movies and books and their stories that show stereotyped characterization of male and female gender (Valdrová, 2006, own translation). I happened to watch many children’s movies with my niece and almost in every movie there was the same story with a male hero saving a beautiful female protagonist. Children watch these movies and they try to imitate, behave more like their heroes and create their own identity accordingly.

Gender identity is a subjective awareness of being male or female and it could be defined as *bipolar* and *negative*. Bipolar means that only male and female genders exist (nothing between them) and negative demonstrates the clear and simple example – I am a man because I am not a woman and I am a woman because I am not a man (Valdrová 2006, 6-7, all citations of this author are own translation). I think that nowadays more and more exceptions appear, for example some men could behave and act more like members of the female gender (emotional, tactful, sensitive, etc.), their behavior might be effeminate, and they might also use female stereotypical ways of communication (e.g. gossips, chit-chat, etc.). And on the contrary, some women could behave and act more like members of the

male gender (e.g. aggressive, unemotional, powerful, etc.) and they might not be interested in female ways of communication such as gossips. In other words, gender identity depends on the individual if he or she feels to be a man or a woman and decides to act like it.

Valdrová (2006) demonstrates gender imperatives on a research of Karin Hausen (1976) where male and female gender identities are shown. Typical imperatives of men are energy, power, independence, decisiveness, firmness, braveness or courage whereas typical imperatives of women are weakness, indecisiveness, modesty, dependence or helpfulness. I think that it is possible to hypothesize that these characterizations are less and less likely to occur in nowadays society because gender identities have been changing. But by contrast, these characterizations support two gender identities which are *hegemonic masculinity* and *preferred femininity* (Valdrová 2006, 7-8, own translation). *Hegemonic masculinity* means that there are strict characterizations of male gender – only white heterosexual man who is healthy, competitive, rational, and unemotional and has good education and job could fulfill these expectations. *Preferred femininity* means that female gender should be attractive, sensitive and they should care about children and household. And if it is necessary, women should give up their career. As I mentioned earlier, however, nowadays society has changed and I think women do not have to give up their dreams of a career. It is almost certain that the characterization of preferred femininity will cease.

1.2 Gender roles

Gender roles exist in apparent and unapparent, unwritten rules and they apply to both male and female genders and relationships between them. Different functions, activities, importance, duties, obligations or responsibilities are assigned to male and female genders. Being a man or a woman is not given only by biology, but based on the evidence, children from early age learn or assume an appropriate gender role because of their surroundings – parents, relatives, teachers in kindergarten and schools, media, churches or other institutions. If children express the ‘right’ character traits or behavior, they are appreciated but if they express ‘wrong’ character traits or behavior, they have to be reformed, changed. Valdrová compares gender roles to a theatre play – where every actor/actress knows his/her role. As soon as an actor/actress does not behave according to their appropriate role, confusion and disarrangement may arise; people can be surprised, they might react negatively or may not accept this behavior (Valdrová 2006). I think that strong beliefs and

opinions regarding what is gender-appropriate still exist in the society and they influence gender roles both in behavior and language.

Language plays an important part. It is very closely connected with gender stereotyping which I will be talking about in the following chapter (e.g. “boys do not cry”, “girls do not say these such things”, “girls do sit with knees together”, “boys do not play with dolls” or “girls do not play with cars”). Children are influenced by their parents or generally by adults so they can be reformed easily (Valdrová 2006). Certainly parents should not force them to something but just give them valuable advices.

Studies have been done stating that gender differences reflect gender role and status. For instance Barbara Westbrook Eakins and Rollin Gene Eakins did a research in seven university meetings where there were both female and male participants and finding out that those women spoke less than men (Aries 1996). The question is why is it so? Perhaps women are more reserved; perhaps speaking in front of unknown people is unpleasant, difficult and stressful or maybe women are shier than extroverted men. In the analytical part of my thesis I will focus on these communicative differences between male and female gender.

1.2.1 Gender contract

The following part is a brief characterization of gender contract which is related to gender roles. Gender contract constitutes of a set of rules and codes which applying to gender relationships. Various duties, or jobs are assigned to men and women and these rules and codes are defined on three levels.

- Social norms and importance
- Institutional norms and importance – in employment, education, etc.
- Familial norms and importance

It means that there is a ‘contract’ between the male and female gender and according to this contract men and women should act. Generally men are seen as more important for the labor market as women stay at home and take care of a household and children for a period of time. So based on the evidence female professions might be less valued (by prestige and mainly salary) because of a gender contract. This contract attaches the priorities and responsibilities of child and household care to female gender. So in general women should choose less ambitious and challenging professions which are not time-consuming and where women could coordinate work with care of family (Valdrová 2006). It could be

generally true but we should be more skeptical about it. Certainly there are women who are more perspective for the labor market than men with similar qualities and qualifications. On the other hand there are men who are able to take care of children and household and their career is not as important to them. It really depends on the individual.

The above is also apparent from the research of Barbara Risman who deals with divorced or single fathers. They have to take care of their children, do household work and have the same responsibilities as women do. Surprisingly, they did much better work than married men (Aries 1996). The main aim of this research was to show that men could handle the same responsibilities as women and vice versa. In a standard married couple, where a man works and a woman takes care of their children, it is evident that a man might not have as many responsibilities of taking care of children and household. In any case, men and women should have the same, equal rights and opportunities regarding the career choices.

1.3 Gender stereotypes

Could gender stereotypes influence us and our beliefs? Are we influenced by the society when it comes to our own gender identity or image? Gender stereotyping influences men and women in everyday life saying how they should behave, socialize and communicate in order to be adequate to their social status and role. Elizabeth Aries mentions a research by Bertram John and Lori Sussman focused on gender stereotyping. Their participants read an unknown story where a male or female hero was an initiator (nobody knew the hero's gender). Of course the result was not surprising as 89% of the participants identified the hero as man, in accordance with gender stereotypes. Aries claims that people tend to stereotype because of their expectations (Aries 1996).

A psychologist Linda Brannon discusses *stereotypical traits of women*, based on Rosenkrantz et al. (1968) as:

- Religious
- Aware of feelings of others
- Gentle
- Tactful
- Quiet
- Neat in habits
- Strong need for security

- Does not use harsh language

Men are characterized as:

- Aggressive
- Not uncomfortable about being aggressive
- Adventurous
- Competitive
- Unemotional
- Hides emotions
- Not excitable in a minor crisis
- Able to separate feeling from ideas
- Dominant
- Skilled in business
- Knows the ways of the world
- Acts as a leader
- Self-confident
- Ambitious
- Worldly
- Never cries
- Not dependent
- Direct
- Thinks men are superior to women
- Not conceited about appearance

It is believed that gender stereotypes exist in the culture. There must be exceptions such as aggressive, ambitious, unemotional woman or gentle, tactful, quiet man but mostly females are characterized as emotional, not aggressive, dependent and home-oriented, and males are considered as aggressive, independent, tough and flexible. These stereotypes or patterns appear in the interaction between men and women (Brannon 1996).

I think that this description of women does not apply anymore to the present culture as I know many women who do not have strong need for security, who are not quiet or tactful.

Valdrová (2006) also mentions a considerable amount of examples of gender stereotyping which happened in the past. Firstly, there are stereotypes which emphasize male gender. For example Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the Olympic Games, stated

that it is impossible to have Olympic Games for women because it would be unrealizable. Helene Deutsch, student of Sigmund Freud, claimed that every intelligent, clever and rational woman is masculine. Bohuslav Brouk, a psychologist and an admirer of Sigmund Freud, maintained that women are less creative and if women work with men, women's job is mostly subordinate and second-rate. And another example, Anne Hutchinson, a well-known Puritan, was sentenced to prison and exile because she did not behave as a typical wife in household but she behaved more like a man. And the last example is from refineries' memorandum where they admitted that they employ mainly women to unship sugar-beets because women are more skillful and quick. And also that men were not so resistant to winter and dirt (Valdrová 2006). I do not agree with either. It is safe to say that some women are very good at sports or that some women have superior job position.

Returning to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, it might be now possible to state that gender stereotypes influence us in our lives, we form our opinions based on our prejudices. The society has been influencing our beliefs and behaviors for centuries.

2 COMMUNICATION

Communication is described as “the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to express or exchange information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc. to someone else” (Merriam Webster dictionary). The types of communication are boundless, e.g. it is conversation, discussion, transmission, discourse, debate, talking, listening, correspondence, gossip, expressions, etc. The word communication comes from a Latin verb *communicare* and it is defined as an ability of an individual to contact and make oneself understood by other individuals; it is also a process of transmission and discussion of information (Adair 2004). In communication there are four major elements:

Table 1: Process of communication (Adair 2004, 19)

The key unit	Notes
1. Social contact	Persons who communicate together have to be in a relative contact
2. Communication medium	Persons who communicate together have to share the same language or communication device
3. Transmission	The message has to be clearly transmitted
4. Understanding	The message has to be transmitted, understood and interpreted properly

1. Social contact – according to Adair people can communicate only if they are in touch with each other (a contact sphere). But nowadays the situation has changed – since new technologies exist. People can communicate even if they are not in touch (both in time and space) by modern devices – telephone, computer, video, radio, television, fax, etc. Simply, the ways of communication have expanded.
2. Communication medium – medium means a communication channel which is used as a device for transmission and expression. The most traditional medium is a language. Genetically people have developed an ability to learn a language even if differences in culture and age exist.
3. Transmission – person who communicates has to deliver the message effectively although the communication is in progress or at a distance. Message should exceed the physical inconveniences and should be delivered clearly.

4. Understanding – communication is a bidirectional process where common or shared activity is in progress. Understanding could be defined as an ability to accept the message and based on knowledge to understand the communication (Adair 2004).

2.1 Language and gender

Language and gender's relation is a social construct developing over the centuries. In this chapter, the historic overview is necessary to be mentioned because one question needs to be asked. Are people unaffected by language?

In 1970s Valdřová claims that male language is much stronger, strategic and dynamic. When women wanted to express themselves, they had to adopt male language which was more powerful. So male language was on a higher position, of a higher status and women imitated their language to be successful among men (Valdřová 2006).

On the other hand, Tannen disputed this claim that women should use male language. She supposes that women do not need to imitate men's language because many differences among men and women exist. She said that genders differ in culture and mainly in language. In 1980s many researchers used the term discrimination of women or discrimination of female language. They agreed with the stereotyped behavior of women adopting men's language. If they did not do so, they were not accepted, listened to or even humiliated (Tannen 1990).

A considerable amount of researches have been published on language and gender since 1990s. These studies have argued a new concept of *doing gender*. It means that every individual should associate themselves with appropriate gender and adjust own language or self-expression. Researchers such as Erving Goffman or Deborah Cameron claim that language is not used naturally but constructively. It is closely connected with gender stereotyping which I discussed in the previous chapter. The society stereotypes genders, i.e. unwritten rules exist, which designate how men and women should behave and how they should use their language (Valdřová 2006).

The purpose of this chapter was to determine whether language is used naturally or constructively. Based on the evidence, it is clear that language is mostly used constructively due to gender stereotyping.

2.2 Private and public speaking

The fact that men and women communicate differently may be supported by typical examples. Deborah Tannen (1990) provides many specific dialogues between men and women in her book showing main differences in communication. She distinguishes private and public dialogues.

2.2.1 Private dialogues

Dialogue one – situation in hospital where woman endured a surgery of her breast. She felt stressed because she had to undertake such a medical surgery and furthermore there was a scar in her breast after surgery. Her sister, friend and husband came to visit her and they said:

Sister: "I know. When I had my operation I felt the same way."

Friend: "I know. It's like your body has been violated."

Husband: "You can have plastic surgery to cover up the scar and restore the shape of your breast." (Tannen 1990, 49).

Firstly her sister expressed the same feelings and sympathy and she was very polite. She emphasized that she endured a surgery too. Secondly her friend was also polite but she made an inappropriate comment about violation of her body. Thirdly her husband was not polite at all and he did not express any feelings and sympathies. He knew that she was stressed by the surgery and he gave her an advice to undertake another surgery to correct her breast's shape and scar. He just gave her reasonable solution to the problem she had.

Woman: "I'm not having any more surgery!"

Woman: "I'm sorry you don't like the way it looks."

Husband: "I don't care."

Husband: "It doesn't bother me at all."

Woman: "Then why are you telling me to have plastic surgery?"

Husband: "Because you were saying you were upset about the way it looked." (Tannen 1990, 50). Here, it is noticeable that the woman just needed understanding of her feelings and maybe she wanted to be comforted but her husband provided her only with an advice (Tannen 1990).

Dialogue 2 – example of male and female cross-purposes speaking where a man is frustrated because a woman relates to his problem.

Man: "I'm really tired. I didn't sleep well last night."

Woman: "I didn't sleep well either. I never do."

Man: "Why are you trying to belittle me?"

Woman: "I'm not! I'm just trying to show that I understand!" (Tannen 1990, 51). The man is protecting his independence and experience. Most women need to express sympathy, understanding or similar experience and they like to match problems with other people's problems. But men rarely need sympathy and understanding (Tannen 1990).

Dialogue 3 – example of behavior and communication of men and women in their home. For most men the home should be a quiet place where they can rest and they do not have to speak after their busy day at work. But on the other hand, for most women home is the best place for private talks with family and relatives where nobody else can hear them. So women need an interlocutor to communicate and if they do not have one, they come up with phrases such as:

Woman: "He doesn't talk to me."

Woman: "He doesn't listen to me." (Tannen 1990, 78).

Women use these phrases mostly to complaint about men when men do not talk to them.

Dialogue 4 – situation when men and women slander. Gossip is defined as "conversation or reports about other people's private lives that might be unkind, disapproving, or not true" or "someone who enjoys talking about other people and their private lives" (Cambridge dictionary). Tannen (1990) demonstrates a situation where a woman's son-in-law wants to buy a really old and wrecked house. Her husband told her:

Man: "Believe me, she's not happy about this."

Woman: "Well, why doesn't she tell him so?"

Man: (did not answer)

Woman: "What did she say exactly?"

Man: (did not answer)

Woman: "What did she say?"

Man: "Oh, I don't remember. General things"

Woman: "What did you say?"

Man: "I don't know." (Tannen 1990, 115-116).

There is a significant difference between men and women. Naturally, women are very curious and interrogative, therefore they need to know everything most of the time. And if they do not have enough information, they might complain about it. On the contrary, men

do not need to talk about something in detail so they just give general information or general view, not unimportant details.

2.2.2 Public speaking

According to Tannen (1990) men speak more often in public than women. They are self-confident, powerful and dominant.

Women have a tendency to use their own experience to support their truth. On the contrary, men use their critical view and they argue what is right and what is wrong. They do not use any experience from their private lives (Tannen 1990). Women need to match their private lives with public lives and perhaps they need to support their statements by evidences, whether it is a private or public experience. Men need to separate their private and public lives and they do not need to support their statements by private experience because it is inappropriate in their eyes.

Tannen (1990) claims that in same-sex group, women feel more natural, friendly and they are not shy. However in mixed groups, women might be afraid of embarrassing themselves if saying something wrong or inappropriate.

There might be exceptions such as women who do not mind talking in front of mixed-sex groups, men who match their private live with public live, men who do not feel confident while speaking in front of many people, etc. As I mentioned before, everything depends on each personality.

2.3 Verbal communication strategies

Men and women use different verbal communication strategies during their interaction. In this chapter, I would like to distinguish between the main strategies.

2.3.1 Communication maneuvering

Communication maneuvering means that person has an ability to avoid an unpleasant situation. People usually use metaphors, pauses or allusions or they do not finish their sentence. For example, in business meeting this strategy could be very useful; on the contrary, in every-day conversation it is absolutely unfair and belittling (Juříčková 2008).

2.3.2 Disqualification

Disqualification means graded maneuvering in which irony and allusions are used. In conversation, one person tries to exclude or disqualify the other person. There are different types of disqualification according to Juříčková (2008):

- Silence – person does not show or express agreement nor disagreement
- Change of the topic – person tries to avoid the unpleasant topics
- Indeterminate disqualification – person tries to ignore other person
- Generalization – person tries to generalize the topic (that there is nothing new)
- Tangential disqualification – person tries to change the topic to the different and irrelevant topic

Whenever men or women use communication maneuvering or disqualification, there will be a consequence of discouragement, intimidation or emotional stress (Juříčková 2008).

2.3.3 Conflict

Conflict is defined as “strong disagreement between people, groups, etc., that results in often angry argument” (Merriam-Webster dictionary). People use this strategy to compete with others while they achieve their goals. Persons who use this strategy are mostly powerful, competitive and they have an ability to argue (Juříčková 2008).

2.3.4 Avoidance

Men and women mostly use this strategy to avoid unpleasant situations, topics and even conflicts. They try to postpone their problems or they claim that they have no needs to argue with others but they do not solve their problems (Juříčková 2008).

2.3.5 Compromise

The compromise is characterized as “an agreement in an argument in which the people involved reduce their demands or change their opinion in order to agree” (Cambridge dictionary). The function of this strategy is to please both partners in conversation. In conversation, both partners are equal and they have an equal say in the solution of their problem (Juříčková 2008).

2.3.6 Cooperation

Cooperation is defined as “a situation in which people work together to do something” (Merriam-Webster dictionary). In communication, people try to negotiate a mutual agreement on solutions, they try to avoid conflicts or communication maneuvering and they have equal position in conversation. Cooperation is possibly the best strategy for interaction (Juříčková 2008).

2.3.7 Interruptions

The term interruption is characterized as “the action of interrupting or being interrupted” (Oxford dictionary). Men and women use this strategy to show their power and dominance or accidentally trying to express themselves quickly without waiting. “The interrupter is seen as a malevolent aggressor, the interrupted an innocent victim” (Tannen 1990, 189).

2.3.8 Laughter

Laughter is defined as “the act or sound of laughing” (Merriam-Webster dictionary). Men and women use laughter as a communication strategy for a different purpose. I believe that laughter helps to release an intense situation, to create a pleasant atmosphere or to entertain others as laughter is mostly contagious. And also men and women use laughter to postpone their response to a question.

2.3.9 Taboo expressions and swear words

Taboo expressions and swear words “can intensify what is said, but they can shock or give offence” (Cambridge dictionary). I think that men and women use taboo expressions and swear words mostly in speaking to express their emotions, strong feelings or to make a status statement.

2.3.10 Familiarity

Familiarity is characterized as “friendly and informal way of acting or talking” (Merriam-Webster dictionary). I believe that men and women use familiarity as communication strategy to create a friendly and pleasant atmosphere during the conversation.

Many other verbal communication strategies exist, however, I have chosen only these ten strategies to analyze in the second part of my thesis.

2.4 Nonverbal communication strategies

Men and women also apply nonverbal communication strategies during their interaction. In this chapter, I would like to describe nonverbal communication and the main nonverbal communication strategies.

Nonverbal communication is a communication via body language which is more spontaneous and usually more honest than verbal communication. Men and women use different types of body language which are related to the context of the conversation.

2.4.1 Facial expressions

Firstly, people generally notice the facial expressions of others when they are talking together. By their facial expressions, they can express empathies, interests but also a lack of interest, arrogance and distance. Facial expressions could be categorized as:

- Smile
- Eye' signals
- Eye contact

2.4.2 Haptic

Haptic is defined as “relating to or based on the sense of touch” or “characterized by a predilection for the sense of touch” (Merriam Webster dictionary). Men and women use different kinds of touch based on their relationships. Women use haptic between themselves more frequently than men because they express closeness and relationship. People avoiding touch are mostly afraid of communication (Juričková 2008).

2.4.3 Kinesics

Kinesics is characterized as “a systematic study of the relationship between nonlinguistic body motions (as blushes, shrugs, or eye movement) and communication” (Merriam Webster dictionary). Kinesics deals with gestures which are distinguished between:

- Emblems – are fixed and regular symbols, everybody knows them (e.g. finger alphabet, symbols of police, etc.)
- Regulators – gestures supporting communication by regulating (e.g. to stop conversation)
- Illustrators – gestures supporting communication by illustrating (e.g. direction, quantity, size, etc.)

- Adaptors – gestures supporting communication by adapting, people use these gestures to feel comfortable and natural (Juříčková 2008).

There are many other nonverbal communication strategies which men and women use during their conversation. I have chosen only the three strategies above to analyze in the second part of my thesis.

Verbal communication is very closely related to nonverbal communication; men and women support their verbal conversation by various body languages. In the second part of my thesis, I would like to analyze verbal communication strategies such as communication maneuvering, disqualifications, conflicts and compromises between men and women, their cooperation, interruptions, laughter, taboo expressions and swear words and also familiarity. Also, I would like to analyze nonverbal communication strategies such as smile, eye contact, haptic and kinesics (usage of regulators, illustrators and adaptors).

II. ANALYSIS

3 CORPUS

I decided to create a corpus of transcripts of two male interviews and two female interviews from a famous American talk show called the *Late Show with David Letterman*.

The following famous people have been chosen: Madonna, Farrah Fawcett, Bill Gates and Chris Farley.

Table 2: Verbal and nonverbal communication strategies (own creation)

Verbal communication strategies	Nonverbal communication strategies
Communication maneuvering	Smile
Disqualification	Eye contact
Conflict	Haptic
Compromise	Kinesics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulators • Illustrators • Adaptors
Cooperation	
Interruptions	
Laughter	
Taboo expressions and swear words	
Familiarity	

3.1 Interview: Madonna

Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone Ritchie is an American pop star singer, born in 1958 and in 1980s she was regarded as a sex symbol in the whole world (The New York Times, 2008). She visited The Late Show with David Letterman in 1994 and the interview lasted about twenty-two minutes.



Figure 1: Madonna on the Late Show with David Letterman

Source: TV Interview Transcripts. *Madonna on the Late Show with David Letterman*. <http://www.oocities.org/davidletterman82/Madonna1994Interview.html>. Accessed April 15, 2014.

Madonna broke several gender stereotypes. She applied all communication strategies. She used *communication maneuvering*: she often made a pause in the sentence because she wanted to avoid an unpleasant situation and instead of answering the questions she asked another question. David Letterman wanted to talk about her private sex life and she tried to avoid answering his questions.

She also applied *disqualification* once she was ironic, she ignored questions twice and changed the topic nine times. So when she felt unpleasant, this is how she managed the situation.

Madonna and David Letterman had *conflicts* eight times. For example, David wanted to have a commercial break but Madonna did not; he asked many questions and instead of answering, she argued with him. But these conflicts were not strategic and competitive, their purpose was to be entertaining. It should be noted that Madonna started the majority of arguments, so she is not to be seen as a stereotyped woman who tries to compromise.

As mentioned, she also uses a strategy called *avoidance* when she did not want to answer questions about her sex life; she simply said that she cannot talk about that. She had no need to argue or accuse, she simply avoided an unpleasant topic.

She did not use *compromise* much; actually she did it only on three occasions when she compromised immediately after a conflict or answered the question. Compromise is closely related to a conflict as a dialogue mostly leads to a compromise or a conflict.

Madonna did not apply a strategy called *cooperation* much; she cooperated only once when she started to answer David's questions. Most of the time she did not want to negotiate and she was an opponent of an interviewer. She did not behave according to gender stereotypes, otherwise as a woman she would be willing to cooperate.

Surprisingly, Madonna used *interruptions* during the whole interview. She interrupted thirty-one times and mostly did not allow the host to interrupt. This is a sign of dominance and power.

She also used a *laughter strategy* most of the time. She laughed when telling jokes twice, she used laughter to disguise nervousness five times, once postponed her response for an unpleasant question and nineteen times she was just entertained and felt natural and casual.

Madonna mentioned *taboo expressions* twelve times. For example, she mentioned her and the interviewer's underwear four times, compared a microphone above her to NBA players twice, also talked about peeing in the shower five times and mentioned picking nose once with an express intention to shock the audience.

She also used numerous *swear words* while talking:

- fuck – fourteen times
- fool – three times
- shit – only once

Her behavior and usage of swear words do not correspond with gender stereotypes as it is quite often men who use taboo expressions and swear words more frequently than women.

During the whole interview she also used *familiarity*. Moreover, besides verbal communication strategies Madonna also applied nonverbal communication strategies. She used *facial expression*: smiling and she kept eye contact with the interviewer and the audience. She expressed her interests in the talk show and sympathies with an interviewer.

She used *haptic* just twice. When she came to the talk show, David Letterman kissed Madonna and during the interview when they were talking they touched hands but just for a while.

On the other hand, she used *kinesics* all the time:

- Regulators – she regulated her talking by gestures; she stopped the conversation three times and supported her speech by gestures five times
- Illustrators – she supported her talking by illustrating, e.g. showed a direction four times
- Adaptors – she supported her talking by gestures to feel natural; she touched:
 - Hair – twenty-six times
 - Hands – ten times
 - Face – five times
 - Legs – three times
 - Necklace – two times
 - Ear – only once
 - Waist – only once

In the second part of the interview she smoked a cigar and used her tongue to touch her teeth. She did this ten times. Such seductive behavior is generally seen as typical for a

woman, because she wants to be attractive for the interviewer and maybe for the men in the audience.

To sum up, Madonna did not display a typical stereotyping behavior of a woman who behaves, socializes and communicates in order to be adequate to her social status. Acting more like a man can be interpreted as dominant, self-confident, direct, competitive and a leader of the conversation. These characteristics are not usually associated with a woman.

3.2 Interview: Farrah Fawcett

Farrah Fawcett was an American movie and serial actress, she was born in 1947 and in 1970s she was also regarded as a sex symbol in the world. Unfortunately, she died in 2009 (The New York Times, 2009). She visited The Late Show with David Letterman in 1997 and the interview lasted about eighteen minutes.



Figure 2: Farrah Fawcett on the Late Show with David Letterman

Source: TV Interview Transcripts. *Farrah Fawcett on the Late Show with David Letterman*. <http://www.oocities.org/davidletterman82/FarrahFawcett1997Interview.html>. Accessed April 15, 2014.

Farrah Fawcett used *communication maneuvering*: she did nine pauses not because of avoidance of unpleasant situation or topic but in order to concentrate. She could not express herself clearly. For the same reason, she may have also used a strategy of asking instead of answering.

She did not use any strategy of *disqualification*: no ironic comments, no disregard or change of the discussed topic. The interviewer was a leader of the conversation.

Fawcett and Letterman had three *conflicts*. Firstly she argued about her age, secondly she wanted to finish her story but he insisted on having a commercial break, etc. Although she was able to argue and act competitively, mostly she tried to make a compromise.

She did not apply any strategy of *avoidance*. She did not have a problem with questions about her private life, about her son and his opinion on his mother's appearance in the Playboy magazine, in general she did not mind talking about any topic.

As mentioned above, *compromise* is closely connected with conflict, as one excludes the other and Farrah mostly made compromises and instead of wanting to compete.

She also applied *cooperation* most of the time as she cooperated with the interviewer and did not argue.

Fawcett also used *interruptions* but not as much as Madonna. Farrah interrupted the interviewer nineteen times and she did not mind to be interrupted by the interviewer. She did not want to express dominance and power in accordance with the theory of stereotypes in gender.

She also applied *laughter* during the interview. She laughed when she told a joke, seven times when she was nervous and she laughed sixteen times when entertained. Mostly she was nervous because of her uncertainty and her incoherent answers.

Unlike Madonna, Fawcett did not use any *taboo expression* or *swear words*. The dialog about the Playboy magazine can be seen as an inappropriate topic for the television but given the time of the show and the fact that it was a part of her life, it seemed natural that they discussed it.

The final verbal communication strategy is *familiarity* and Fawcett used it all the time during the dialogue trying to communicate, in a friendly, polite and informal way to create pleasant atmosphere.

Fawcett used nonverbal communication strategies as well. For example, she used *facial expressions* - she was smiling during the interview, kept eye contact with the interviewer and audience to show sympathies and interests.

She used *haptic* twice. When she came to the talk show, David Letterman kissed Farrah's hand and during the dialog she touched an interviewer to make him listen.

On the other hand, she used *kinesics* majority of the time:

- Regulators – she regulated her talking by gestures; she stopped the conversation twice and supported it twenty-six times

- Illustrators – she supported her talking by illustrating, she showed the directions four times and she illustrated sizes three times
- Adaptors – she supported her talking by gestures to feel naturally; she touched:
 - Hair – thirteen times
 - Dress – nine times
 - Face – six times
 - Watch – three times

She supported her female behavior by these gestures. It is typical for women to use adaptors because they feel more natural and maybe they are less nervous when touching a familiar object. Feeling familiar helps them to communicate.

3.3 Interview: Bill Gates

William Henry Gates is an American cofounder of Microsoft Company, born in 1955 and known as the software king in the whole world (Microsoft, 2014). He visited the Late Show with David Letterman in 1995 and the interview lasted about ten minutes.



Figure 3: Bill Gates on the Late Show with David Letterman

Source: TV Interview Transcript. *Bill Gates on the Late Show with David Letterman*. <http://www.oocities.org/davidletterman82/BillGates1995Interview.html>. Accessed April 15, 2014.

Bill Gates broke gender stereotypes like Madonna but in a different way. He did not use many communication strategies. For example, he used *communication maneuvering* only twice – he made two pauses. Firstly, he tried to postpone his answer and secondly he needed some time to think about his response. During the dialogue he provided his answers willingly, and displayed no need to avoid any of the interviewer's questions.

He did not use *disqualification* – he did not change the topic of the dialogue and had no ironic comments or responses.

He so did not have any *conflict*, showed no need to be competitive, powerful or aggressive. David Letterman was a leader of the conversation and Bill Gates just simply answered all his questions.

He did not use communication strategy called *avoidance* as they did not talk about private life. They discussed well known topics which were mainly computers, software and Microsoft in general. He did not apply *compromise* and *cooperation strategies* as they did not need to agree. Both partners were equal and Bill Gates did not need to negotiate any solutions.

It is rather interesting that Bill Gates used *interruptions* only five times during the whole conversation. Simply he did not use this strategy to show his power or dominance, he merely wanted to clarify the topic. He did not mind to be interrupted by the interviewer either. Although he did not interrupt, he was very self-confident.

He used *laughter* only several times. He laughed nine times because he was entertained, seven times when he told jokes and twice when there was a pleasant conversation. He was not nervous as there was not any intense situation.

He did not use *taboo expressions* or *swear words* mainly because, as I mentioned above, no private topics were discussed and there was no need to express his emotions or feelings.

Bill Gates used communication strategy called *familiarity*; he behaved and communicated in a friendly, polite and informal way. There was a really pleasant atmosphere in the studio during the show.

He did not use many verbal communication strategies, but he used nonverbal communication strategies. He used *facial expressions* –smiling during the whole interview and he expressed his sympathies and interests. He also kept eye contact but only with David Letterman. He did not keep any eye contact with the audience.

He also used *kinesics*:

- Regulators – he supported his talking by hand gestures nineteen times
- Illustrators – he supported his talking by illustrating size four times
- Adaptors – he supported his talking by gestures to feel naturally; he touched:
 - Legs – twice
 - Face – twice

- Spectacles – once

It was a rather serious interview. Bill Gates communicated professionally but in an informal and friendly way. He did not apply stereotyped male behavior – was not aggressive, competitive, dominant, ambitious or powerful. He was natural, self-confident and it is obvious that he is skilled in his profession.

3.4 Interview: Chris Farley

Christopher Crosby Farley was an American comedian actor, he was born in 1964 and he belonged among the best comedian actors. Unfortunately, he overdosed of cocaine and morpheme and he died in 1997 (ČSFD, 2014). He visited the Late Show with David Letterman in 1995 and the interview lasted about ten minutes.



Figure 4: Chris Farley on the Late Show with David Letterman

Source: TV Interview Transcript. *Chris Farley on the Late Show with David Letterman*. <http://www.oocities.org/davidletterman82/ChrisFarley1995Interview.html>. Accessed April 15, 2014.

Chris Farley used the following communication strategies. For example, he used *communication maneuvering* only once when he was thinking about his answer, he made a pause.

He did not use *disqualification* – he did not change the topic and he made no ironic comments or responses.

Farley had no *conflict* in the show; he was not competitive or powerful in the conversation. The leader of the dialogue was David Letterman and Farley answered all questions.

He used a strategy called *avoidance*. An interviewer asked him about his mother and he repeated the same answer twice. Repetition may serve as an avoidance strategy.

Farley did not use *compromise*, but he used *cooperation*. Both partners were equal during the conversation. Farley did not argue with the interviewer.

He applied *interruptions* only four times and it seems that he used this strategy only accidentally as he tried to express himself very quickly without waiting. He did not show dominance or power.

Chris Farley was a very optimistic person during the whole interview, he used *laughter* almost all the time. He laughed twelve times when he told jokes and he was entertained ten times. He did not use laughter to postpone his answers.

He did not use *taboo expressions* but he used *swear words* – he said “jackass” twice during the whole interview.

He applied *familiarity* during the interview in order to entertain the interviewer and audience and to create a friendly and pleasant atmosphere.

Chris Farley did not use many verbal communication strategies however he did use nonverbal communication strategies. He used *facial expression*, kept eye contact with the interviewer and audience, and his communication was spontaneous.

Farley also used *kinesics*:

- Regulators – he regulated his talking by gestures; he supported it only four times
- Illustrators – he did not use any illustrators
- Adaptors – he supported his talking by gestures to feel more natural; he touched:
 - Hair – four times
 - Jacket – three times
 - Leg – three times
 - Chest – three times
 - Sunglasses – only once

It was not a serious interview, as Chris Farley was a comedian, and the tone of the interview was generally light-hearted. He made jokes, tried to entertain people and talked in a friendly and pleasant way. He was not aggressive, competitive or dominant.

3.5 Interviews: Summary

I analyzed four famous people who visited the Late Show with David Letterman. I focused on their verbal and nonverbal communication strategies. In verbal communication

strategies I measured: communication maneuvering, disqualification, conflict, avoidance, interruptions, laughter, taboo expressions and swear words.

I did not measure compromise, cooperation and familiarity because it cannot be numbered. I merely mentioned above if these strategies during the interview were used.

Table 3: Female and male usage of verbal communication strategies (own creation)

Category	Women		Men		Total
	Number	Percentage %	Number	Percentage %	Number
Communication maneuvering	14	8	3	5	17
Disqualification	12	7	0	0	12
Conflict	11	6	0	0	11
Avoidance	1	1	1	2	2
Interruptions	50	30	9	16	59
Laughter	51	30	40	73	91
Taboo expressions	12	7	0	0	12
Swear words	18	11	2	4	20

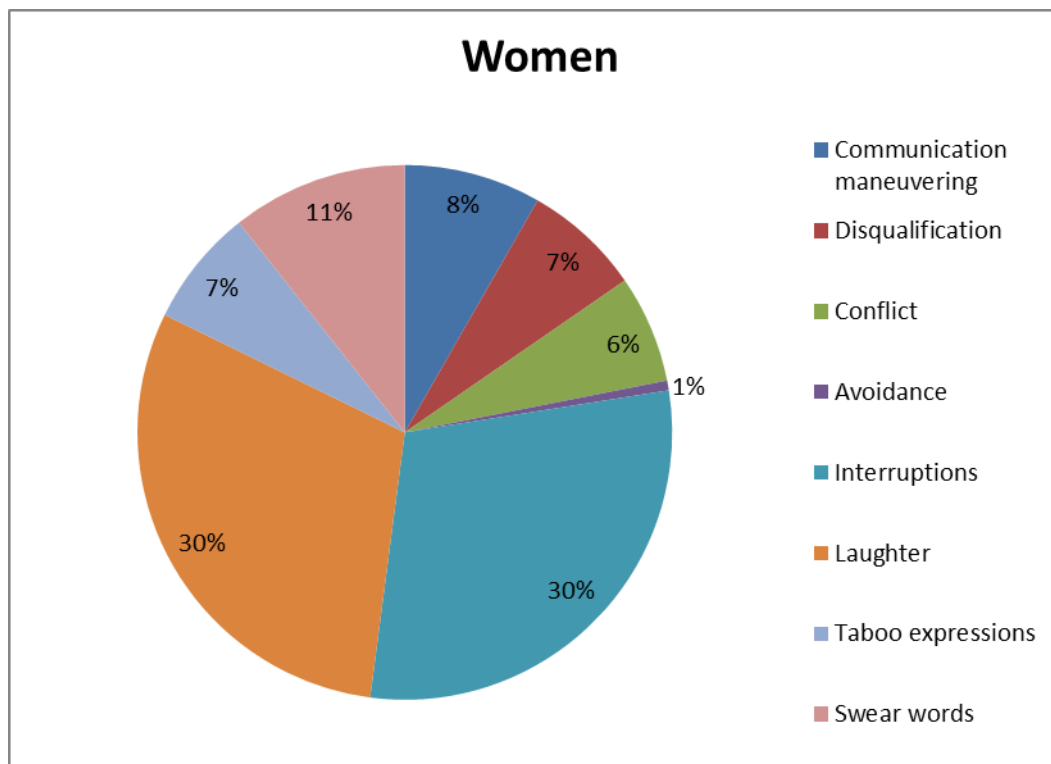


Figure 5: Female usage of verbal communication strategies (own creation)

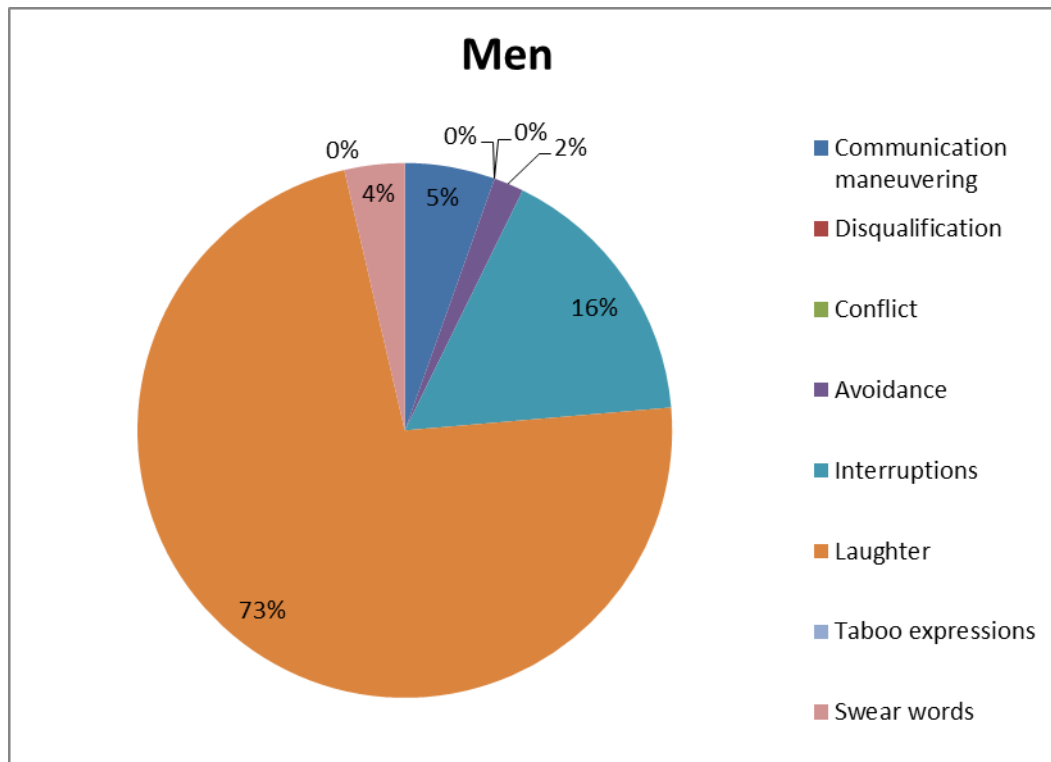


Figure 6: Male usage of verbal communication strategies (own creation)

In these pie graphs we can see which verbal communication strategies were used by men or which by women. Women applied communication maneuvering more often than

men which suggest that men do not have the ability to avoid an unpleasant situations or topics. Women made more pauses to think about their responses. Women also used disqualification more often than men – they changed the topic or they used irony. Men did not use conflict, they were not as competitive or dominant while women used conflicts and they tried to argue with the interviewer to achieve their interests. Men and women did not use avoidance very often to avoid unpleasant topics. Women used interruptions more often than men to show their dominance and but in other cases it was only accidental to express themselves quickly without waiting. Men did not use interruptions to show their power and they did not act like the leaders. On the other hand, men used laughter more than women to relieve the situation, make a pleasant atmosphere and entertain the interviewer and the audience. Women used laughter to postpone their responses and also to create a pleasant background. Men did not use taboo expressions and swear words. Women used taboo expressions and swear words, not to be rude or offend on purpose to the interviewer or audience but to express their emotions or strong feelings.

In nonverbal communication I measured: haptic, regulators, illustrators and adaptors. I did not measure facial expressions because it cannot be numbered. Men and women used facial expressions frequently – they were smiling and mostly they kept eye contact with the interviewer and the audience.

Table 4: Female and male usage of nonverbal communication strategies (own creation)

Category	Women		Men		Total
	Number	Percentage %	Number	Percentage %	Number
Haptic	3	2	2	4	5
Regulators	34	28	23	48	57
Illustrators	11	9	4	8	15
Adaptors	75	61	19	40	94

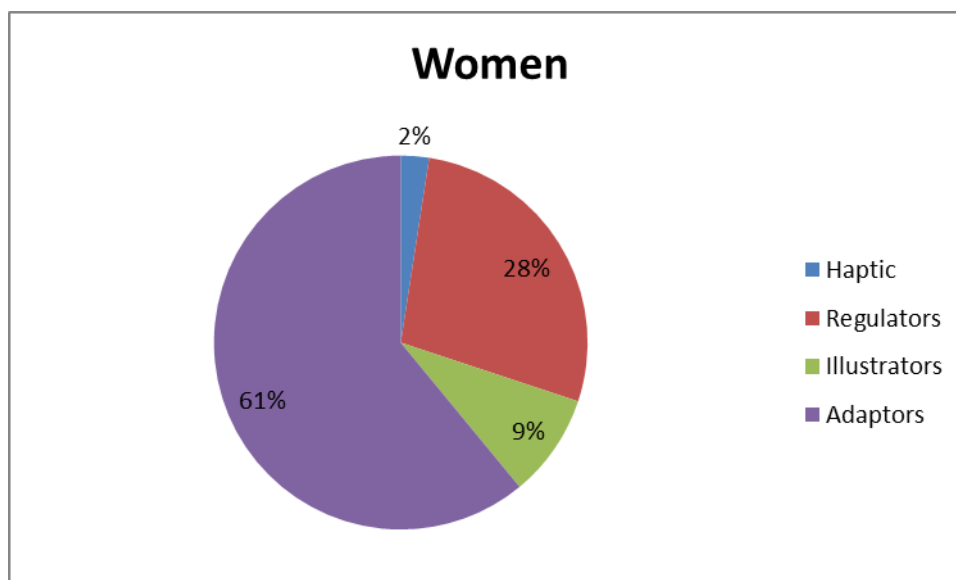


Figure 7: Female usage of nonverbal communication strategies (own creation)

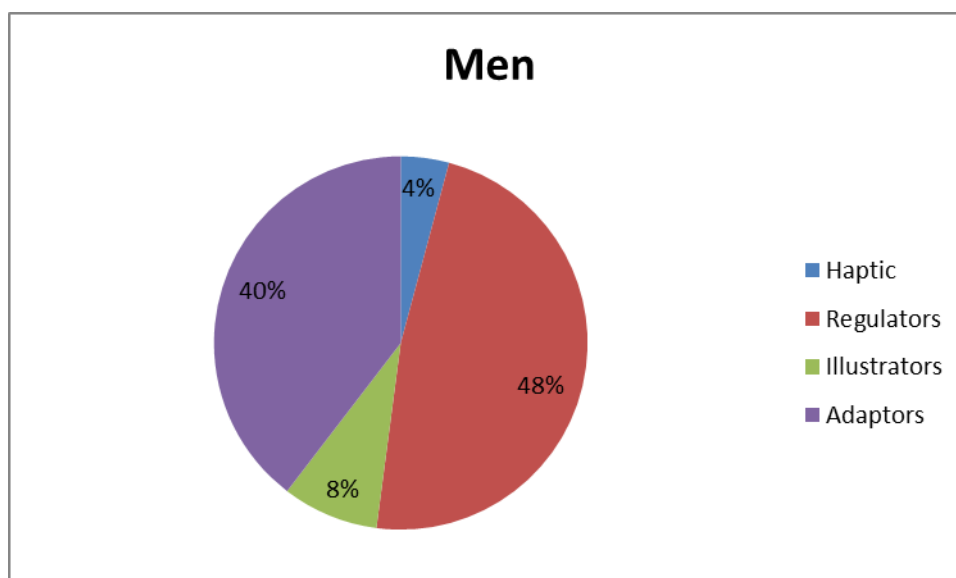


Figure 8: Male usage of nonverbal communication strategies (own creation)

In these pie graphs we can see which nonverbal communication strategies were used by men or women. Men and women did not use haptic; they did not express closeness or close relationship. Men used regulators much more frequently than women – they supported their communication by gestures. Both men and women used illustrators in the same way; they supported their communication by gestures and mostly they illustrated direction or size. Women used adaptors more often than men; mostly they touched: hair, hands, face, legs, necklet, ear, waist, dress or watch. Man touched: hair, face, legs, chest, jacket, sunglasses or spectacles. So both women and men used part of their body or their accessories.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was a descriptive study of gender, namely male and female communication strategies. In order to understand the analytical part, it was necessary to become familiar with the theoretical terms such as gender, differences between genders and also gender identities, roles and stereotypes; verbal and nonverbal communication and verbal and nonverbal communication strategies.

As a result, the analysis was created based on a corpus consisting of transcripts of an American television talk show called the Late Show with David Letterman. I chose two female participants (Madonna, Farrah Fawcett) and two male participants (Bill Gates, Chris Farley) and I analyzed their usage of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies. I am aware that the number of participants is rather low, but for the purposes of a comparative study, four interviews were enough to demonstrate that both genders do not generally follow the gender stereotype theories.

The aim of the analytical part was to show that men and women do not communicate and act according to stereotyped expectations. Gender stereotyping influences people in their everyday life saying how they should behave or communicate with each other in order to be adequate to their social role and status. However, nowadays the society seems to have changed and there are men who are not dominant, powerful or aggressive; as well as women who are not gentle, quiet or who use harsh language.

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