WHAT IS ‘FEMININITY’ IN JAPANESE LANGUAGE?:
A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF YOUNG JAPANESE COUPLES

by

KAeko ARAGAKI

B.A., Doshisha Women’s College of Liberal Arts, 1998

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Asian Studies)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
November 2002

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Department of Asian Studies

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Nov. 20, 2002
Abstract

It is widely believed from previous studies on cross-sex conversation that women are more cooperative, employing addressee-oriented speech behavior whereas men are more dominant, employing speaker-oriented speech behavior. This study also examines the conversational interaction between how young Japanese men and women in romantic relationship and explore how they use language in their social interaction. This study also focuses on women's speech style and investigates how young Japanese women express their sex identity linguistically considering their overall evaluation regarding ‘feminine’ speech style and ‘femininity’ in Japanese language. The participants of this study included four young Japanese couples in a romantic relationship whose ages range from 19 to 26. The data was collected by means of recording spontaneous and natural conversations between the couples and through a questionnaire to investigate their linguistic ideology.

Based on the notion proposed by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), this study analyzes the conversations of young Japanese couples in romantic relationships in terms of the following discourse functions: interruption, aizuchi, supportive questions; and the linguistic form, sentence-final particles. The findings demonstrate that both male and female participants in a romantic relationship are actively involved cooperatively to keep a conversation going. This result suggests that it is not always the case that men dominate a conversation while women are engaged in supportive work. Also, the speech style of the young Japanese female participants is hardly feminine as far as sentence-final particles and their use of vulgar or masculine expressions are concerned. However, the Questionnaire data showed that they acknowledge the traditional
stereotypes of 'feminine' speech style and attempt to employ the 'feminine' speech style depending on not only the individual evaluation of the 'feminine' speech style but also on the individual evaluation of the given context, such as the relation between interlocutors (psychological distance; power relationship).

By demonstrating the complexity of what is actually taking place in conversation and the implication of the participants' employment of particular linguistic features, I argue that 'femininity' in Japanese language does not always correspond to the quality of being polite, gentle, non-assertive and empathetic as argued in the previous studies (e.g., Ide, 1979; Jugaku, 1979; Shibamoto, 1985) and employing addressee-oriented speech behavior. This study posits the importance of a more in-depth inquiry into young Japanese women's linguistic behavior in relation to their linguistic ideology and social backgrounds.
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List of Abbreviations

Following abbreviations are used in this thesis:

COP   copula
F     filler
NEG   negative morpheme
NOM   nominalizer
OM    object marker
OP    onomatopoeia
P     particle
PS    passive morpheme
Q     question marker
QL    quiet laugh
QT    quotative marker
SUB   subject marker
TAG   tag-question-like morpheme (e.g. jan, janai and deshō)
TOP   topic marker
List of Transcription Conventions

- low intonation fall (at the end of sentence)

? high intonation raise

. recognizable pause

[ the beginning of interruption

= speech which comes immediately after another person's

:: lengthened syllable

- abrupt cut-off

() unclear utterance

(... ) silence

(*** ) audible words

(Bergvall, (1996))
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Acknowledgements

The past three years have been the most challenging and precious period in my life during which I have been supported and inspired by many people in countless ways. I know that without such assistance, I could not have completed my thesis. I would like to express my gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Sharalyn Orbaugh, Dr. Joshua Mostow and Dr. Tineke Hellwig for their insightful comments on my thesis. I am most indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Sharalyn Orbaugh who supported me in various ways throughout my academic years as well as in the process of writing my thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Ross King who read the earlier version of my thesis and willingly provided a lot of guidance. I am especially grateful to Dr. Juta Kitching who opened the door to the subject of Sociolinguistics and allowed me discover the joy of doing research.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the people who participated in my research, whom I identify as: Hanako, Gonta, Miki, Fukumatsu, Kimiko, Isao, Rin and Keita. I appreciate their generosity to let me use their private conversation as data for my research.

I am thankful to Caroline Dey who proofread most parts of my thesis. I appreciate her patience and careful and thoughtful editorial work.

My heartfelt thanks also go to the friendships I made in Vancouver as well as in Japan whose countless support and encouragement was always a source of strength to me. I would like to thank Maiko Shimada who witnessed my three academic years and was always there to help me whenever I encountered difficulties in my life. I would like to express my special appreciation to Yumiko Nakamura, one of my best friends, roommate, big sister, who constantly
helped me with different matters and made life so enjoyable.

Finally I am grateful to my family in Japan, my parents, my grandparents and my brother for their limitless support, encouragement and unconditional trust, and their patience throughout my academic life in Vancouver.
Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview

In the last few decades, several articles have been devoted to the study of the relation between gender and language. Research on the subject of gender and language has been widely done on phonological, morphological, and grammatical gender differences (e.g. Lakoff, 1973; Labov, 1981; Trudgill, 1973) and how both men and women use language in actual social interaction (e.g. Fishman, 1978, 1980; Maltz and Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990). This thesis deals with the latter subject - how both men and women use language in social interaction - and focuses on women's speech style in cross-sex conversation.

For the investigation of gender and language, the previous studies commonly explored such linguistic forms as floor-gaining, interruptions, question-asking, and the use of minimal responses and 'you know' (e.g. Fishman, 1978; James and Drakich, 1993; Maltz and Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990; Zimmerman and West, 1975). According to these above studies, women are more cooperative, employing addressee-oriented speech behavior, whereas men are more dominant, employing speaker-oriented speech behavior. The above claim often leads to the conclusion that in conversation men and women exhibit the power relationships in society, where men are dominant and women obedient.

When we observe gender differences in conversation, we are confronted with two major models which try to explain such gender differences – the 'dominance' approach and the 'difference' approach. The 'dominance' approach claims that conversational interaction is a
hierarchical set of power relationships: linguistic behavior in conversation displays the social dominance of men and the secondary status of women, that is, women's sense of inferiority. The 'difference' approach, on the other hand, views sex difference as cultural difference. The 'difference' approach states that men and women's different socialization from childhood and adolescence produces different speech styles in men and women. These two frameworks, the 'dominance' and the 'difference' approach, have been the major accounts explaining gender differences in conversation.

The 'dominance' approach was also predominant in the case of gender differences in Japanese linguistic behavior (Ide, 1979, 1982, 1990; Jugaku, 1979; Shibamoto, 1985, 1990; Smith, 1992). These studies claim that the speech style of Japanese women is often described as polite, gentle, soft-spoken, non-assertive and empathetic. The most frequently cited differences regard the usage of sentence-final particles, address terms, honorifics, pitch ranges and intonations (Ide, 1979, 1982, 1990; Reynolds, 1990; Shibamoto, 1985; Smith, 1992). These characteristics are often perceived as a reflection of women's social powerlessness (Reynolds, 1990; Smith, 1990).

Ide (1979) discusses how Japanese women employ polite words, honorifics and aizuchi (backchannel expressions: Maynard, 1989) more than men in conversation. These characteristics are often associated with the assumption that women tend to avoid assertive expressions because they are often insecure and considered socially inferior to men (Ide, 1979; Uchida, 1993). Thus, gender difference in Japanese linguistic behavior is often explained by the 'dominance' approach.
However, a number of studies based on both the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approach have been criticized for their oversimplification of gender in conversation, their lack of empirical evidence and their inability to explain the complex aspects of what is actually happening in cross-sex communication. Since Eckert and McConnell (1992) advanced a new interpretation, ‘community-of-practice,’ contemporary studies on gender and language emphasize gender as one of several social categories such as class, ethnicity, age, etc. Following the notion ‘community-of-practice,’ recent research on gender and language challenges stereotypes of women’s speech style. The emphasis of research on gender and language has progressed from looking into how the sex of speakers determines their linguistic choice, to examining gender in a specific speech community, that is, when and in what kind of context gender becomes salient in the specific language use (e.g. Bergvall, 1996; Bucholtz, 1999; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1995; Eckert, 1998; Greenwood, 1996; Hall, 1998). Recent research also emphasizes that it is important to consider the individual linguistic ideology in relation to the given context: who the addressees are; what kind of occasion it is, etc. Hall (1998), for instance, examined the speech style of women working for a “fantasy-line” (p.321) in a Telecommunications Company. She discovered that the ‘powerless’ women’s speech style illustrated by Lakoff (1975) could become very powerful in this industry in terms of pleasing male customers. The point to note is that power relationships vary according to context and speech community. Thus, the new perspective of research on language and gender attempts to look at ‘gender in context.’

As well, recent studies based on the speech style of young Japanese women have reported that their actual speech is much more diverse and less feminine than is commonly believed (e.g. Okamoto, 1995; Okamoto and Sato, 1992; Yoshioka, 1994). Most of these studies have
identified appropriate use by women of some conventionally masculine forms (e.g. sentence-final particles: \textit{ze}, \textit{zo}, \textit{na}). Uchida (1993) examined the cross-sex conversation of young Japanese and reported that these conversations do not conform to the common view that women take a supportive role while men dominate. Hence, recent studies, both in English and Japanese, based on natural conversations and other observations, prove that both the 'dominance' and 'difference' approach are too simplistic to explain the actual complex phenomena in relation to the 'gender' identity of the interlocutors in context, and question the reality of the assumed distinction between female and male linguistic forms.

1.2 The Present Study

This thesis will examine the speech style of young Japanese women in one specific speech community: How young Japanese women interact in conversation with their boyfriends and how it relates to their sex identity. I will observe how much the female participants in this project fulfill the supportive function in conversation and demonstrate linguistic characteristics traditionally defined as feminine. I will also investigate young Japanese women's linguistic ideology in relation to their sense of femininity. In order to do so, I will record conversations of young Japanese couples and analyze their conversation in terms of the following linguistic features: \textit{interruption}; \textit{supportive questions}; \textit{aizuchi}; and \textit{sentence-final forms}. 
1.3 Organization of this Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter Two reviews the literature on the linguistic behavior of women in cross-sex conversation both in English and Japanese, considering two predominant accounts of gender differences in cross-sex communication: the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approach. It also introduces some of the recent studies conducted with the new perspectives on gender and language. Chapter Three describes the methodology used for this thesis and defines each linguistic features focused on in this thesis. Chapter Four analyzes the recorded conversations in terms of the following linguistic features: interruption; supportive questions; aizuchi; and sentence-final forms. It also summarizes the findings of the questionnaire given to each of the subjects. In conclusion, in Chapter Five, I will discuss the results drawn from this study and describe some of its limitation.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

In this chapter, I will review major studies on women's speech manner in conversation, both in general and in Japanese. Section 2.1 reviews the literature on the linguistic behavior of English-speaking women in cross-sex conversation. Section 2.2 examines the two predominant accounts of gender differences in cross-sex communication: the 'dominance' approach and the 'difference' approach. Section 2.3 discusses critiques of these two predominant accounts and introduces a new perspective for studies on gender and language. Then I proceed to my discussion of Japanese women's linguistic behavior. Section 2.4 reviews the literature on the linguistic behavior of Japanese women, mainly young Japanese women.

2.1 Women's linguistic behavior in cross-sex communication

In English speaking countries such as North America and Britain, a number of studies have examined how men and women interact in conversation (Cameron, 1985; DeFrancisco, 1998; Fishman, 1978, 1980; Maltz and Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990, 1994; Zimmerman and West, 1975; West and Zimmerman, 1983). Most of the studies have worked on gender differences in linguistic behavior in same-sex or cross-sex conversation in terms of such particular linguistic variations as the use of you know, interruption, floor holding, amount of talk, backchannel expressions (i.e., minimal responses, frequency of questions, etc). These studies discovered that (1) men talk more than women, (2) women tend to ask more questions than men, (3) women tend to use more minimal responses than men. I will begin by considering these noticeable gender
differences in cross-sex conversation respectively.

First, many researchers agree that men talk more than women do in cross-sex conversation. Woods (1988) examined the relation between gender and occupational status by looking at the amount of speaking time. The results show that the gender of the speaker has a greater influence on floor apportionment and regardless of occupational status, females play a supportive role in conversation. Another example is James and Darkich’s critical review (1993) of previous studies that investigate how men and women behave in conversation with regard to the amount of talk. What they found is that women are expected to talk in order to maintain the smooth flow of interaction and “show their good will towards others” (p.302). Thus, both studies share the view that, compared to men, women take a more active role in keeping conversation going smoothly.

Secondly, it is generally agreed that women tend to ask more questions than men. Fishman’s studies (1978,1980), for example, conform to this belief that women are more likely to ask questions than men. Fishman (1978) examined the natural conversation between three heterosexual couples and discovered that women asked questions two and a half times as often as the men. She interprets the finding as women’s attempt to encourage responses from their partner in order to maintain smooth interaction and described this as evidence of women’s conversational overwork. Similarly, Tannen (1990) interpreted women’s question-asking tendency as part of their cooperative speaking style and as a device for sharing the floor with their conversational partners. Thus women’s question-asking is often interpreted as one of women’s cooperative attempts to maintain smooth conversational interaction.
Thirdly, women display a greater tendency to use minimal responses like “yeah”, “umm”, and “huh” than men do in cross-sex conversation (Hirschman, 1973, cited in Martz and Borker 1983). What Fishman (1978) argues is that men and women use minimal responses very differently. Men hardly make a minimal response at a point that needs filling; therefore, “the male usage of the minimal response displayed lack of interest” (p.422). On the other hand, women employ minimal responses in order to signal that they are listening and to demonstrate their active participation in a conversation and “their interest in the interaction and the speaker” (p.422). In conclusion, she claims that women take a more active role than men to insure interaction.

Finally it is clear from these studies that women are more actively engaged in doing supportive work for the purpose of maintaining conversation than men. Conversely, men are dominant by claiming more speaking time than women do (Woods, 1988), as mentioned earlier. Several studies have also argued that men are dominant by interrupting (Zimmerman and West, 1975; West and Zimmerman, 1983), by controlling the introduction and development of the topic of conversation (Zimmerman and West, 1975), and by making more direct declarations of fact and opinion than women do (Fishman 1978). We can distill the common interpretation from these studies as follows: women are mutually more cooperative and non-competitive, employing addressee-oriented speech behavior, whereas men are more dominant, employing speaker-oriented speech behavior in cross-sex conversation.

This section has discussed the common interpretation of such women’s linguistic features as women’s floor apportionment, question-asking and use of minimal responses. The next section introduces two traditional frameworks which attempt to explain such gender differences
2.2 Two approaches – the ‘dominance’ and the ‘difference’ approaches

In observing gender differences in linguistic behavior in cross-sex conversation, we encounter two models to explain those differences: the ‘dominance’ approach and the ‘difference’ approach. The ‘dominance’ approach rests on the claim that gender differences in linguistic behavior in cross-sex conversation are a reflection of the hierarchical power relationships in a society. The ‘difference’ approach, on the other hand, emphasizes that men and women are from different sociolinguistic subcultures and learn how to do various things differently, thus influencing how men and women learn to behave in conversational interaction. This section reviews the literature on both the ‘dominance’ approach and the ‘difference’ approach.

The ‘dominance’ approach explains that in conversational interaction men and women exhibit the power relationship in a society where men are dominant and women subordinate (Wardhaugh, 1998). Zimmerman and West (1975), West and Zimmerman (1983) and Fishman (1973, 1980) confirm the ‘dominance’ approach. Zimmerman and West (1975) and West and Zimmerman (1983), for example, explain male dominance in conversation in terms of the ‘interruptions’ that occur in a given context. In these studies, they discovered that men interrupt women more frequently and pointed out that ‘interruption’ is men’s display of their power in conversation and their attempt to reinforce their power in face-to-face interaction with women.

Another variation is Fishman’s work (1978, 1980). Fishman (1980) explored the character of conversational interaction through two examples of female conversational style: question-asking and the use of ‘you know.’ Fishman argues that women’s use of questions
results from their attempts to “solve the conversational problem of gaining a response to their utterance” (p.255), and women’s use of the hedging ‘you know’ also functions as an explicit invitation to respond. All these studies support the theory of the ‘dominance’ approach that gender overrides the status of the speaker. Thus, the ‘dominance’ approach emphasizes that gender inequality in society is fundamentally involved in the problems in cross-sex conversation.

The ‘difference’ approach, on the other hand, emphasizes the claim that men and women “come from different sociolinguistic subcultures” (Maltz and Borker 1982: 200) that produce gender differences in their linguistic behavior. According to Maltz and Borker (1982), men and women “learn to do different things with words in a conversation” (p.200) since during their childhood or adolescence men and women learn the rules for interacting in informal friendly situations exclusively with peers of their own sex. In summary, Maltz and Borker claim that men and women carry over into adulthood the linguistic behavior patterns that men and women learn from childhood. Men and women, consequently, have at least some gender-differentiated behavior in conversation.

Following the ‘difference’ approach proposed by Maltz and Borker (1982), Tannen (1990) also claims that gender-differentiated behavior toward interaction is similar to particular characteristics of cross-cultural interaction, something Tannen calls “cross-cultural communication” (p.42). Thus, the ‘difference’ approach emphasizes the perspective that men and women interact differently as a result of “different socialization and acculturation patterns” (Holmes 1992:330).
The discussion above has introduced two theoretical frameworks, the ‘dominance’ approach and the ‘difference’ approach that were predominant in accounting for gender differences in conversation. The following sections show new perspectives on research on language and gender.

2.3 Gender in context

In this section, I will examine critiques of both the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approaches and introduce some new perspectives in research on gender and language.

2.3.1 Critique of the ‘dominance’ and the ‘difference’ approaches

Both the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approaches have been the predominant accounts in feminist linguistic studies (Cameron, 1995). However, both the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approaches have been criticized for their inability to explain the complexity of what actually occurs in a given interaction. That is, these theoretical frameworks tend to ignore the viewpoints of the participants in conversation, individual preferences for conversational style, and also individual social identities like class, ethnic identity, and sexual identity (Cameron, 1995). The core of the critiques of the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approaches states the inadequacy of treating ‘gender’ as an independent variable; rather they emphasize looking at ‘gender’ in context.

In opposition to the ‘dominance’ approach suggested by Zimmerman and West’s (1975) and West and Zimmerman’s (1983) studies on interruption, for example, Greenwood (1996) examined the conversations of three different groups of adolescents in order to consider the
concept of floor management in terms of interruption and the degree of familiarity among the speakers. The findings indicate that interruption does not always function as verbal enactment of the power and dominance of the speaker. She argues that the functions of interruption depend on how the speaker perceives the interruption in context. In conclusion, Greenwood states that it is inadequate and misleading to correlate the notion ‘gender’ with specific linguistic features such as interruptions.

Freed and Greenwood (1996) also conducted research on the phrase ‘you know’ and question-asking to reconsider the traditional interpretation of the ‘dominance’ approach which argues that women adopt the phrase ‘you know’ and question-asking because of their insecurity, which in turn is a result of societal powerlessness (e.g. Lakoff, 1975; Fishman, 1978, 1980; Coates, 1986). They obtained results that show that women and men use ‘you know’ and ask questions with equal frequency. The point Freed and Greenwood raise is that the use of these features depends on particular requirements of the given social context that motivates it. From these two studies, we can see that it is not the sex of the speaker that motivates the speaker’s use of particular linguistic forms, but the speaking situation and the type of talk.

The ‘difference/cultural’ approach, an alternative to the dominance/power-based approach, is also the subject of controversy. For instance, Tannen’s book, You just don’t understand, has received some feminist criticism (e.g., Troemel-Ploetz 1998); specifically, the ‘difference’ approach Tannen dealt with treats gender difference in linguistic behavior as a simple fact of life and overlooks the underlying issue of gender difference: that is, gender inequality. In other words, both the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approaches yield the implication that male behavior and male norms are prototypical (Cameron and Coates 1988) and female behaviors are auxiliaries.
The overgeneralization of this stereotype perpetuates the exclusion of women and reinforces male-dominant norms that keep women as a deviation of the male standard (Cameron, 1995). To dichotomize the two concepts of ‘difference’ and ‘dominance’ is unsatisfactory because it is impossible to account for complex linguistic variables from only two different frameworks; most importantly, it limits a multi-dimensional view of the researchers. Hence, the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approaches (as well as some other approaches) have to be regarded as “simultaneously composing the construct of gender” (Uchida, 1998:290). Finally, it is clear that the historical feminist accounts — ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approaches — are too simplistic and limited to explain the complexity of conversational interaction.

The discussion above has shown the limitations of two theoretical frameworks, the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approaches, and their inability to account for the diversity of conversational context. The next section discusses a new approach to studies on gender and language.

2.3.2 Gender as an Identity

One of the important changes in studies on gender and language has been the contextualization of particular conversational interactions, considering speakers’ social identities, such as class, ethnicity, age and also their engagement in a specific speech community. When observing the relation between language and gender, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) discuss the importance of taking into account these social identities and also looking into how gender is constructed in a specific ‘speech community,’ which Eckert and McConnell-Ginet call a ‘community of practice.’ They explain a ‘community of practice’ as “ways of doing things,
ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations, in short, practices which emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavor” (p.490). Based on Eckert and McConnell-Ginet’s notion of ‘community-of-practice’, many researchers have conducted studies that explore the relation between gender and language in a specific speech community (e.g. Bergvall, 1996; Bucholtz, 1999; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1995; Eckert, 1998; Greenwood, 1996; Hall, 1998).

First of all, I will introduce Hall’s and Eckert’s studies, both of which look into the relation between gender and language in a certain speech community. Based on female linguistic features described in Lakoff’s *Language and women’s place* (1975), Hall (1998) examined the speech style of women who work for “fantasy-lines” (p.321) in the telecommunication industry, which are essentially ‘phone sex’ lines. She analyzed the prerecorded messages in their advertisements and interviewed fantasy-line operators. The findings of her study reveal that employing ‘powerless’ speech styles can empower women in the fantasy-line industry by fulfilling the male expectations of interaction with a female. This apparently contradicts the traditional interpretation of power and gender in conversation, which regards women as powerless, and men as powerful, by judging from so-called powerless female linguistic features. In the telecommunication industry, female operators are more powerful than male customers because they can control men by fulfilling or failing the male expectations. Her conclusions follow the same idea as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, stating that it is necessary “to develop a more flexible understanding of gender, which allows for variability of meaning within and among communities” (p.340).
Likewise, Eckert (1998) investigated how the phonological variation between 'standard' and 'vernacular' relates to gender and some other social identities in a specific speech community: an American public high school in the suburbs. She discovered that the frequency of different variants differs from speaker to speaker, or from group to group; however, her research does not show a clear and significant generalization that demonstrates a particular difference in a particular group or gender. What she argues in her conclusions is that gender practices differ from culture to culture and from group to group, interacting with other aspects of social identity such as class, age and ethnicity. Thus, most studies like Hall (1998) and Eckert (1998) point out the limitations of previous studies which regard gender as a crucial factor determining women's linguistic choice, thereby ignoring other social identities and the multiple social aspects of context.

Secondly, some studies (e.g., Tannen 1998) propose that it is also important to take into consideration individual linguistic ideologies in relation to other social factors in a context: the degree of formality; identity of one's interlocutor; what kind of occasion it is, etc. Tannen (1998), for example, states in her discussion of power and solidarity that defining these attributes by linking them to linguistic strategies confuses the understanding of what occurs in conversation between men and women. She suggests that it is necessary to attempt to "consider the context..., speakers' conversational styles..., and most crucially, the interaction of their styles with each other" (p.278), because all the linguistic variations have divergent meanings according to context. In the specific context of an academic setting, Bergvall (1996) also investigated how female students deal with multiple gender-role demands and conflicts in the discourse of women at a technological university — traditionally a male-dominated field. The findings of her study
show the dilemma of female students who attempt not only to respond to traditionally masculine norms as assertive engineering group participants, but also to respond to the conflicting traditional feminine role expectation of being facilitative supporters. Her study reveals that relating social factors like gender to particular linguistic variations based on a specific social theory glosses over the implications of the individual use of the linguistic variation (Cameron, 1990). Therefore it should be noted that we have to look in detail into the speakers' metalinguistic intention that speakers assign to a particular linguistic variation as well as to multiple roles of gender according to context.

In this section, I have introduced several studies that show a new perspective on gender and language. As Bergvall states, 'gender' performs multiple roles. In other words, 'gender' and the meaning of 'women' depends on a given context. We need to give careful thought to 'gender' in context, considering that 'gender' is only one of the social identities that influence women's linguistic behavior. When analyzing discourse, it is not adequate to show only what kind of sex differences exist in language use in a particular speech community. Instead, the point to observe is when one of the social identities, 'gender', becomes salient and what an interlocutor intends to express with a particular language use.

The next section introduces recent studies on the speech style of Japanese women, mainly young women, to show that studies on young Japanese women's speech style also follow the new viewpoint - 'looking at gender in context' - discussed above.
2.4 Neutralization in the Speech of Young Japanese Women

This section reviews previous studies on the linguistic behavior of Japanese women. Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 discuss the speech style of young Japanese women in same-sex conversations and cross-sex conversations, respectively. Section 2.4.3 introduces Matsumoto's (1996) 'new femininity-cuteness' in the speech of young Japanese women.

2.4.1 Gender differences in Japanese language

Over the past few decades, numerous attempts have been made to show gender differences in Japanese linguistic behavior (Ide, 1979, 1982, 1989, 1990; Kitagawa, 1977; Jugaku, 1979; McGloin, 1990; Mizutani & Mizutani, 1987; Reynolds, 1985; Shibamoto, 1985, 1987, 1990; Smith, 1992). Research on gender differences in Japanese has been conducted in the areas of self references and address-terms, sentence-final particles, pitch ranges, word order, ellipsis of case-marking particles (i.e., wa and ga) and the use of honorifics. These studies have characterized the Japanese language as exhibiting distinct gender differences. Gender differences in Japanese language are often described as a reflection of the social power relationship between men and women.

Sentence-final particles, for instance, are often cited as a characteristic example displaying gender differences in usage (e.g., Ide, 1979; Kitagawa, 1977; McGloin, 1990; Shibamoto, 1985, 1987). Sentence-final particles can be categorized into three groups: masculine forms, feminine forms and neutral forms. Masculine forms are particles used exclusively by men, feminine forms are those exclusively used by women and neutral forms are used by both men and women.

To cite examples from McGloin (1990), particles such as ze, zo and na are characterized as
masculine forms, *wa* as a feminine form and *yo* and *ne* as neutral forms:

(1) a. *Iku zo.*
go-Pres
'I am going, I can tell you!'

b. *Sonna koto wa atarimae da ze.*
such thing obvious copula
‘That goes without saying, I can tell you!’

(=Uyeno’s (119))

c. *Kondo no shiken dekinakatta na.*
this exam do well-Neg-Past
‘You didn’t do well in the last test, did you’.

(2) a. *Watashi ga yaru wa.*
I do-Pres
‘I will do it’.

(3) a. *Ti desu yo.*
good copula
‘It’s OK’

b. *Ti desu ne.*
good copula
‘OK?’

(McGloin 1990:24).

*Ze* and *zo* are particles that give an impression of being assertive and somewhat derogatory to the other party, and *wa*, on the other hand, functions to soften a sentence (Ide, 1979). These features are often considered as evidence for the fact that women’s speech sounds politer than men’s.

According to Ide (1979), these female forms result from women’s attempt to give options to the addressee, reducing the strong sense of insistence. This view of Ide is widely accepted in studies on other gender differences in Japanese language relating to self references and
address-terms, pitch ranges, word order, and the use of honorifics, etc, (e.g., Ide, 1982, 1989, 1990; Kitagawa, 1977; Jugaku, 1979; Reynolds, 1985; Shibamoto, 1985, 1987, 1990; Smith, 1992). These studies commonly describe Japanese women as polite, gentle, soft-spoken, non-assertive and empathetic (Okamoto, 1995). More importantly, these characteristics of women's speech style are associated with differential social status: men being superior and women inferior. We can see that these studies on the relation between gender and Japanese language often result in or coincide with one of the traditional theoretical frameworks, the 'dominance' approach.

2.4.2 The speech style of young Japanese women in same-sex conversation

In opposition to the 'dominance' approach that many previous studies claim (e.g., Ide, 1979, 1989; Kitagawa, 1977), recent studies have shed new light on the relation between gender and Japanese language. The results of recent studies (Matsumoto, 1996; Okamoto, 1995, 1996, 1997; Okamoto and Sato, 1992) shake the basic assumptions of the characteristics of Japanese women's speech style as being polite, gentle, soft spoken and empathetic, etc, showing that the actual speech style of Japanese women is diverse.

Okamoto (1995, 1996, 1997) and Okamoto and Sato (1992) examined Japanese women's speech style in natural conversation with their close friends and analyzed their use of linguistic features that are often associated with gender: sentence-final forms (Okamoto and Sato 1992; Okamoto 1995, 1996, 1997), and strongly masculine expressions (Okamoto and Sato 1992). In these studies, young Japanese women used neutral sentence-final forms most frequently and used masculine forms (e.g. zo, ze, na) more often than feminine forms (e.g. wa, yo, no). In addition,
they used expressions commonly perceived as strongly masculine or vulgar, as illustrated in the following examples.

(1) SP 4: ....If  jan  sore.
   good AUX that
   ‘That is good, isn’t it?’
   (Okamoto 1996:305)

Example (1) uses the neutral negative auxiliary jan. It is a contracted form of ja nai, for a mild assertion or to seek agreement. The following examples show the use of strongly masculine expressions by young Japanese women.

(2) (drinking tea: subject 3)
   umai.
   delicious/good
   ‘It is delicious/good.’
   (Okamoto 1996: 291)

(3) (speaker 1. discussing the location of an office)
   Iya, datte tooi zo.
   No but far is.
   ‘But it’s far away.’
   (Okamoto and Sato 1992: 485)

Umai, ‘delicious/good’, in example (2) is also commonly marked as a strongly masculine or vulgar expression (Okamoto and Sato 1992). Example (3) demonstrates the use of zo, a masculine sentence-final particle for assertion. From these remarks, it is obvious that the speech styles of Japanese women are becoming less feminine and more neutral. The speech of Japanese women is more diversified than previously proposed (Ide 1979, 1990; Jugaku 1985; Shibamoto 1985).
In conclusion, Okamoto and Sato (1992) state that choice of speech style is determined by a speaker's consideration of the multiple social aspects of context in addition to his or her beliefs and attitudes concerning language use. Also, the use of a variety of forms is a strategy to express a speaker's identity and relationship to others according to context. In short, these studies support the new standpoint of the study on gender and language, 'looking at gender in context' which explores the question of how gender, as one part of many social identities, behaves in a given context.

The next section looks into the speech style of young Japanese women in cross-sex communication.

2.4.3 The speech style of young Japanese women in cross-sex conversation

The previous section introduced Okamoto's (1995, 1996, 1997) and Okamoto and Sato's (1992) studies showing that the actual speech of Japanese women is varied. This section will examine studies on cross-sex conversation: how men and women interact with each other in cross-sex conversation.

Most studies on interaction in cross-sex communication (e.g. Cameron 1985; Fishman 1978; Maltz and Borker 1982; Tannen 1990) take a similar view: women are more cooperative, employing addressee-oriented speech behavior; whereas men are more dominant, employing speaker-oriented speech behavior. As the previous sections have argued, these studies also report that women work to establish a human relationship with the addressee through conversation. By using more back-channeling or minimal responses, for instance, women signal the fact that they are listening and show more signs of interest and attention than men do (Maltz
As for men's conversational interaction, Tannen (1990) states that conversation is one of the opportunities for men to present themselves for the purpose of building their stable status in society. Therefore, men perceive competition and discord in conversation as a method to show intimacy with their conversation partner. These differences of conversational interaction result in the common interpretation that women are more cooperative than men while men are more dominant in conversation.

In the area of Japanese language, Ehara, Yoshii and Yamasaki (1984), who examined conversational interaction between men and women, corroborate the 'dominance' approach. They investigated the cross-sex conversation of Japanese in terms of non-verbal expressions such as aizuchi (backchannel expressions: Maynard 1989), nodding, silence and interruption. The participants in their study were 32 university students from Ochanomizu University, Waseda University and Tokyo University in Tokyo. Their study found that Japanese men are not cooperative in maintaining a conversation through supportive non-verbal expressions. Their failure to use such expressions often caused silence in conversation. They also reported that men interrupt more than women and take a leading role in conversation. Finally they reveal from these remarks that men are empowered in conversation as well as in society. We may, therefore, conclude that their study reinforces the traditional view on conversation: cross-culturally women are more cooperative whereas men are more assertive (e.g. Cameron 1985; Fishman 1978; Tannen 1990). However, this traditional view on cross-sex conversation has also been criticized for its limitations in explaining the actual complex cross-sex interaction. The next section introduces one of the studies, Uchida's (1993), that criticizes the traditional view: women are more cooperative than men.
2.4.4 Uchida’s study – Do women always take a supportive role in conversation?

Uchida’s recent study (1993) questions the general agreement that “women always takes a supportive role in conversation” (Fishman 1978:425). She examines cross-sex communication among unacquainted persons, emphasizing the influence of social relationship on the choice of speech style. The participants were 40 Japanese university students (20 male and 20 female students) who had met for the first time. For her analysis, Uchida, based on previous studies, categorized discourse functions into two categories according to gendered features: (1) The Problem-solving function, and (2) The Conversation-maintaining function. According to Uchida, (1) The Problem-solving function is considered to be practiced primarily by men and (2) The Conversation-maintaining function by women. In addition, Uchida also examined various linguistic forms that a number of studies have pointed out as features showing gender differences (listed in the following page). Uchida counted the frequencies of each linguistic form per 10 minutes and analyzed each features as well as its discourse function. Figure 1 shows the categories for the discourse analysis employed by Uchida.
Figure 1. Categories for Discourse Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Function</th>
<th>(1) Problem-Solving Functions</th>
<th>(2) Conversation-Maintaining Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interruption</td>
<td>Aizuchi (Backchanneling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overlapping</td>
<td>Counterargument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counterargument (Absolute &amp; Receptive)</td>
<td>(Sympathy, Confirmation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ignorance (Intentional Ignorance)</td>
<td>Silence-Repairing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic-Raising (Topic-Changing &amp; Topic-Developing)</td>
<td>Supportive Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question-Raising</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra Remarks for Agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introductory Remarks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 indicates the linguistic forms Uchida observed in order to find gender differences in speech manners.

Figure 2. Linguistic Forms for Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Honorifics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Polite Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sentence-Final Expressions to Avoid Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tag Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fillers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exaggerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mimetic Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exclamations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inversions, Postpositions &amp; Additions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pronouns (First &amp; Second Pronouns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sentence-Final Particles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results demonstrate that the male subjects take the role of repairing silence more often than women, a finding that contradicts the conclusions of previous studies (e.g. Cameron 1985; Fishman 1978; Maltz and Borker 1982; Tannen 1990). Also, some of the male subjects tend to take a conversation-maintaining role, usually considered a female role (e.g. Tannen 1990); conversely, other female subjects appear to lead the conversation more affirmatively, which is often understood as a masculine role in conversation. Uchida concludes that the choice of speech style is influenced by a speaker's psychological distance from the hearer determined on the basis of social relations such as hearer's age, appearance, character, and status.

We can see that the classification "Japanese women's language," as well as the two theoretical explanations characterized as the 'dominance' approach and the 'difference' approach, is overly simplistic in accounting for the varied speech styles of Japanese women. Okamoto & Sato (1992), Okamoto (1995, 1996, 1997) and Uchida (1993) show that the use of 'gendered' linguistic features is not necessarily associated with sex or femininity/masculinity. That is, gender is not an independent variable that explains particular linguistic features but just one of many categories that influence an individual speech style; rather speech style is derived from a linguistic ideology that reflects a speaker's consideration of the social aspects of context in his or her identity and relationship to others. Finally we should consider the entire context of interaction and the individual conversational style based on various aspects of the context such as the degree of formality, atmosphere, topic, interlocutors' age, status, sex and ethnicity.
2.5 \textbf{Femininity in Japanese}

Section 2.4 demonstrated that 'femininity' in Japanese language does not mean the quality of being polite, gentle, soft-spoken, non-assertive and empathetic as argued in various previous studies (e.g. Ide, 1979). In this section, I will introduce studies that investigate Japanese language and gender in relation to one's linguistic ideology and traditional female speech expectations.

Section 2.5.1 introduces Matsumoto's study (1996) investigating the motivation of young Japanese women's use of masculine forms. Section 2.5.2 examines studies on the speech style of young Japanese women that seek to investigate the relation between their speech style and other social identities such as age and profession.

2.5.1 \textbf{The New 'Femininity' - Cuteness}

This section examines Matsumoto's (1996) study on Japanese women's speech style in the media. To reveal the motivations for and effects of the use of masculine forms among women, Matsumoto examines feminine and non-feminine forms, principally sentence-final particles, from expressions used in TV advertisements and four popularly-read women's magazines aimed at audiences from different age groups. She analyzes the linguistic behavior of a housewife in a TV commercial who talks to her husband off-screen. Matsumoto notes that the housewife employs some conventionally explicit non-feminine or childlike forms. Matsumoto (1996: 460) explains that the intent of the housewife's adoption of non-feminine or childlike forms is "to make the speech not defeminized, but cute" (p.460).
Example (4) shows non-feminine forms used in the TV commercial. *Sugu*, ‘readily or always’, is lengthened and the consonant [s] is replaced by [ʃ] “both of which are characteristic of children’s speech” (Matsumoto 1996:461). Also, the repeated expression, *tyotto dake, tyotto dake* ‘just a little one, just a little one’ in asking her husband for kisses reminds us of a child’s persistent demand for something. Thus, linguistic behavior associated with children’s speech makes the wife look immature and childlike in the scene. Matsumoto (1996:461) states that the wife’s childlike portrayal in the scene, with the non-use of traditional feminine forms, “reflects the fact that normative (feudalistic) ideology associated with traditional womanhood is viewed as a characteristic of a properly socialized adult.” Further, she indicates that “the housewife,” through the non-use of feminine forms, “avoids the subservient aspect of the normative ideology, but also creates an effect of immaturity,” which is also one aspect of Japanese women’s resistance to the traditional feudalistic ideology.

Matsumoto’s views have much in common with Okamoto’s, in that they both argue that women’s adoption of masculine forms and child-like speech style conveys resistance to the dominant linguistic ideology and normative concept of femininity. She also suggests that the child-like speech style of the Japanese adult woman seen in this popular TV commercial may represent a new stereotype of femininity: ‘childlike cuteness’ may be replacing the Confucian
ideology of traditional femininity with the use of non-feminine forms.

As Matsumoto shows, we are able to interpret the linguistic neutralization of young Japanese women as their attempt to create a particular effect of 'cuteness' to express their sex identity.

2.5.2 What affects the speech style of young Japanese women?

In order to determine whether the neutralization of speech style is universal among Japanese women, this section will examine studies of the variation in the speech style of Japanese women according to other social identities such as age and profession.

Research on the speech style of young Japanese women often suggests that the neutralization of Japanese women's language results from the improvement in their social status (Yonekawa 1994). Yoshioka (1994) states that the recent rapid social changes in Japan concerning women's social status and attitudes toward traditional gender roles associated with "Confucian" doctrine (men being superior and women inferior) has influenced peoples' perception of reality and behavior. Further, "social changes during the post-war era have had an incalculable impact on women's perceptions of reality" (Reynolds, 1990:129), and are reflected in the speech of Japanese women.

From this viewpoint, the neutralization of Japanese women's language is often described as a resistance to traditional linguistic norms that emphasize speaking onna-rashiku (as expected of women) (cf. Endo, 1994; Okamoto, 1995, 1996; Yoshioka, 1994; Yonekawa, 1994). Also, the adoption by young Japanese women of conventionally masculine forms indicates "a rejection of the traditional Confucianistic conception of femininity that is associated with subordinate and
deferential attitudes” (Matsumoto, 1996: 456).

The studies by Kobayashi and her colleagues (1993) and Okamoto and Sato (1992) reveal that the neutralization of Japanese women’s speech style is occurring more among the younger generations than older ones. Kobayashi (1993) and her colleagues conducted a self-report survey and analysis of conversations among different generations. A total of 7 Japanese women participated as subjects: 2 university students, their mothers and grandmothers and one great-grandmother of one of the students. Her analysis reveals that older speakers (grandmothers and mothers) use more feminine expressions (i.e., sentence-final forms wa, yo, no, indirect expressions, honorifics) than do the younger generations. As well, Okamoto and Sato (1992) examined the speech style of three age groups—students aged 18-23, homemakers aged 27-34, and professionals aged 45-57—in order to find age differences in female speech. Their findings also demonstrate that the younger age group employs fewer feminine forms and more masculine forms than the older age group.

However, this brings us to the second question: whether status also affects linguistic behavior. For instance, university students are at the age stage where they expand their knowledge and experience through different new environments such as their life on campus, part-time jobs and a larger circle of acquaintances. They are more open-minded and freer from social norms than professionals, something which should have an effect on their linguistic behavior. Also, it is obvious that professional women have a broader social network than housewives do, and that they have access to more non-traditional domains in their daily life. The professional women have to adjust their linguistic behavior in their non-traditional domain. That is, it is not only age but also conditions such as marital status and occupation that must be
examined.

Turning to the point about the relationship between age and speech style, Okamoto (1996) and Matsumoto (1996) demonstrate the same tendency: older women use feminine linguistic features more than younger women do. In Matsumoto’s study on women's speech style in magazines, she determines that sentence-final particles and expressions that are conventionally considered masculine are used more in magazines for a young age group than in those for higher age groups. Also, the magazines aimed at higher age groups employ relatively formal registers. From the studies discussed above, we can conclude that this neutralization is occurring more in the speech of younger generations than that of older ones.

The generational difference raises a question: is it because of a generation gap, or will Japanese women in young generations lose their neutralized speech style as they age? Most studies on the speech style of young Japanese women reinforce the common view that as they age they will change their speech style in public to linguistically acknowledge the social relationships among people (e.g. Kobayashi, 1993; Okamoto and Sato, 1992; Yonekawa, 1994; Yoshioka, 1994). For instance, the subjects in Okamoto and Sato (1992:487) agree that, “young women change their speech style once they graduate from college and start working.” The findings also demonstrate that “marital status may also affect a woman’s choice of gendered speech” (Okamoto and Sato, 1992:487). The subjects in Kobayashi (1993) evince a similar view: they would change their speech style according to the change in relationship that results from marriage or occupation, and they might be expected to adopt a ‘feminine speech style’ in public contexts in the future.
In the preceding section, I pointed out that 'Japanese women's language' is too simplistic a definition to explain actual diverse speech styles. In other words, 'feminine speech style' in Japanese is a culturally constructed norm: it conveys a Japanese social ideology intended to make the speech style sound 'feminine.' A subject in Kobayashi's study (1993) mentions that if she bears a daughter in the future she may feel like training her to adopt feminine speech style. What the subject's statement makes clear is that Japanese ideology has an influence even on young Japanese women's consideration of their speech style and is likely to be carried over through successive generations. Thus, Japanese women become more obliged to acknowledge traditional female speech expectations according to social relationships as they age.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the major studies on gender and language. Section 2.1 introduced the major findings on linguistic gender differences from previous studies. In Section 2.2, I examined the two predominant theoretical frameworks – the 'dominance' and 'difference' approaches which are proposed to explain the linguistic gender differences introduced in Section 2.1. Section 2.3 pointed out the limitations of both the 'dominance' and 'difference' approaches and introduced a new perspective on studies of gender and language, "looking at gender in context." Section 2.4 reviewed research specifically on Japanese language in three studies (Okamoto, 1995, 1996, 1997; Okamoto & Sato, 1992; Uchida, 1993). This section demonstrated that 'femininity' in Japanese cannot necessarily be associated with such characteristics as being polite, soft-spoken, non-assertive and empathetic. It also emphasized the importance of treating gender not as an independent variable but as one of several aspects of
social identity such as age, status, ethnicity, etc. In Section 2.5.1, I investigated a new type of femininity in Japanese, ‘cuteness,’ as demonstrated by Matsumoto (1996). Then in Section 2.5.2, I examined factors that can affect the speech style of young Japanese women and proposed that Japanese women are more pressured to linguistically acknowledge the traditional female speech style as they age.

The next chapter will introduce the organization of this study and the research methodology I will employ.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Based on the review of previous studies in Chapter Two, I propose the following research questions:

(1) How do young Japanese women interact in conversation with intimate interlocutors, in this case, their boyfriends? To what extent do women conform to the traditional view that women are actively engaged in supportive work during conversation?

(2) How, and to what extent, do young Japanese women exhibit the stereotypes of a strict gendered language in their conversations with their boyfriends?

(3) How do young Japanese women express their sex identity in conversation with their boyfriends?

In order to answer these questions, I analyze actual conversational data from couples in romantic relationships referring to the questionnaire data in Chapter four. The following sections describe the participants in this research and the procedure for data analysis.

3.1 Participants

The participants for this research consisted of four Japanese couples in romantic relationships. To recruit participants, I asked my friends in Vancouver as well as in Japan to inform their friends about this research. Also, three of the female participants: Hanako, Kimiko and Rin, are my friends; the other one, Miki, was recruited by a friend of mine in Vancouver.
Each of the female participants was asked to bring her boyfriend into this research. A total of 8 people volunteered to participate in this research. The following criteria were used in selecting the women: (1) they were between the ages of 18 and 25, and (2) they commonly used the standard Japanese language with their boyfriends. The second criterion was set because sentence-final particles vary according to dialect. Figure 3 summarizes the details of the participants in this research, while the next section briefly introduces background information on each respective couple.

3.1.1 Backgrounds of each couple

This section introduces the each couple respectively and focuses on female participants in terms of their backgrounds and language training if any from their family.

Couple 1. Hanako & Gonta

The conversation was a mini-disc recorded for approximately sixty minutes in October 2001. It was recorded at Hanako and Gonta’s house at around midnight. To start a conversation, the topic they chose was “diet.” Topics varied from music, e-mail and the Internet to part-time jobs and trips, according to time in order of appearance.

Hanako, 20 years old, was born and raised in a city in Yamagata prefecture, in the Tohoku area, the north part of Japan. She spent all her life in Yamagata prefecture until she

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1 Yamagata Prefecture is located in the Tohoku area, the north part of Japan where different kinds of dialect are spoken. According to Hanako (private talk in Dec. 2001), she is from the area where people do not speak their dialect with a strong accent compared to people in other areas. In her family, also, she thinks that the speech style of her family members does not show such strong characteristics of their own dialect as compared to that of others. Both Gonta and Hanako reported that Hanako can handle both standard Japanese language and her own dialect and they usually speak standard Japanese language with each other. Also, there were no strong features of her dialect found in the actual data.
Figure 3. Backgrounds of the Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couple Number</th>
<th>Name ²</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Birth Place</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hanako</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Yamagata</td>
<td>Hanako is an ESL student in Vancouver and has been here for 8 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gonta</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Kanagawa</td>
<td>Gonta is on a working holiday in Vancouver and has been here for 11 months. He is unemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Miki</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Saitama</td>
<td>She is a college student in Vancouver. After she graduated high school, she came to Vancouver to study English and has lived here for around 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fukumatsu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Aomori</td>
<td>He came to Vancouver to learn architecture after he worked as a carpenter for 5 years in Aomori. He has lived in Vancouver for 2 years. He is currently unemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kimiko</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ibaragi</td>
<td>Kimiko is a 4²nd year university student in Tokyo. She works at a restaurant where Isao works on a part-time basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Isao</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ibaragi</td>
<td>Isao is a 3²nd year university student in Tokyo. He works at a restaurant as a cook on a part-time basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rin</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Since Rin graduated university, she has worked at a law office in Tokyo for 2 years and a half.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keita</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Since Keita graduated university, he has worked at a computer company in Tokyo for 2 years and a half.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Pseudonyms are used.
came to Vancouver. According to Hanako, she has not had much training, advice or warning about her speech behavior from her family since her childhood. She met Gonta, a 19-year-old from Kanagawa prefecture, at an English language school in June 2001 in Vancouver. They had been dating for approximately four months and living together for 1 month at the time the conversation was recorded. Hanako is an ESL student and goes to school three days a week from 10 am to 2 pm while Gonta is unemployed and stays home most days. Both Hanako and Gonta said they spend most their time together except while Hanako is at school.

Couple 2. Miki & Fukumatsu

The conversation was a mini-disc recorded for approximately sixty minutes in February 2002. It was recorded in a car on the way to their friends’ house and the way back home. They talked about different things such as their common friends, computers, Miki’s school life, outdoor activity, food, and their families, etc (in order of appearance).

Miki, 22 years old, is a computer college student in Vancouver. She was born and grew up in a city in Saitama prefecture, north of Tokyo, in the Kanto area. She went to junior and senior high school in Tokyo. When she was at high school, she stayed in New Zealand for three months with a home-stay family to study English. Starting with her experience in New Zealand, she determined to study abroad after graduating high school. She reported in the questionnaire that her parents were very strict about her speech behavior, especially her choice of words: they scolded her if she used such vulgar or masculine expressions as chou ‘very’; or mukatsuku ‘annoying.’ Also, when she spoke very fast, she was usually scolded by her parents.
She had lived in Vancouver for two years and a half at the time the conversation was recorded. Approximately one year ago, Miki and Fukumatsu started to live together as roommates and one month later, they started to date. Like Hanako and Gonta, Miki and Fukumatsu reported that they spent most of their time together except while Miki is at school for four hours a day.

**Couple 3. Kimiko & Isao**

The conversation was a mini-disc recorded for approximately sixty minutes in June 2001. It was recorded at Isao’s room when Kimiko and Isao were watching a TV program. They talked about various things such as the TV program, TV stars, school, trips, and part-time jobs in order of appearance.

Kimiko, 22 years old, was born and grew up in Ibaragi prefecture, located in the northeast part of the Kanto area. She goes to a university in Tokyo. Similarly to Miki in Couple 2, Kimiko’s parents were strict about her speech behavior: she was usually scolded by her parents when she spoke like a man or when she used such vulgar expressions as *fuzakenma* ‘Don’t make fun of me’; or *baka* ‘stupid.’ Her boyfriend, Isao is the same age as Kimiko and also from Ibaragi prefecture. He goes to a university of physical education in Tokyo. Although they have known each other since high school, they started dating after they graduated from high school. Kimiko and Isao had been together for around three years at the time the conversation was recorded. They worked at the same Japanese restaurant for their part-time jobs. Both Kimiko and Isao reported that they met each other at work as well as in private almost every day.
Couple 4. Rin & Keita

The conversation was tape-recorded for sixty minutes in July 2001. It was recorded when Rin and Keita had dinner together at a restaurant in Tokyo. At the beginning, they ordered their dishes and then started talking while they waited for their dishes to come. The first dish came in fifteen minutes after they started recording the conversation. After that, they were talking to each other while eating. At first, they started talking about their plan to take a summer trip and then moved on to such topics as food, professors and web-site design and construction (in order of appearance).

Rin was born and raised in Tokyo. After graduating public elementary school, she went to a private girl's junior and senior high school. Of the female participants in this research, Rin is probably the most conscious about her speech behavior because of her mother who always tells Rin to be very careful about her speech style regarding such aspects as tone, choice of words, way of speaking, politeness, and intonation. For instance, she is often told by her mother to speak in a charming way, not to irritate others by her tone of voice or intonation, not to lengthen the end of a sentence, to use not 'un' but 'hai'\(^3\) to her family, etc. (Rin's comments in the Questionnaire). According to Rin, her mother even instructs Rin how to pick up a phone: how to greet the person calling; how to take a message with the appropriate tone of voice, speaking speed and politeness.

Rin is 25 years old, as is her boyfriend, Keita, who lives in a neighboring city. They went to the same university. They had been dating for six years at the time the conversation was recorded. After graduating from university, Rin had worked as a secretary at an international

\(^3\) Un, like 'yeah' in English is a more casual or colloquial form of hai 'yes'.
law office for two and a half years, while Keita had worked at a computer company in Tokyo for two years and a half as well. She calls her work place ‘a place to learn rules of etiquette’ where she leaned proper manners in every respect and especially how to socialize with seniors at her work place. The couple reported that they went out on a date at least two or three times a week.

3.2 Procedure for Data Collection

This research employs two procedures: (1) a questionnaire, and (2) the conversation sessions. The following sections describe the (1) questionnaire and (2) conversation sessions, respectively.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire in Japanese was distributed to the participants prior to the conversation sessions. The questionnaire had three parts. The first part asked questions on the background information of each couple. The second part asked questions regarding individual conversational style; e.g., what they are concerned about in their conversational style when talking to people; and finally, the third part asked questions regarding the participants’ views and opinions on ‘feminine’ speech style. The second part of the questionnaire focused mainly on detailed questions on occasions or situations that affect their speech style according to whom they talk to. The third part relates to how both male and female subjects define ‘feminine’ speech style, and whether the female subjects adopt a ‘feminine’ speech style. The third part is then followed by questions for determining in detail on what occasions or in what situations the female subjects adopt a ‘feminine’ speech style. The last question asks for the subjects’ overall
evaluation regarding 'feminine' speech styles; and whether they prefer 'feminine' speech style. In order to better understand and review the subjects' conversational styles, the subjects were asked to write comments on their own speech or their partner’s speech in the conversation after they recorded their conversation.

3.2.2 Conversational session

The data was collected by either tape-recording or mini-disc recording spontaneous and natural conversations between the couples. A total of four conversations were recorded, approximately sixty minutes in length each. With the participants’ consent, they were asked to tape-record or mini-disc record, according to their preference, their conversation at a specific location. There was no pre-selected topic; the participants were free to talk about matters of their own choosing.

Since this research focuses on women’s verbal behavior -- how the participants speak in conversation with their boyfriends and what affects their speech style--, videotaping was avoided to reduce negative effects on their verbal performances. Moreover, the researcher was not present at the conversations in order to facilitate as natural a dialogue as possible.

3.3 Procedures for Data Analysis

After the recordings were completed, the data of each conversation session was transcribed by the researcher. The initial three minutes of each conversation were excluded from the data in order to account for the initial self-conscious reactions because of the recording.
For analysis, this research employs the framework of Uchida's study (1993) on cross-sex communication among unacquainted persons (See Chapter 2.4.4). Following Uchida's framework, I will analyze the Japanese couples' conversations in terms of (A) interruption from 'The problem-solving functions'; (B) aizuchi and (C) supportive questions from 'The conversation-maintaining functions'. Also, in order to investigate how and to what extent young Japanese women exhibit the traditional women's features of speech style, I will look closely into (D) sentence-final forms. Then I will count the frequencies per 10 minutes of occurrence of the linguistic form as well as the other categories chosen for discourse analysis. The following will give definitions and examples of each category employed in this research. All the example data is from the actual conversations of each participant for this research.

3.3.1 Problem-Solving Function

(A) Interruption: Interruption refers to a form that intrudes into a speaker's turn space (Greenwood, 1996). An example of interruption is as follows. All the examples below are from the actual conversation of the participants in this research.

(1) Context: Two people are talking about the internet service their friend, Tetsu, has lent them.

1. A: Ichijikan jūgo doru dakara ne, (...) yasui mon desu.
   1 hour 15 dollars so P cheap NOM BE
   "It is only 15 dollars for an hour, it is cheap."

→ 2. B: [Demo kore shitte kara, But this know since
   "But since I found this out,"]
3. Tetsu ga sa:: America itta toki ni sa::;
   “when Tetsu went to America,”

4. Watashi kanari tsukaimakutteta yone::;
   “I kept using (the Internet) very much, didn’t I?”

   yeah
   “Yeah.”

6. B: Kono jikan igai ni::,
   “Except this time (over the limit Tetsu gave),”

   yeah
   “Yeah.”

8. B: Dakara sa::, (...) chōka ryōkin,
   “So (I wonder what the) extra charge (comes to)-

→ 9. A: [Kekkyoku demo sa::, sonna no
   “After all, I don’t care about that (extra charge),”

10. ii n da kedo sa:: tsukatteta n da yone.
    “but we used the internet very much anyway.”

3.3.2 Conversation-Maintaining Function

(B) *Aizuchi:* *Aizuchi* are defined as “back-channel expressions,” verbal or non-verbal expressions that signal to the speaker that the receiver is following what they are saying (Cook, 1992). Maynard (1989) defines “back-channel expressions” as “occurrences of behavior where an interlocutor who assumes a listener’s role sends short messages during the other’s speaking
Therefore, examples of verbal aizuchi are such expressions as aa ("uh-huh"), ee ("yes"), un ("yeah"), hee, sorede ("oh, and then?") and só desu ne ("it is, isn’t it"). According to Ehara, Yoshii and Yamasaki (1983), aizuchi fulfill a supportive function, helping to maintain and develop a conversation.

(2) Context: Two people are talking about the rate for the Internet.

1. A: *Kore sugoi yone::, tsukaihōdai deshō?* 
   This great P use as much as you like TAG
   "This is great, you can use it (the Internet) as much as you like, can’t you?"

2. B: *Un.*
   yeah
   "Yeah.”

3. A: *Shikamo museigen da yo.*
   Besides limitless BE P
   "Besides, it’s limitless.”

4. B: *120 doru gurai? Demo museigen tte ittemo sa::,*
   120 dollars around but limitless QT say P
   “It comes to around $120? Though it is limitless,”

5. A: *Un.*
   yeah
   "Yeah.”

6. B: *Jissai kore da:, tte sa::,*
   In fact this BE QT P
   "it actually,”

7. A: *Un.*
   yeah
   "Yeah.”

8. B: *Sonna kakatte nai jan.*
   That much cost NEG TAG
   "doesn’t cost that much, does it?”.
yeah
“Yeah.”

10. B: 12 doru gurai?
12 dollars around
“It comes to around 12 dollars?”

yeah
“Yeah.”

In this example, A does not take the speaking turn or show any agreement or disagreement, but just indicates that A is following what B has said.

(C) Supportive Questions: Supportive questions refer to questions that are produced to show the listeners’ positive engagement in a conversation by means of clarifying the previous statements and asking more questions about the topic the interlocutors are currently engaged in. It is considered to be a supportive function in a conversation since listeners can show their interest in the statements. The following example demonstrates supportive questions.

(3) Context: Two people are talking about a woman who is a friend of a superstar.

1. A: Saikin mi-nai na. Toshishita?
   recently see NEG P younger
   “I have not seen her recently. (Is she) younger (than us)?”

2. B: Iya, tame da yo. Tame.
   no same age BE P same age
   “No, (she is) in the same age (as us).”

3. A: Onaji gakunen na no?
   same year BE NOM
   “(Is she) in the same year?”
   same year same class is taking
   "(She is) in the same year. (And she is) taking the same courses."

5. Hotondo onaji jyugyō da yo, atashi.
   most same class BE P I
   "I am taking most of the classes (with her)."

6. A: Ima wa awa-nai no?
   Now TOP see-NEG NOM
   "Haven’t you seen her?"

7. B: Sono dare::?
   FIL who
   "Who (are you talking about)?"

8. A: Datte hotondo onaji kurasu na n deshō?
   Because most same class BE NOM TAG
   "Because you are taking most of the classes with her, aren’t you?"

   yeah
   "Yeah."

10. A: Ima wa mō chigau no?
    now TOP anymore different NOM
    "Aren’t you taking the same classes anymore?"

11. B: Nani ga? Dōiu imi?
    What SUB What mean
    "What? What do you mean?"

12. A: Sono hito to awa-nai no?
    That person P see-NEG NOM
    "Haven’t you seen her?"

    see P so today also met P
    "I see her. I saw her also today."
In this example, although A fails to make himself understood with B, A tries to clarify B’s statement and positively engages in developing the current topic. Observe lines 6 and 10 where B shows neglect for A’s questions.

3.3.3 Linguistic Forms

(D) Sentence-Final Particles: Following Uchida (1993), this research also deals with the following sentence-final particles:  ze; yona; jan; yo; sa; no; na; ne; yone; wa and kashira. Each sentence-final particle is classified as feminine, masculine or neutral, as shown in the following chart. The classification is based mainly on previous studies (e.g., McGloin 1991; Mizutani & Mizutani 1987; Shibamoto 1985; Okamoto 1995; Okamoto & Sato 1992).

Feminine forms

a. The particle yo attached after a noun or na-adjective (Strongly feminine)
   Pāti wa  ashita  yo.
   party TOP tomorrow
   “The party is tomorrow, I can tell you”.

b. The particle no after a noun or na-adjective in a statement (Strongly feminine)
   Pāti wa  ashita  na  no.
   party TOP tomorrow
   “The party is tomorrow, I can tell you”.

c. The particle no followed by ne, yo, yo ne (Strongly feminine)
   Pāti wa  ashita  na  no  ne.
   party TOP tomorrow
   “The party is tomorrow, isn’t it?”

   Pāti wa  ashita  na  no  yo.
   party TOP tomorrow
   “The party is tomorrow, I can tell you”.

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Pâti wa ashita na no yo ne.
party TOP tomorrow
“The party is tomorrow, right?”

d. The particle no after a plain form of a verb or i-adjective in a statement
Pâti e iku no.
party to go
“I am going to the party, I can tell you”.

e. The particle ne after a noun or adjective
Pâti wa ashita ne.
party TOP tomorrow
“The party is tomorrow, isn’t it?”

f. The particle ne after te-form of verbs of requesting
Kore tabete ne.
this eat
“Please eat this”.

g. The particle wa for mild emphasis or its variants (wa ne, wa yo, wa yo ne) (Strongly feminine)
Ashita pâti ni iku wa.
tomorrow party to go
“I am going to the party tomorrow, I can tell you”.

h. The particle kashira ‘I wonder’ (Strongly feminine)
Pâti wa ashita kashira.
party TOP tomorrow
“(I) wonder if the party is tomorrow”.

Masculine forms

a. The particle ze for assertion (Strongly masculine)
Iku ze.
go
“I am going, I can tell you”.

b. The form yo na for seeking agreement (Strongly masculine)
Ashita iku yo na.
tomorrow go
“You are going tomorrow, aren’t you?”
c. The particle yo preceded by the plain imperative form of a verb
   (Strongly masculine)
   Ikeyo.
   go
   “Go, I am telling you”.

d. The particle yo attached after the plain form of a verb or i-adjective
   Iku yo.
   go
   “I am going, I can tell you”.

e. The particle yo preceded by the auxiliary da
   Ashita pāti da yo.
   tomorrow party
   “The party is tomorrow, I can tell you”.

f. The form yo ne preceded by the auxiliary da
   Ashita pāti da yo ne.
   tomorrow party
   “The party is tomorrow, right?”

g. The particle ne preceded by the auxiliary da
   Ashita pāti da ne.
   tomorrow party
   “The party is tomorrow, isn’t it?”

h. The particle na for a negative command (Strongly masculine)
   Iku na.
   go
   “Don’t go, I am telling you”.

i. The particle na for eliciting agreement
   Atsui na.
   hot
   “It is hot, isn’t it?”

Neutral forms

a. The negative auxiliary jan (a contracted form of ja nai) for mild assertion or
   seeking agreement.
   Pāti wa ashita jan.
   party TOP tomorrow
   “The party is tomorrow, isn’t it?”
b. The particle *sa* following by such conjunctions as *kara, kedo, si, to* etc.

Ashita pāti iku kara sa, ie ni inai yo.
“Because I am going to the party tomorrow, I won’t be at home”.

c. The particle *na* preceded by *ka* ‘I wonder’

Pāti wa ashita kana.
“(I) wonder if the party is tomorrow”.

d. The exclamatory particle *nāa*

li nā.
“nice"
“How nice!”

e. The particle *ne* after the plain form of verb or *i*-adjective

Ashita pāti iku ne.
“I am going to the party now, I can tell you”.

Atsui ne.
“hot"
“It is hot, isn’t it?”

f. The form *yo ne* for seeking agreement

Pāti wa ashita yo ne.
“The party is tomorrow, isn’t it?”

The next chapter attempts to analyze the conversational data referring to the results of the Questionnaires.
Chapter Four

Analysis of Conversational Data

This chapter analyzes the conversational data in order to answer the research questions presented in Chapter 3. In particular, it will analyze the conversations of young Japanese couples in romantic relationships in terms of the following three points: (A) interruption; (B) aizuchi and (C) supportive questions. Then, as a linguistic form, the data will also deal with (D) sentence-final forms. To analyze, I will count each item's frequency in every 10-minute period and provide the average. Then I will discuss particular characteristics of the data.

4.1 Problem-Solving Function - Interruption

4.1.1 Discussion

Two major findings were obtained in the results of interruption. First, the result demonstrates that male participants caused more interruptions than their female counterparts which agrees with the findings of previous studies (e.g. Fishman, 1978; Zimmerman and West, 1975; West and Zimmerman, 1983). However, the interruptions observed in the data are mostly rapport-type interruptions that display the interlocutors' positive attitudes to participate in conversation. This section discusses details of each finding.
4.1.2 Interruption

Table 1 below represents the average frequencies per 10-minute period of the occurrence of interruption. The results are shown in percentage and average frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Female Participants</th>
<th>Male Participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>38.76% (14)</td>
<td>61.24% (22)</td>
<td>100.00% (36.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The square with thick black borders shows the majority.

The table above indicates that male participants caused more interruptions than female participants did. This result corresponds with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Zimmerman and West, 1975; West and Zimmerman, 1983). Table 2 below shows each couple’s average frequency of occurrence of interruption per 10 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couple No.</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Female Participant</th>
<th>Male Participant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Hanako &amp; Gonta)</td>
<td>73.33% (5.5)</td>
<td>26.67% (2)</td>
<td>100.00% (7.5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Miki &amp; Fukumatsu)</td>
<td>43.55% (2.5)</td>
<td>56.45% (2.8)</td>
<td>100.00% (5.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Kimiko &amp; Isao)</td>
<td>17.35% (2.4)</td>
<td>82.65% (11.6)</td>
<td>100.00% (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Rin &amp; Keita)</td>
<td>40.43% (3.2)</td>
<td>59.57% (4.6)</td>
<td>100.00% (7.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows that the male participants, except Gonta, caused more interruption than the female participants did. In particular, the ratio of interruption caused by Isao in Couple 3 was relatively significant, at a percentage of 83.5% (12.3 times per 10 minutes) compared to the other male participants. Also, the results of Couple 1 are exceptional: the female participant, Hanako, caused more interruption than the male conversational partner (5.5 times per 10 minutes, 73.3%). Do these findings suggest the power relations within the couples, with the male participants more powerful than the female ones? Or does Hanako, in spite of being female, possibly acquire more power than Gonta in conversation?

In examining interruption in detail, we have found the existence of three types of interruption, as follows. (1) Type 1. Interruption caused by the listeners’ intention to take the speaking turn; (2) Type 2. Interruption caused by the listeners’ too quick response; and (3) Type 3. Interruption caused by the interlocutors’ cooperative attempt to develop conversation. I will now explain each of them in more detail.

The first type of interruption is illustrated in the following example. This interruption occurs when s/he lacks interest in the current topic and takes the speaking turn to change the topic. Previous studies based on the ‘dominance’ approach often cite Type 1 interruption, arguing that this type of interruption is a display of male dominance and power in conversation (e.g., Zimmerman and West, 1975; West and Zimmerman, 1983; Fishman 1973, 1980). As well, we could obtain examples of Type 1 interruption in our data as illustrated in the following.

(4) Couple 1. Hanako & Gonta
Context: They are talking about Internet service while eating soup that Gonta made. Gonta starts talking about ‘cable’ and Hanako asks Gonta what ‘cable’ is.
1. G (Gonta): 『Tsune ni tsunagippanashi tte kēburu mitai da na::』
   always P connect-keep QT cable like BE P
   “Being able to get on line anytime is almost like (the service) by cable, isn’t it?”

2. H (Hanako):
   "Yeah?"

3. G: N?
   yes
   “Yeah?”

4. H: Kēburu?
   cable
   “Cable?”

5. G: Nihon de wa uchi ga tsukatteta intānetto no setsuzoku.
   Japan in TOP my family SUB was using Internet NOM connection
   “It is how my family gets on the Internet.”

6. H: Fu::n.
   uh-huh
   “Uh-huh.”

7. G: Kēburu to keiyaku shitete::;
   cable with contract doing
   “We have a contract with the cable company.”

   yeah
   “Yeah.”

9. G: De, sore intānetto no-,
   and it Internet NOM
   “and (it is) for the Internet service-
       anymore cannot eat give up eat-can-NEG anymore
       “I can’t eat anymore. I give up. I can’t eat anymore.”

       Datte saisho ni süpu tabechatta mo::n. Gomen, Gonta suteru yo.
       because first at soup ate P sorry Gonta throw away P
       “because I first drank soup. I am sorry Gonta, I will throw it away.”
11. **G:** *Betsuni ii yo.*
   particularly good P
   “It is OK.”

12. **H:** *A::, chou onaka ippai.*
   ah very stomach full
   “Ah, I am very full.”

In this example, although Gonta is trying to explain what ‘cable’ is to Hanako and Hanako gives constant *aizuchi* in line 6 and 8, Hanako interrupts Gonta, ignoring Gonta’s explanation about ‘cable’ and tells him how full she is (Line 10). They never go back to the topic of ‘cable’ afterward and Gonta could never finish his explanation about ‘cable’. Hanako caused the interruption because of her lack of both interest in the current topic of conversation and of supportive attitude for Gonta. The interruption caused by interlocutors’ lack of interest is described as “Type 1” in this research.

The second type of interruption is one caused by one’s overly quick response to the previous statement uttered by the other party. Example (5) and (6) demonstrate how overly quick responses cause interruption.

(5) Couple 3. Kimiko & Isao
   **Context:** Kimiko is talking about a popular TV star, Yūki Kohara who is also a student at the university that Kimiko goes to. She saw him on campus one day.

   1. **K** (Kimiko): *Kyō sa::, Kohara Yūki o sa::, mita no ne.*
      today P Kohara Yūki OM P saw NOM P
      “I saw Kohara Yuki today.”

   2. **I** (Isao): *Un.*
      yeah
      “Yeah.”
and then P FIL entirely P no good BE P
“(I found) he was entirely no good.”

4. I: Nande dame na no?
why no good BE NOM
“Why was he no good?”

ugly Kohara Yūki
“Kohara Yūki is ugly.”

6. I: Mosai no?
ugly NOM
“Is he ugly?”

ugly surprise
“He is ugly. I am very surprised.”

In this example, Kimiko causes interruption (Line 5) because of her overly quick answer to Isao’s question about ‘why Kohara Yūki is no good’ in the previous utterance. This interruption illustrates Kimiko’s intention to emphasize how ugly she found the star however popular and seemingly good-looking he is supposed to be. We can see that Kimiko’s interruption shows how disappointed she was to see Kohara Yūki’s true appearance, contrary to her expectations. This point will now be illustrated with a further example.

(6) Couple 3. Kimiko & Isao
Context: They are talking about their common friend, Shōpi, who is originally a friend of Isao. Shōpi goes to a driving school and belongs to a life-guarding club at university.

1. K: Mata sainyūsho shita n desho?
again reenter did NOM TAG
“He reentered (the driving school) again, didn’t he?”
2. I: Un De, hantoshi jan.
   yes and half a year TAG
   "Yes, he did. And he has half a year to go, you know."

   yes why September until blank SUB COP NOM
   "Yes. Why does he have a blank until September?"

   go-NEG because
   "Because he can't go (to the driving school)."

5. K: Dōshite?
   why
   "Why (can't he go to the driving school)?"

6. I: [Isogashikute.
   busy
   "(Because he is) busy."

   busy pretend do NOM COP P Shōpi TOP
   "He pretends to be busy."

8. I: [Umi icchau kara. Zu::tto.
   sea go because all times
   "He always goes to the beach."

9. K: Datte mō yo-nensei tte ika-nai n janai no?
   because anymore 4th years QT go-NEG NOM TAG NOM
   "4th years don't have to go to club activity anymore, do they?"

10. I: Iku n da yo. yo-nensei mo.
    go NOM BE P senior also
    "They do. 4th years also go to club activity."

11. K: Dōshite::?
    why
    "Why?"

12. I: Kankei nai n da yo. Raifuseibā-bu wa natsu ga
    relation NEG NOM BE P life-guarding club TOP summer SUB
    "Their year doesn't matter. (I heard that seniors) in the life-guarding club-
In line 6 of this example, Isao’s overly quick response causes the interruption. However, Isao’s interruption functions differently from Kimiko’s in example (5). As illustrated in line 6 and line 8, Isao’s interruptions are demonstrations of Isao’s attempts to defend his friend, Shōpi. From Isao’s following utterances in line 10 and 12, we can see that Isao attempts to emphasize that his friend, Shōpi, reentered his driving school not because he neglected to finish courses within six months, but because he is very busy with his club activity. Like Kimiko and Isao’s interruptions in example (5) and (6), interruption caused by overly quick responses can be interpreted to have various implications. Thus, both example (5) and (6) illustrate how overly quick responses can cause interruptions. In this research, interruptions caused by overly quick reactions are described as “Type 2”.

The last type of interruption, Type 3, occurs when the interlocutors cooperate with each other to build a sentence (Ehara, Yoshii & Yamasaki, 1984). An example is given below.

(7) Couple 3. Kimiko & Isao

Context: They are watching a TV show. Kimiko tells Isao that anyone can be on the show.

1. K: Kore dereru n da tte yo::.
   this can-be NOM BE QT P
   “(I heard) you can be on this (show).”

5 In a driving school in Japan, people have to finish all the courses within 6 months after starting.
2. I: *Daredemo?*
   anyone
   "Anyone?"

   yeah anyone
   "Yeah. Anyone (can be on the show)."

4. I: *Terebi ni?*
   TV on
   "On TV?"

   TV on
   "On TV."

6. I: *Uso da yo.*
   lie BE P
   "[lit: It's a lie.] No way."

   ah wrong Internet by
   "Oh, I was wrong. By Internet-

→ 8. I: *[Intānetto de terebi ni deren no?]*
   Internet by TV on can-be NOM
   "(Can you) be on the show by Internet?"

   yeah so so
   "Yeah, that's right"

In line 9 where Kimiko agrees with Isao by saying "*Un. Sō sō. (Yes, it is so)∗", we can see that Isao succeeded in correctly filling in the rest of what Kimiko was going to say. Although Isao interrupted Kimiko, taking the speaking turn, she attempts to convey that the message is completed. Here is another example that illustrates the listener's cooperative utterance to build a sentence in order for the speakers' message to be correctly conveyed.
(8) Couple 2. Miki & Fukumatsu

Context: They are talking about the construction of computers, particularly the CPU's fan.

1. M (Miki): CPU no sa::, ue ni kuttsuiteru fan atta jan,
   CPU NOM P top at attached fan COP TAG
   "There is a fan on the top of the CPU, isn't there?"

2. F (Fukumatsu): Un.
   yeah
   "Yeah."

3. M: Kō, senpā ki mitai na no.
   like electric fan like BE NOM
   "It is something like an electric fan."

   yeah
   "Yeah."

5. M: Are no ne::, mōtā ne::, jishaku na no.
   that NOM P motor P magnet BE NOM
   "The motor of the fan is a magnet."

6. F: Fu::n
   OK
   "OK."

7. M: Jishaku de ne::, kō
   magnet by P like
   "By magnet,"

       turn NOM BE
       "It turns!"

9. M::=Sorekoso esu-kyoku to enu-kyoku mitai na no no::,
    the thing S-pole and N-pole like BE NOM NOM
    "A thing like the one with an S pole and an N pole."

    yeah yeah
    "Yeah, yeah"
As well, Fukumatsu could apparently cooperate to build a sentence with Miki. Fukumatsu in line 8 follows Miki by inferring what Miki is going to say and Miki adds more information on “how the fan is turning” in line 9 and 11. Thus, both example (7) and (8) show that the interlocutors work together to have a message conveyed, which helps to create an active flow in conversation and a smoother dialogue. Despite the interruption’s occurrence, the message is successfully conveyed by the interlocutors’ attempt to move the conversation forward. This type of interruption is categorized as “Type 3”.

In summary, we see three types of interruption: (1) Type 1: Interruption which takes the speaking turn; (2) Type 2: Interruption caused by overly quick response, and (3) Type 3: Interruption caused by the interlocutors’ cooperative attempt to build up a sentence and move the conversation forward.

These above interruptions can simultaneously occur in the interaction, showing various functions and implications. The complex sites of interruption are illustrated in the following example.

(9) Couple 4. Rin & Keita
Context: Keita is teaching Rin how to make a homepage on the web and Rin asks him some questions.

1. Rin (Rin): Dō yattara mitakotom-nai yatsu o tsukuru no?
   how do-if have seen-NEG thing OM make P
   “How do you make items that you have not seen before?”
Mitakotonai yatsu o.
have seen-NEG thing OM
“Something you have not seen before.”

2. K (Keita): Mitakoto noai yōna yatsu?
have seen-NEG like thing
“Something you have not seen?”

3. R: Kōi yōgo ni wa nai jan.
these sorts words in TOP NEG TAG
“(You can’t find it) among these sorts of words, can you?”

ah it here and there from FIL have researched P
“Ah, I have already researched (how to make a web-page) (looking at) different homepages.”

Hito no hōmupēji itte-
people NOM Homepage go
“You go to people’s homepage-

➔ 5. R: [Hitono hōmupēji itte, kōi funi shitaina tte.]
people homepage go this like do-want-P QT
“You go to people’s homepage, (and if you find).”

omotta yatsu no::-
thought thing NOM
‘a homepage that you want to (imitate)-

➔ 6. K: [Dōiufuni sekkeishiteru no kana:: tte-
how design NOM wonder QT
“and (you) wonder how it is designed-

➔ 7. R: Sōsu o mite kangaeru.
source OM see think
“You check the source, and think (more about it).”

➔ 8. K: [Sō sō. A::, kono sōsu ka:: tte-
so so huh this source Q QT
“Yes, that’s right. Ah-hah, they use this source,-

➔ 9. R: [De, jibun ga::,
and oneself SUB
“And then, you-

61
10. K: [Kumiawasete mite, combine try to "You combine them,"

11. R: Kumiawaseru? combine "Combine (them)?"

In example (6), a total of 5 interruptions occurred (Line 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10). It is obvious to see both Rin and Keita work together to develop their conversation by filling in the rest of what they are going to say. In line 5, Rin moves the conversation along by completing Keita’s previous utterance. With Keita’s additional supportive remark (Line 6), it is clear to see from line 8 that Keita agrees with Rin that her statement (Line 7) successfully corresponds with his answer to her question: “How do you make an item that you have not seen before”. In line 8 and 10, Keita and Rin interrupt each other, which exhibits their intention to actively participate in conversation. Thus example (9) illustrates the complex cases of interruption in discourse where Type 2 and Type 3 interruptions occur simultaneously to develop a smooth conversation.

Table 3 represents all the interruptions that are categorized into each type previously introduced. They are shown in percentage and frequency of each couple.
Table 3. The Categorized Interruption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Type 1</th>
<th>Type 2</th>
<th>Type 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couple 1. Hanako</td>
<td>39.39% (13)</td>
<td>60.61% (20)</td>
<td>0.00% (0)</td>
<td>100.00% (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 1. Gonta</td>
<td>16.67% (2)</td>
<td>83.33% (10)</td>
<td>0.00% (0)</td>
<td>100.00% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 2. Miki</td>
<td>20.00% (3)</td>
<td>73.33% (11)</td>
<td>6.67% (1)</td>
<td>100.00% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 2. Fukumatsu</td>
<td>11.76% (2)</td>
<td>64.71% (11)</td>
<td>23.53% (4)</td>
<td>100.00% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 3. Kimiko</td>
<td>0.00% (0)</td>
<td>94.12% (16)</td>
<td>5.88% (1)</td>
<td>100.00% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 3. Isao</td>
<td>13.58% (11)</td>
<td>76.54% (62)</td>
<td>9.88% (8)</td>
<td>100.00% (81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 4. Rin</td>
<td>0.00% (0)</td>
<td>94.74% (18)</td>
<td>5.26% (1)</td>
<td>100.00% (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 4. Keita</td>
<td>21.43% (6)</td>
<td>75.00% (21)</td>
<td>3.57% (1)</td>
<td>100.00% (28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 3 indicates, more than 50% of the interruptions of each of the participants are categorized into Type 2 or 3 interruption. As noted in Chapter 2, previous studies (e.g., Zimmerman and West (1975); West and Zimmerman (1983); Fishman (1973, 1980)) looked into the amount of interruption caused by men, arguing that interrupting is the male display of power in conversation. Hence, these studies often cite Type 1 interruption and advance the ‘dominance’ approach. The data in this research, however, shows other types of interruption that do not necessarily yield to the ‘dominance’ approach. Overly quick responses, for example, can be interpreted as a manifestation of the interlocutors’ interest in the topic that they are currently engaged in. Moreover, Type 3 interruption cannot occur without two very important elements. The first is a level of intimacy between the interlocutors. The second vital component is that the two must share a certain amount of common knowledge with one another. In other words, Type 3 illustrates the interlocutors’ intimate relationship and their cooperative desire to develop a smooth conversation. The data revealed that both men and women tend to
use interruptions that are more cooperative and rapport-building. That is to say that, interruptions to dominate and control interactions are used at a much lower frequency. From this viewpoint, contrary to the 'dominance' approach, interruption can be interpreted as a display of the interlocutors' positive attitude to participate in the conversation.

In summary, the data on interruption revealed that although the number of interruptions caused by males is more than that of female participants, both male and female participants use cooperative or rapport-type interruptions which aids in the development of conversation.

4.2 Conversation-Maintaining Functions – Supportive Questions and Aizuchi

4.2.1 Discussion

There are two major findings obtained in the results of supportive questions and aizuchi. First, male participants produced more supportive questions and aizuchi than female participants. This result in the thesis does not agree with the common assumption that women tend to be engaged in supportive work by asking more questions or giving more minimal responses (i.e. aizuchi) to maintain a smooth flow in conversation. Second, participants are aware of their role as listener or speaker in the conversation and use this to make their conversation enjoyable and proceed more smoothly. This section discusses each of the findings in detail referring to the data drawn from the questionnaires.
4.2.2 Supportive Questions and Aizuchi

Tables 4 and 5 below show the average frequencies of supportive questions and aizuchi respectively. The results are shown in percentage and average frequency.

**Table 4. The Average Frequencies of Supportive Questions per 10 minutes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Female Participants</th>
<th>Male Participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38.90% (6.1)</td>
<td>61.10% (9.4)</td>
<td>100% (15.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5. The Average Frequencies of Aizuchi per 10 minutes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Female Participants</th>
<th>Male Participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.85% (5.2)</td>
<td>70.15% (11.5)</td>
<td>100% (16.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The square with thick, black borders shows the majority.

The tables above show that male participants produced more supportive questions (61.10% on 10-minute average) and aizuchi (70.15% on 10-minute average) than their female counterparts, which does not concur with the traditional view of women’s speech style. This view maintains that women tend to ask more questions (e.g. Fishman, 1979) or give aizuchi (e.g. Ide, 1982b) to manage conversation.

Tables 6 and 7 represent the data for each couple of the average frequencies of supportive questions and aizuchi.
Table 6. The Average Frequencies of Supportive Questions per 10 minutes: Each Couple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couple No.</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Female Participants</th>
<th>Male Participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Hanako &amp; Gonta)</td>
<td>45.95 % (5.7)</td>
<td>54.05 % (6.7)</td>
<td>100.00 % (13.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Miki &amp; Fukumatsu)</td>
<td>25.81 % (2.7)</td>
<td>74.19 % (7.7)</td>
<td>100.00 % (10.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Kimiko &amp; Isao)</td>
<td>33.90 % (10.7)</td>
<td>66.10 % (20)</td>
<td>100.00 % (30.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Rin &amp; Keita)</td>
<td>61.54 % (5.3)</td>
<td>38.46 % (3.3)</td>
<td>100.00 % (8.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. The Average Frequencies of Aizuchi per 10 minutes: Each Couple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couple No.</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Female Participants</th>
<th>Male Participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Hanako &amp; Gonta)</td>
<td>24.42 % (3.5)</td>
<td>75.58 % (10.8)</td>
<td>100.00 % (14.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Miki &amp; Fukumatsu)</td>
<td>13.92 % (3.7)</td>
<td>86.08 % (22.7)</td>
<td>100.00 % (26.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Kimiko &amp; Isao)</td>
<td>58.65 % (11.5)</td>
<td>41.35 % (7.2)</td>
<td>100.00 % (18.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Rin &amp; Keita)</td>
<td>29.55 % (2.2)</td>
<td>70.45 % (5.2)</td>
<td>100.00 % (7.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 indicates that male participants, except Keita from Couple 4, provided more supportive questions than female participants. Likewise, as shown in Table 7, male participants, except Isao from Couple 3, give more aizuchi in conversation.

Although the population of participants for this thesis is small and the recording time is relatively short (1 hour for each couple), the above results indicate that male participants are more likely to produce supportive questions and aizuchi than females. Both styles signal that the addressee is following what the speaker is saying and demonstrate the interlocutors' participation and interest in the interaction and the speaker. In summary, the average results of supportive questions and aizuchi deviates from the previous studies which state that women try to use such conversational strategies as question-asking and minimal responses to induce the other party's
utterance and make the conversation move forward.

The next section examines each couple's individual speech behavior, referring to the questionnaire data.

4.2.2.1 Results of Questionnaire Data (1)

In order to examine the relation between the above findings and the participants' individual speech behavior in conversation with their boy/girl friends, this section introduces the questionnaire responses to answer the following two questions.

Q1. Which do you consider yourself, the listener or the main speaker, in usual conversation with your boy/girl friend? Which do you consider your boy/girl friend, the listener or the main speaker, in conversation with you?

Q2. Which of the following speech manners do you think best describes your style when conversing with your boy/girl friend?

a) I want to avoid silence and try to make conversation continue.
b) Regardless of interest in the topic, I try to actively participate in conversation.
c) I pay extra attention to what s/he feels and try not to bore her/him.
d) I am always conscious of expressions because I am concerned with how s/he sees me.
e) In order to make conversation enjoyable, I pretend to agree with what s/he says even when I do not actually agree with her/him.
f) I say whatever I want to say, no matter what.
g) Regardless of her/his interest, I talk about whatever I want to talk about.
h) I want to take a leading role in conversation as much as possible.
i) None of the above

Figure 4 summarizes the answers of each couple.
The above figure indicates that all the female participants consider themselves as main speakers and their boyfriends as listeners. Except for Isao from Couple 3, the male participants also agree with the female participants’ answers. Details are discussed according to each couple as follows.

**Couple 1. Hanako and Gonta**

Both Hanako and Gonta consider Hanako as the main speaker and Gonta as the listener. As for the speech manner in conversation, Gonta answered that he does not pay attention to any particular speech manner. In contrast, Hanako chose the following categories for her answers: (f) I say whatever I want to say no matter what; (g) Regardless of her/his interest, I talk about whatever I want to talk about. Hanako also added in category (i), “I can’t help talking. I just want to talk. There are so many self-assertive people here in Vancouver. I feel stressed because sometimes I miss a chance to talk. I am very happy with Gonta because I can always...
take a speaking turn and talk as much as I like.” It is clear from her comments that she is partial to talking. Also in the actual conversational data, the distinction of conversational roles is very clear: Hanako spoke most of the time whereas Gonta listened to her.

**Couple 2. Miki and Fukumatsu**

Both Miki and Fukumatsu agree that Miki is always a main speaker, and Fukumatsu a listener. Miki answered in Question 2 that she is not particularly concerned with any speech manner in conversation with Fukumatsu, adding in category (i) “I do not care about any speech manner. I just say whatever I feel or comes to mind”. As well, Fukumatsu chose category (g) Regardless of her/his interest, I talk about whatever I want to talk about; and said in category (i), “I just speak without hesitation.” As well as Couple 1, Miki took most speaking turns and kept talking while Fukumatsu listened in the recorded conversation.

**Couple 3. Kimiko and Isao**

Kimiko answered that she takes both roles: speaker and listener, according to the topic and occasion. According to Kimiko, she takes a leading role and becomes self-assertive in conversation whenever she talks while, at the same time, positively listens to him when he talks. Like Miki in Couple 2, Kimiko also reported that she is not concerned with any speech manner, saying, “I talk whenever I want to talk and other times, silence goes on when both of us are tired. I become a main speaker or listener depending on my mood. But I always want to avoid silence

---

6 Since floor-gaining (i.e. the amount of speaking time) is not the focal topic of this thesis, a detailed analysis of floor-gaining by female participants is not presented.
and actively participate in conversation.” On the other hand, Isao considers both Kimiko and himself main speakers in conversation. Other than category (g), Isao is the only one who chose category (d) I am always conscious of expressions because I am concerned with how s/he sees me. In the actual data, however, there is no distinct feature of Isao where he was sensitive to word-choice or hesitated to use certain expressions. Contrary to Couple 1 and 2, the conversational roles of Kimiko and Isao are not so distinctive as those of Couple 1 and 2. As Kimiko commented, in the recorded conversation, the conversational roles of listener or speaker switched back and forth according to topic. This is also the case for Couple 4, which is comprised of Rin and Keita. Their data is shown below.

**Couple 4. Rin and Keita**

Rin’s answers are as follows: “I listen to Keita but I feel like I am very a self-centered person when I am with him. He always tries to make me happy by fulfilling any of my wishes and this is also the case in conversation. I think that most of the time I am the main speaker while he is the listener. (He told me he tends to become the main speaker in conversation with others). I can’t think of any particular speech manner that I pay attention to in conversation with Keita since we have been together for such a long time. The things I am concerned with in general are minimum polite speech manner and consideration to others.” Keita’s answer is consistent with Rin’s for the most part: “If I have to choose either listener or speaker, I guess I am mostly a listener although I become more talkative and self-assertive especially when the topic is more to my taste. I think Rin is usually a listener with other friends, but she talks very much and is relatively self-assertive with me.”
The results of the questionnaire illustrate three main points as follows: (1) conversation style varies according to each couple; (2) all the participants are free from any linguistic restriction: free to choose topic, words, speech style, etc, in conversation with their partners. This point will be discussed further in the next section. Lastly, we found that more women than men regard themselves as the main speaker. This result supports the recent report from research that young Japanese women are becoming more assertive by speaking without hesitation, insisting on their opinions to others, etc (English Discussion Society, 1992; Iwao, 1993, cited in Okamoto, 1995). As noted earlier, it is very obvious to see that especially Hanako from Couple 1 and Miki from Couple 2 talked more throughout the sixty minutes in the actual conversational data. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that the speech manner of the male participants in Couples 1 and 2 reflects their results of supportive questions and aizuchi. Both Gonta and Fukumatsu behave as the listener when talking with their girlfriends and use these techniques for conversation.

The results of Couple 4 concerning supportive questions and aizuchi also seem to exhibit a characteristic of Rin and Keita’s speech manner. Table 8 and Table 9 show Couple 4’s results regarding the occurrence of supportive questions and aizuchi in each 10 minute period.
Table 8. The Frequencies of Supportive Questions in Each 10 minutes: Couple 4. Rin and Keita

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Rin</th>
<th>Keita</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>57.14% (4)</td>
<td>42.86% (3)</td>
<td>100.00% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.67% (6)</td>
<td>33.33% (3)</td>
<td>100.00% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.45% (5)</td>
<td>54.55% (6)</td>
<td>100.00% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57% (2)</td>
<td>71.43% (5)</td>
<td>100.00% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.00% (3)</td>
<td>50.00% (3)</td>
<td>100.00% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>100.00% (12)</strong></td>
<td>0.00% (0)</td>
<td>100.00% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>61.54% (32)</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.46% (20)</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00% (52)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. The Frequencies of Aizuchi in Each 10 minutes: Couple 4. Rin and Keita

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Rin</th>
<th>Keita</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>36.36% (4)</td>
<td>63.64% (7)</td>
<td>100.00% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A (0)</td>
<td>N/A (0)</td>
<td>N/A (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.18% (2)</td>
<td>81.82% (9)</td>
<td>100.00% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.67% (1)</td>
<td>83.33% (5)</td>
<td>100.00% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>100% (2)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>100.00% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.57% (4)</td>
<td><strong>71.43% (10)</strong></td>
<td>100.00% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29.55% (13)</strong></td>
<td><strong>70.45% (31)</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00% (44)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both Table 8 and 9 show Rin asked more supportive questions than Keita whereas Keita provided more aizuchi than Rin. Here, we must especially examine their conversation in the last 10 minutes. As Table 6 indicates, Rin produced 12 supportive questions (Keita, none) in the last 10 minutes, which greatly influences the total percentage. However, this finding is not consistent with the result of aizuchi in the same last 10 minutes as Keita produced more aizuchi than Rin (Keita, 10 times; Rin, 6 times). The reason for her frequent supportive questions is that in the first part of the last 10 minutes, he explains how to make a web page while she keeps...
asking questions about web page making. The below example illustrates one site of the first part of their conversation.

(10) Couple 4. Rin & Keita
Context: Keita is teaching Rin how to make a homepage on the web and Rin asks him some questions.

1. Keita (Keita): Boku no home peiji o miru-to boku ga nani o my NOM homepage OM look-if I SUB what OM “If you check my homepage, you can see-”
   uchiko n da ka ga zenbu detekuru kara. put NOM BE Q SUB all come out because “everything I programmed (on the page)”.

2. R (Rin): Sore wa yeiindsu dekiru no? it TOP paste can NOM “Can you paste it?”


4. R: Jibun ga tsukuru toki ni kopī shite haritsukeru ka. yourself SUB make when at copy do paste Q “(I am asking) if you can paste it when you make (a homepage)”.

5. K: [A::, wakugumi dake. Mannaka wa jibun de ah frame only middle TOP yourself by “Ah-huh, only the frame. You have to program-”
   uchikomanaito ikenai. must-put “what is inside by yourself”.

6. R: Uchanakya ikenai no? must-program “Do you have to program it (by yourself)”
   yeah yeah yeah yeah first TOP yourself by put NOM BE P
   “Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. First, I programmed by myself”.

8. R: Ja, sono, moji wa dōyatte utsu no?
   then its word TOP how put NOM
   “Then, how do you program those words?”

9. K: N?
   pardon
   “Pardon?”

10. R: Moji wa dōyatte irekomu no?
    words TOP how put NOM
    “How do you program those words?”

11. K: (explains about how to program words on the homepage).

12. R: Nante utsu no?
    what put NOM
    “What do you put (in it)?”

    ah it’s also all
    “Ah, (you program) all of them”.

14. R: Oboete-nai no?
    remember-NEG NOM
    “Don’t you remember them?”

    FIL remember but now TOP explain cannot
    “I remember all of them, but I cannot explain it now”.

    say say
    “Tell me, tell me”.

17. K: (Starts explaining about programming with technical terminologies)⑦.

---

⑦ The rest of their conversation is partly seen in Example (6) where Keita and Rin alternately show their cooperative attitude with each other by questions and answers.
In this example, Rin asks constant questions (Line 2, 6, 8, 10 and 12) showing her interest in Keita’s explanation about how to program a homepage. Her questions apparently encourage Keita to make conversation move forward. Observe line 16 where Rin asks Keita to explain “programming” more in detail although Keita previously refused to explain all of it (Line 15). Thus Rin shows her cooperative attitude and interest in the interaction throughout the first half of the last 10 minutes.

In the latter half, on the other hand, the topic moves on to ‘an illustrator’ and Rin mainly talks and expresses how wonderful it is, to work with one's talent as an illustrator while Keita mainly listens to Rin’s talking using aizuchi. An example of Keita’s aizuchi is illustrated in the following exchange.

(11) Couple 4. Rin & Keita
Context: Rin talks about homepage of illustrators.

1. Rin (Rin): Nanka minna sa::, hômupēji tte iuto sa::, medatsu tameni sa::;
   FIL everyone P homepage QT say-if P outstanding for P
   “When you go to a different homepage, to get people’s attention easily,”
   sensu no nai hadena kanban ga, yoku aru janai,
   talent NOM NEG colorful signboard SUB often COP TAG
   “there are many awful signboards which are just colorful and extravagant-”
   machi no naka de.
   city NOM inside at
   “in the cities,”

2. K (Keita): Anna no (tobasare) chau.
   that NOM skip
   “(people) skip the homepage with such signboards”

3. R: Sōiu kanji de::, tada hadede medatsu yōni minna shiteru kedo::;
   so like by just colorful outstanding for everyone do but
   “Like those signboards, people make colorful (homepages) to get people’s attention,”
イラストレーターのひとは、センスが高く（…）
“but because they have such talent, even if an illustrators’ homepages are not as colorful”

そんな中кладыва（…）かわいくて、きれいであって、みんな全部。
“as others are, everything they made on their homepages looks cute and pretty.”

yeah
“Yeah.”

5. R: Seiton sareteru.
organize PS
“(Their homepages are) well organized”.

yeah
“Yeah.”

7. R: Hōmupēji zukuri o shiteite shikamo sore ga jibun no e ga sa::,
homepage making OM do besides it SUB yourself NOM picture SUB P
“Besides, when making your homepage, the pictures you draw-,”

yeah
“Yeah.”

9. R: Sono::, aikon ni nattarisuru janai.
FIL icon to become TAG
“can become something like icons.”

yeah
“Yeah.”

it SUB cute good P
“It is cute, I like it”.

→ 12. [Un, un, un, un.
yeah yeah, yeah yeah
“Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah”.

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In this example, Keita gives constant aizuchi at the points where they need to be given (Line 4, 6, 8,10 and 12). Keita’s constant use of aizuchi illustrates that Keita is showing his interest and participation in the interaction (Observe line 12). Thus, we can see both Rin and Keita show their supportive attitude towards each other in conversation: according to the topic, they are actively engaged as either listener or speaker by providing supportive questions and constant aizuchi, which apparently maintain an active flow in conversation and encourage the initiation of new utterances to one another.

This also seems to be the case in Couple 3’s conversation. As Kimiko and Isao’s answers to Question 1 and 2 show, the conversational roles as listener and speaker are not as clearly distinguished to them as to other couples such as Couples 1 and 2. As well as Couple 4, Couple 3’s results of supportive questions and aizuchi did not turn out to be consistent with each other. Tables 10 and 11 show the frequencies of supportive questions and aizuchi respectively.

Table 10. The Frequencies of Supportive Questions in Each 10 minutes: Couple 4. Kimiko and Isao

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Kimiko</th>
<th>Isao</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26.67 % (4)</td>
<td>73.33 % (11)</td>
<td>100.00 % (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>43.59 % (17)</td>
<td>56.41 % (22)</td>
<td>100.00 % (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.00 % (9)</td>
<td>50.00 % (9)</td>
<td>100.00 % (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.64 % (6)</td>
<td>86.36 % (38)</td>
<td>100.00 % (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>56.25 % (18)</td>
<td>43.75 % (14)</td>
<td>100.00 % (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.69 % (6)</td>
<td>79.31 % (23)</td>
<td>100.00 % (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.90 % (60)</td>
<td><strong>66.10 % (117)</strong></td>
<td>100.00 % (187)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11. The Frequencies of *Aizuchi* in Each 10 minutes: Couple 4. Kimiko and Isao

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Kimiko</th>
<th>Isao</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>35.71% (5)</td>
<td>64.29% (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.67% (14)</td>
<td>33.33% (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>61.90% (13)</td>
<td>38.10% (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57% (2)</td>
<td>71.43% (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.00% (1)</td>
<td>50.00% (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.67% (26)</td>
<td>33.33% (13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00% (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>58.65% (61)</strong></td>
<td><strong>41.35% (43)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00% (104)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of Couple 3, however, Isao’s ignoring was observed more often than the other male participants (Isao, 9 times; Others, none for 60 minutes). The following is an example of Isao’s ignoring.

(12) Couple 3. Kimiko & Isao

Context: They are talking about the vice-president of the restaurant they work for part-time.

1. K(Kimiko): *Shachō wa okane aruyo:: litoko dori da yo:::*  
   president TOP money have P good parts take BE P  
   “The president has a lot of money. He takes only the good parts of the business.”

   *Sōtō moratte n deshō::, jyōmu to isshoni:::*  
   a great deal receive NOM TAG vice-president with together  
   “He receives such a high salary, the same as the vice-president, doesn’t he?”

2. I (Isao): *Onaji gurai no nedan da yo, kyūryō.*  
   same about NOM price BE P salary  
   “He receives around the same amount of salary”.

3. K: *Usso::*  
   lie  
   “Really?”
4. I: *Jyōmu to.*
   "As the vice-president."

5. K: *Dattara jyōmu saiaku janai?.*  
   "If it is true, the vice-president is such a terrible man, isn’t he?"

   "Yeah, he is such a bad person!"

   "Yes (he is)."

8. I: *Bottakuri mo iiitoko da.*  
   "It is nothing more than deceiving to get money."

   "Yeah, the vice-president is such a person."

10. I: (...)  

11. K: *Konnaide demo kiteta yo ne, getsuyōbi.*  
    "But he came last Monday, didn’t he?"

12. I: (...)  

    "Right?"

    "I am almost slobbering."

    "Are you sleepy? It will be trouble if you fall asleep. I will-"
In this example, ignoring occurred a total of three times (Line 10, 12 and 14). Such examples as these Isao displays show his lack of interest in the current topic although Kimiko tries to maintain the topic and actively participates in the conversation. Observe line 13 where Kimiko fails in her attempt to induce Isao’s comment by ne ‘Right?’ (Line 13). Isao completely ignores Kimiko, eventually changing topics (Line 14). Here is another example.

(13) Couple 3. Kimiko & Isao
   Context: They are talking about a TV program they are watching. Kimiko asks Isao what kind of program it is.

1. K (Kimiko): Doiu, e, kore wa nan na no? Bokushingu?
   what kind FIL this TOP what BE NOM boxing
   “What is this? Is this boxing or something?”

→ 2. I (Isao): (…)

3. K: Ne::,
   P
   “Hey,”

   yeah boxing a little more a little can hear for do
   “Yeah, it is boxing. Can you turn up the volume so we can hear?”

   no P because then here at trouble SUB come out P
   “No! If so, it would ruin (our recording)”.

80
6. I: (...)  

7. K: Ne, kiiteru?  
P listen  
"Hey, do you hear me?"

In this example, we can see that Kimiko attempts to involve Isao in the conversation because of his lack of aizuchi or comments. As both examples 12 and 13 illustrates, Isao did more ignoring than the other male participants because he neglects to give aizuchi at a point which needs filling in or neglects to give his answers to previously asked questions. In total, Isao’s ignoring is observed 9 times during the 60 minutes of recorded conversation, which is relatively frequent compared to other male participants (none, during 60 minutes). The ignoring shown by men like Isao is often associated with the statement that male ignoring or lack of minimal responses are their display of the power relations between the sexes in society where men are superior and women inferior (Fishman, 1978; Ide, 1982b; Ehara, Yoshii, and Yamasaki, 1984).

It should be noted, however, that Isao produced more supportive questions than Kimiko as shown in Table 11. In addition, the number of supportive questions Isao produced is almost twice as much as that of the other male participants. Although Isao’s lack of aizuchi is observed more often than the other male participants, at the same time Isao is apparently able to demonstrate his cooperative attitude, interest and participation by using supportive questions in the interaction.

Contrary to the previous studies (e.g. Fishman, 1978; Ide, 1982b), male participants produced more supportive questions and aizuchi on average, which are traditionally interpreted as a characteristic of the speech style of women who usually do active maintenance and
continuation work in conversation. However, a close look at interaction reveals that both male and female participants are aware of their own role in conversation depending on the topic, occasion and conversational style of each couple or individual. Accordingly, although such violation of speech manner as ignoring and interruption (discussed in 4.1.2) did actually occur in the conversation, the participants try to satisfy their role, demonstrating their participation by giving supportive questions or *aizuchi* in order to make conversation more enjoyable.

In summary, the above results do not show a clear and significant generalization of supportive questions and *aizuchi*; however, it is clear to see that particular speech styles differ from couple to couple; individual to individual. As the recent studies argue (e.g., Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1995), the findings of this study also conform to the idea that gender cannot be an independent variable that determines specific speech styles, showing the complexity of what is occurring in the actual interaction.

The next section will discuss the findings on sentence final particles to examine how much female participants exhibit the stereotypes of strict female features.
4.3 Linguistic Forms

4.3.1 Sentence Final Forms

4.3.1.1 The Result of the Female Participants

Chart 1 shows the distribution of sentence final forms for all the participants, shown in percentage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64.15%</td>
<td>35.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yo (SF)</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no (SF)</td>
<td>69.23%</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa (SF)</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne (F)</td>
<td>86.67%</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no (F)</td>
<td>67.00%</td>
<td>33.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kana (N)</td>
<td>76.34%</td>
<td>23.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jan (N)</td>
<td>60.39%</td>
<td>39.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yone (N)</td>
<td>86.67%</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa (N)</td>
<td>75.86%</td>
<td>24.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na (N)</td>
<td>58.33%</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne (N)</td>
<td>77.22%</td>
<td>22.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yona (SM)</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ze (SM)</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yone (M)</td>
<td>75.56%</td>
<td>24.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na (M)</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>93.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yo (M)</td>
<td>55.51%</td>
<td>44.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne (M)</td>
<td>56.41%</td>
<td>43.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chart 1. The Distribution of All Sentence-Final Forms for All Participants per 10 minutes*

---

8 All the categorization of sentence-final forms can be found in Chapter 3 (p. 46-49).
Chart 1 shows that female participants used more sentence-final forms during a 10-minute period than male participants did in total (Female participants, 64.15%; Male participants, 35.85%). While the distribution differs from individual to individual, it is interesting to note that the sentence final forms categorized as masculine forms, such as “yone”, “ne” and “yo,” are used by females more frequently than males as shown in Chart 1. Likewise, the sentence final forms categorized as the female form, “yo”, is used by male participants more frequently than female participants. Table 12 represents the use of sentence final forms for the female participants.

Table 12. The Use of Sentence Final Forms for Female Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Association</th>
<th>Percentage (Total Tokens)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminine Forms</td>
<td>10.94% (120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Feminine Forms</td>
<td>7.29% (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Feminine Forms</td>
<td>3.65% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Forms</td>
<td>60.26% (661)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine Forms</td>
<td>28.80% (316)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Masculine Forms</td>
<td>28.71% (315)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Masculine Forms</td>
<td>0.09% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00% (1097)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 demonstrates the following findings: (1) all the female participants used neutral forms most frequently (60.26%); (2) all the female participants used masculine forms more frequently than feminine forms (masculine forms, 28.80%; feminine forms, 10.94%). In addition, the majority of feminine forms used by the female participants are only moderately feminine ones. Among the moderately feminine forms, “no” after a plain form of a verb or i-adjective in a statement is the most commonly used (67 tokens obtained). An example is given
The use of strongly feminine forms appeared in approximately 33% of the total feminine tokens (cf. 3.65% of the total tokens), which is almost the same percentage (34%) as the result obtained in Okamoto’s study (1995). The most commonly used strongly feminine form is “no” followed by “ne”, “yo” and “yone” with a total of 20 tokens obtained. The strongly feminine form, “no” after a noun or na-adjective is also often used (16 tokens) as illustrated in the following examples.


Gozen chu wa hima na no.

before noon during TOP nothing to do BE
“I am less busy in the morning.”


Haishi sareta no ne.

ablish-PAS

“The dining car was removed.”
On the other hand, the use of such feminine forms as “wa” and “kashira”, which are typically regarded as strongly feminine, is infrequent: “wa” appeared only three times; “kashira” was absent in the whole data. As well, another variation “yo” of strongly feminine form appeared only once in the data.

Most of the masculine forms the female participants used are moderately masculine forms, of which “yo” after a plain form of verb or i-adjective is the most commonly used (162 tokens obtained). Example (18) illustrates the female participants’ use of “yo” after a plain form of the verb or i-adjective. Example (19) also shows another type of “yo” which follows copula “da”. This “yo” is also very frequently used (94 tokens).

(18) Couple 3. Kimiko: Answering the question previously asked by Isao as to where Kimiko puts her VISA card.

Ha'itteru yo. Kakushite nai yo. Betsuni futsunì ha'itteru yo.
be in hide NEG particularly usually be in
“It is in (my purse). I didn’t particularly hide it. It is in (my purse) as usual.”

(19) Couple 2. Miki: Answering the question previously asked by Fukumatsu if their common friend is already awake or not.

Mo ne te nai deshō, sanji da yo.
anymore sleep NEG TAG three o’clock COP
“She shouldn’t be sleeping anymore, don’t you think? It is already three o’clock!”

In addition to the sentence final forms dealt with in this thesis, we obtained several examples of expressions which are often regarded as masculine or vulgar, such as chou ‘very’; mosai ‘ugly’; tame ‘same age’; majide? ‘really?’; yatsu ‘guy/thing’. Thus, as far as the sentence final particles and the use of those ‘vulgar’ expressions are concerned, it is clear that the

---

9 The actual use of the following words can be found in Chapter 4: chou ‘ugly’ in example (4); mosai ‘ugly’ in example (5) and yatsu ‘guy/thing’ in example (9). Also, tame ‘same age’ can be also found in example (3) in Chapter 3.
speech style of the female participants in conversation with their boyfriends is far from the traditional stereotypes of feminine speech style in Japanese.

Table 13 summarizes the use of each sentence-final particle by the female participants.

### 4.3.1.2 Results of the Male Participants

Table 14 shows the use of sentence-final forms for the male participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Association</th>
<th>Percentage (Total Tokens)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feminine Forms</strong></td>
<td>8.65 % (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Feminine Forms</td>
<td>5.71 % (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Feminine Forms</td>
<td>2.94 % (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral Forms</strong></td>
<td>43.23 % (265)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculine Forms</strong></td>
<td>48.12 % (295)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Masculine Forms</td>
<td>45.35 % (278)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Masculine Forms</td>
<td>2.77 % (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.00 % (613)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared to the results of the female participants, the male participants used more of their own gender forms: i.e., masculine forms rather than neutral forms (Male participants: masculine forms, 48.12 %; neutral forms, 43.23 %; Female participants: feminine forms, 10.94 %; neutral forms, 60.26 %). Also, the use of feminine forms by male participants is not as frequent as the use of masculine forms by female participants (Male participants: feminine forms, 8.65 %; Female participants: masculine forms, 28.80 %). These results may suggest that neutralization of the speech style between men and women is taking place more among the speech style of women.
Table 13. The Use of Each Sentence-Final Forms For Female Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Association</th>
<th>Sentence final Forms</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminine Forms</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10.94 % (120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Feminine Forms</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.65 % (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. yo</td>
<td>0.09 (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. no (w/ noun or na-adjective)</td>
<td>1.46 (16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. no (w/ ne, yo, yo ne)</td>
<td>1.82 (20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. wa</td>
<td>0.27 (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. kashira</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Feminine Forms</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.29 % (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. no (w/plain form of verb or s-adjective)</td>
<td>6.11 (67)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. ne (w/noun or adjective)</td>
<td>1.19 (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. ne (w/ te-form)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Forms</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.26 % (661)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. jan</td>
<td>14.04 (154)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. sa</td>
<td>28.08 (308)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. kana</td>
<td>6.47 (71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. naa</td>
<td>2.55 (28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. ne</td>
<td>5.56 (61)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. yo ne</td>
<td>3.56 (39)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine Forms</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28.80 % (316)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Masculine Forms</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.09 % (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. ze</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. yo na</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. yo (w/imperative form of verb)</td>
<td>0.09 (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. na (negative command)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Masculine Forms</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28.71 % (315)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. yo (w/plain form of verb or s-adjective)</td>
<td>14.77 (162)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. yo (w/ da)</td>
<td>8.57 (94)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. yo ne (w/ da)</td>
<td>3.10 (34)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. ne (w/ da)</td>
<td>2.01 (22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. na (for eliciting agreement)</td>
<td>0.27 (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
than that of men however limited the research population might be.

The most commonly used masculine forms are moderately masculine forms, of which "yo" after a plain form of verb or i-adjective is the most frequently used (139 tokens, 47.12% of total masculine tokens). As discussed in the previous section, this result concurs with that of the female participants: this type of "yo" is the most frequently used among masculine forms including the data of the female participants.

Interestingly, the frequency of the use of the feminine forms by the male participants is very similar to that of the female participants (Female participants, 10.94%; Male participants, 8.65%). The following examples illustrate male participants' use of strongly feminine forms.

(20) Couple 2. Fukumatsu: Talking about an ice cream.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Poro poro te iu aisu na no.} \\
\text{OP OP QT say ice BE}
\end{align*}
\]

"It is many tiny balls of ice cream."

(21) Couple 3. Isao: Talking about how Isao sleeps with a blanket, saying he can sleep without a blanket.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ore wa itsumo so yo.}^{10} \\
\text{I TOP always so}
\end{align*}
\]

"I am always like that."

Among the feminine forms including both moderately and strongly feminine forms, "no" after a plain form of verb or i-adjective is the most frequently used by male participants (33 tokens, 62.26% of total feminine tokens). Observe the following examples.

---

10 'Ore' is a second person pronoun that is regarded as more masculine and an informal variation of 'boku' (Shibamoto, 1985; Uchida, 1993). It is very interesting to observe that in example (20), the strongly feminine form appeared in a sentence together with a masculine variation of the second person pronoun.
Other than "no" after i-adjective in example (22a) and a plain form of verbs in example (22b), example (22c) and (23) show "no" after nasal-assimilated verbs, ‘n’. The form, “no” with nasal-assimilated verbs is often observed also in the result of both the female and male participants. Although “no” after a verb plain-form or i-adjective is categorized as a moderately feminine form, this type of assimilated verb makes a sentence sound more casual and less feminine. As the data shows, the use of the form “no” with assimilated verbs is not exclusively restricted to female usage and needs more careful consideration concerning categorization.11

11 In this research, “no” after such assimilated verbs is included in a category of “no” after a plain form of verbs or i-adjectives.
Table 15 summarizes the use of each sentence-final forms for male participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Association</th>
<th>Sentence final particles</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feminine Forms</strong></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8.65 % (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly Feminine Forms</strong></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.94 % (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. yo</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.33 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. no (w/ noun or na-adjective)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.14 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. no (w/ne, yo, yo ne)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.47 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. wa</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. kashira</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderately Feminine Forms</strong></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.71 % (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. no (w/plain form of verb or i-adjective)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.38 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. ne (w/noun or adjective)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.33 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. ne (w/te-form)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral Forms</strong></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43.23 % (265)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. jan</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.48 (101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. sa</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.99 (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. kana</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.59 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. naa</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.26 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. ne</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.94 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. yo ne</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.98 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculine Forms</strong></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48.12 % (295)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly Masculine Forms</strong></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.77 % (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. ze</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.65 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. yo na</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.96 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. yo (w/imperative form of verb)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.16 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. na (negative command)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderately Masculine Forms</strong></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28.71 % (315)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. yo (w/plain form of verb or i-adjective)</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.68 (139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. yo (w/da)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.77 (66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. yo ne (w/da)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.79 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. ne (w/da)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.77 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. na (for eliciting agreement)</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.34 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 What is 'Femininity' in Japanese for Young Japanese Women?

People in a farming village often say to brides, “Shut up, women!” Women in a farming village were not allowed to speak in public (Jugaku, 1979: 168).

The speech style of women is often said to be soft and euphemistic. Repetition is also another characteristic of the female speech style (Horii, 1993: 101).

While men can choose one of the following 'yo' 'ze' 'zo' (in a statement), women, in order to make a sentence sound soft, have to employ 'wa' with 'yo' (Ide, 1979: 49-50, cited in Nakamura (1995)).

The most remarkable social norm concerning women's way of speaking is “women have to be quiet”... The books on etiquette or polite manners repeatedly emphasize that “women must not speak too much”... the second social norm concerning women's usage of language is the restriction. Women have to speak politely and elegantly (Nakamura, 1995: 178-180).

4.4.1 Results of Questionnaire data (2)

In the preceding sections, we have seen that the female participants in this research used several vulgar or masculine expressions and often employed more neutral or masculine sentence-final forms than feminine ones. This result agrees with the findings of the previous studies on the speech style of young Japanese women (e.g., Okamoto, 1995; Okamoto and Sato, 1992). Moreover, from the viewpoint of conversational interaction, not only the female participants but also the males in this research played supportive roles in terms of such discourse functions as interruption, aizuchi, and supportive questions, in order to develop smoother conversation. This result in the research contradicts the previous studies that state women are more cooperative whereas men are more dominant in cross-sex conversations (e.g., Fishman, 1978; Maltz and Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990; Zimmerman and West, 1975). In fact, the actual
conversational data shows no remarkable characteristics or tendencies on the part of females to use traditional or stereotypical feminine speech forms or speech styles. Hence, the speech style of the Japanese female participants is hardly feminine from the viewpoint of traditional stereotypes of Japanese women’s ‘feminine’ speech patterns.

Yet the following questions still remain: how the young female participants react to the traditional feminine speech style; and what is ‘feminine’ speech style to them. To investigate the above questions, this section considers those questions using a questionnaire.

Q1. Do you voluntarily control your speech style because you are a ‘woman,’ for example, trying to sound ‘feminine’ by not talking too much, using honorific words towards/for others, or speaking more elegantly?
   a. I always control my speech style.
   b. I control my speech style depending on the conversational partner, the occasion and the context.
   c. I do not voluntarily control my speech style, but I think my speech style often sounds feminine.
   d. I try not to control my speech style as much as possible.
   e. Other. (Please explain)

Q2. What kind of characteristics do you think make speech style feminine?

Q3. Do you adopt the ‘feminine’ speech style as described in question 2?
   a. I adopt ‘feminine’ speech style depending on who I’m speaking to, the context, and the occasion.
   b. I do not adopt ‘feminine’ speech style at any time.
   c. I do not know.
   d. Other. (Please explain)

Q4. <Those who chose (a) in question 3 > 4a) In particular, with whom do you adopt a ‘feminine’ speech style? 4b) In particular, on what kinds of occasions do you adopt a
Q5. Do you like the 'feminine' speech style? (Please circle either yes or no) 
   Yes / No

Could you give reasons why you like or you do not like the 'feminine' speech style?

Q6. Please write any other comments you have on the 'feminine' speech style in Japanese.

The following are all the characteristics of the feminine speech style that the female participants described in question 2.

Q2. What kind of characteristics do you think make speech style feminine?

Gentle and soft.  
Standard Japanese itself.  
(Hanako, Couple 1)

Lengthened end of utterance.  
The frequent use of sentence-final particle 'ne'.  
(Miki, Couple 2)

Soft-spoken way of speaking.  
The way of speaking which does not make the other party uncomfortable.  
Voice with soft and sexual sigh.  
(Kimiko, Couple 3)

Soft-spoken, euphemistic, polite way of speaking.  
Choice of soft topics.  
To be considerate to others, reserved, not self-assertive, synchronize with others to some extent.  
Elegant and shy way of speaking.  
To be quiet.  
No gestures.  
(Rin, Couple 4)

Here, we notice that their definition of the 'feminine' speech style has much in common with the typical characteristics of Japanese women's language depicted by the previous studies (e.g., Ide,
1979; Jugaku, 1979; Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987; Shibamoto, 1985; Smith, 1992), such as “gentle” (Hanako), “soft-spoken way of speaking” (Kimiko and Rin), and “not assertive” (Rin). Their comments reveal that young Japanese female participants often associate ‘femininity’ in speech style with the traditional stereotypes of ‘feminine’ speech style.

The question is “why and in what context women are more likely to use particular linguistic forms” (Abe, 1995:666), i.e., ‘feminine’ speech style as described in question 2. Question 3 should provide a clue to understand the above question although it lacks empirical evidence to support it. This is due to the fact that the conversational data does not exhibit the distinct characteristics of ‘feminine’ speech style that the female participants characterized. The answers to question 3 show an age difference. Among the female participants, the oldest participant, Rin in Couple 4 (25 years old) and Kimiko in Couple 3 (22 years old) answered that they adopt ‘feminine’ speech style depending on the conversational partner, the context, and the occasion. On the other hand, the youngest participant, Hanako in Couple 1 (20 years old) and Miki in Couple 2 (22 years old) seem to have no consciousness about ‘feminine’ speech style in their speech. Hanako chose the category (b) “I do not adopt a ‘feminine’ speech style at any time.” As well, Miki commented in the category (d) “I always speak in the same way”. These two different answers observed in the questionnaire data may reflect not only their age difference but also their background and social network. Observe the following comments by Rin and Kimiko.
Q4. a) In particular, with whom do you adopt a ‘feminine’ speech style?

1. Customers at the restaurant where I work.
2. Professors.
3. My boyfriend when we just started to date (As we dated, I came to use less and less of a ‘feminine’ speech style). (Kimiko, Couple 3)

1. People at work with whom I do not feel like developing a close relationship (someone who is older, younger than me, or male)
2. People who may like feminine speech style and expect me to speak in a more feminine way (but I feel as if there is a premise that we won’t be close to each other in the future).
3. Elders (who may be included in 2, but in the elders’ case, there is no premise to me that we won’t be in a close relationship in the future). (Rin, Couple 4)

b) In particular, on what kinds of occasions do you adopt a ‘feminine’ speech style?

1. When I want the other party, especially the male one, to be interested in me.
2. When I confess my love to a guy.
3. At the beginning when I started to date my boyfriend. I was speaking in a more ‘feminine’ way because I wanted him to feel more affection for me and wanted to appear more womanly. (Kimiko, Couple 3)

1. When I have to talk with people I described above (in question 4a).
2. When I have to talk with persons I am unacquainted with for a certain amount of time.
3. When I meet my boyfriend’s people (e.g., family, friends, coworkers, etc).
   (Rin, Couple 4)

First, their comments reveal that they become conscious of ‘feminine’ speech style when they interact with those who exhibit a power relationship or social distance caused by such factors as status or age; for instance, customers and professors (from Kimiko’s comments) and elders (Rin’s). Both Rin and Kimiko live in Japan, work on a full or part-time basis (Rin and Kimiko respectively), whereas both Hanako and Miki are international students in Vancouver with no work experience. In addition, the latter two rarely have a chance to access Japanese
society where Japanese social rules apply, such as the following: "Japanese society requires one to be polite to a high status person" (Ide, 1989:227). That is, the social networks of Rin and Kimiko are more imposed upon them than those of Hanako and Miki. The former live in Japanese society where a hierarchical power relationship between men and women (Phillips, 2001), elders and younger people, superiors and subordinates is prominent. According to Rin, the use of 'feminine' speech style "saves my face like honorifics or good manners (of behavior or speech)" (Rin's comments in question 6). Therefore, it may be that for Rin and Kimiko, the use of the 'feminine' speech style (that is, as Kimiko said, "the way of speaking which does not make the other party uncomfortable" or "soft-spoken, euphemistic, polite way of speaking", as Rin defined it) is obligatory to show their sense of respect or to be polite when interacting with people with high status or elders. Thus, the difference in their social networks may affect the female participants' consciousness about 'female' speech style.

Second, their use of 'feminine' speech style apparently displays the psychological distance they feel towards the other party, as observed in Rin's use of 'feminine' speech style to persons she is unacquainted with (Rin's comment 2 in question 4b), for example\textsuperscript{12}. Rin employs 'feminine' speech style to distance people who she perceives are not going to be close to her (Rin's comment 1 in question 4a). Likewise, Rin feels the interactional partners' distancing her if she is expected to employ 'feminine' speech style (Rin's comment 2 in question 4a). On the contrary, the use of the 'feminine' speech style becomes inappropriate when they wish to show their sense of solidarity (Kimiko's comment 3 in question 4a). Hence, their using 'feminine' speech style or not is a "strategic choice" (Brown, 1998) to distance or show their feeling of

\textsuperscript{12} See also Kimiko's comment 3 and Rin's comments 1 and 2 to question 4a.
the following comment by Rin in question 6.

If my friends use the ‘feminine’ speech style with me, I feel that they do not want to get to know or become closer to me.

(Rin, Couple 4)

Thus, several observations on their comments in the last paragraphs make it clear that the ‘feminine’ speech style is not the nature of the young Japanese female participants’ speech style but one of their linguistic forms regulated by their attempt to be appropriate to a given situation or the relation between conversational partners such as the degree of intimacy and level of formality (Okamoto, 1995).

It is also interesting to note Kimiko’s comments in response to question 4b as cited below.

1. When I want the other party, especially a male one, to be interested in me.
2. When I confess my love to a guy.
3. At the beginning when I started to date my boyfriend. I was speaking in a more ‘feminine’ way because I wanted him to feel more affection for me and wanted to appear more womanly. (Kimiko, Couple 3)

We can see that all the occasions she described in question 4b somewhat require her to become conscious of male perceptions of herself as a woman. Her comments reveal that she may believe that by employing ‘feminine’ speech style that shares a lot in common with the traditional stereotypes of ‘femininity’ in Japanese\(^\text{13}\), she is able to convey the image of women that men prefer. Kimiko also has a positive image of the ‘feminine’ speech style: “The way the ‘feminine’ speech style sounds makes people relaxed; it eases people’s feelings or anxieties and its politeness makes people more comfortable”(Kimiko’s comments in question 6). From these

\(^{13}\) See Kimiko’s comments on ‘feminine’ speech style in question 1.
its politeness makes people more comfortable" (Kimiko’s comments in question 6). From these comments, it is clear that in order to attract men, she attempts to use the image of the ‘feminine’ woman by taking advantage of the nature of the ‘feminine’ speech style.

Rin in Couple 4 shares a similar view to Kimiko’s. She says that “if a woman talks to me using a ‘feminine’ speech style, I feel comfortable and have an impression that I am well treated.” However, she added, “when speaking with a ‘feminine’ speech style, I have a conflict because I feel as if I have a different personality or that my way of acting changes.” Hanako in Couple 1 also has a similar feeling to Rin’s concerning the ‘feminine’ speech style. In question 5, she answered that she likes the ‘feminine’ speech style because it sounds beautiful, however, she dislikes adopting it. The reason for Hanako’s comments can be found in her answers to question 6 as cited.

When speaking with a ‘feminine’ speech style, I have to gloss over myself and pretend to be a feminine person. The image that I have in mind of those who speak with a ‘feminine’ speech style, is a woman who has quiet and refined language and looks feminine and elegant. It is not myself. It is neither my personality nor my appearance. It is not myself at all.

(Hanako, Couple 1)

Hanako’s comments in question 4 demonstrate her resistance to the ‘feminine’ speech style and rejection of the feminine image of women that this speech style can bring to the foreground. The major reason for her strong resistance is because it does not match her usual personality. She also said how much she disliked the ‘feminine’ speech style and the image of ‘feminine’ women by citing her experience in high school when she joined a theatre club. According to her, when she was assigned to play the role of a woman who adopts a ‘feminine’ speech style with the
frequent use of the sentence-final form ‘kashira’\textsuperscript{14}, she refused to play the role and tried to create a different personality in the role. As well, Miki in Couple 2 shows her dislike of the ‘feminine’ speech style because of her image of women who use the ‘feminine’ speech style, which is “those who always try to look cute.” As noted earlier, Rin, however, shows her preference toward the ‘feminine’ speech style by expressing how precious it is for the Japanese language to have a gender difference: “It is wasteful that Japanese people will not keep our graceful, beautiful and feminine Japanese.” Nevertheless, she feels like a different person from the image she associates with the ‘feminine’ speech style when she adopts it. The above comments of Rin, Hanako and Miki show that they resist the ‘feminine’ speech style and reject some aspects of the image of ‘femininity’ in women or language in order to be ‘themselves.’ Thus, we can see that young Japanese female participants negotiate their gender identity by taking advantage of the ‘feminine’ speech style to bring the preferred image of ‘feminine’ women to men (Kimiko), or resisting it or rejecting some aspects of femininity in speech style or the image of ‘feminine’ women (Hanako and Miki).

This section examined the Questionnaire data in order to investigate the following two questions: (1) how they perceive the ‘feminine’ speech style, i.e., ‘femininity’ in Japanese; (2) what is behind their use of the ‘feminine’ speech style: why and in what context the young Japanese female participants are more likely to use the ‘feminine’ speech style. Although lacking empirical evidence to support the statement, the data showed the following three points. First, the young female Japanese participants acknowledge traditional stereotypes of the

\textsuperscript{14} K\textit{ashira} is a sentence-final form that is often cited as a strongly feminine form (Okamoto, 1995; Okamoto and Sato, 1992).
‘feminine’ speech style as a show of ‘femininity’ in Japanese. Second, the use of the ‘feminine’ speech style is based on its appropriateness depending the nature of a given context (e.g., the level of formality) or the relation between interactional partners (e.g., degree of intimacy; power relationship). Finally, it demonstrated how the young female participants view the ‘feminine’ speech style and how they negotiate their gender identity, for example, Kimiko’s attempt to take advantage of the ‘feminine’ speech style, or Hanako’s rejection of some aspects of femininity in speech style to assure her gender identity, show how they go about this feat. Thus, as the recent studies on gender and language argue (e.g., Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1995; Eckert, 1998; Hall, 1998), the data of this research also shows that gender can not be a determinant variable for the choice of specific linguistic forms; i.e., ‘feminine’ speech style in this section. Rather, multiple factors such as the nature of a given context; the relation between the interlocutors; individual evaluations of the specific linguistic form or motives behind their use of it, interact in complex way.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the analysis of how the young Japanese female participants interact in conversation with their boyfriends in terms of the following three discourse functions: interruption, supportive questions, and aizuchi. It also deals with the analysis of the young Japanese female participants’ use of the linguistic form sentence-final forms, which are often characterized as exhibiting a marked gender difference. As well, it attempts to answer the research questions raised in Chapter 3. Finally, it reveals the limitations of this research and provides suggestions for further studies.

5.1 The speech style of young Japanese women

In Chapter 3, I proposed the following research questions regarding the linguistic behavior of the young Japanese women:

(1) How do young Japanese women interact in conversation with intimate interlocutors, in this case, their boyfriends? To what extent do women conform to the traditional view that they are actively engaged in supportive work during conversation?

(2) How, and to what extent, do young Japanese women exhibit the stereotypes of a strict gendered language in their conversations with their boyfriends?

(3) How do young Japanese women express their sex identity in conversation with their boyfriends?
To answer these questions, this research examined the conversational interaction of young Japanese couples in a romantic relationship in terms of the following discourse functions: interruption, supportive questions and aizuchi; and the linguistic form, sentence-final forms.

First, as the previous studies on interruption showed (e.g., Fishman, 1978; Zimmerman and West, 1975), the results of interruption in this research also showed that male participants caused more interruption than female participants. What has to be noted, however, is that most of the interruption observed in the data was a rapport-building type of interruption that illustrates the participants' attempt to show their interest or active participation in order to actively develop the conversation. Therefore, it is far from to conclude that, in terms of interruption, men dominate conversation with women by, in this case, the specific linguistic behavior of interruption, as examined in this research.

Second, the analysis of supportive questions and aizuchi revealed that women are not necessarily involved in supportive work by, for instance, providing supportive questions, or minimal responses (i.e., aizuchi in this research) to make conversation actively go forward. In addition, from the quantitative point of view, the actual data in this research showed that male participants produced supportive questions and aizuchi more frequently than female participants did. A close look at how the participants interact with each other in terms of supportive questions and aizuchi enables us to see that the participants are aware of their conversational roles: i.e., speaker or listener, and function to satisfy the role depending on the conversational style of each couple or individual as well as their evaluation of such aspects of conversations as topic and degree of formality. In this research, the results of our observation of supportive questions and aizuchi could not lead to one generalized conclusion because, as the actual data
illustrates, what is actually taking place in conversational interaction is very complex. Thus, the analysis of interruption, supportive questions and aizuchi demonstrates how simplistic it is to come to only one generalization such as "men are more likely than the women to control conversation" because of "the socially structured power relationship between men and women" (Fishman, 1978:427) or "women act, including the way women talk often rely on some notion of a female personality," which is explained by socialization: "Women are seen as more insecure, dependent and emotional than men because of the way that they are raised" (Fishman, 1998:253).

As far as the discourse functions such as interruption, supportive questions and aizuchi are concerned in this research, it seems that, as a whole, both male and female participants in a romantic relationship are actively involved in the cooperative work to keep conversation going.

Furthermore, the young Japanese female participants in this research are hardly feminine with respect to their use of sentence-final forms. As recent studies on the speech style of young Japanese women (e.g., Okamoto, 1996; Okamoto & Sato, 1992) showed, the data in this research also showed the female participants employing more neutral or masculine sentence-final forms than feminine ones, or masculine or vulgar expressions: for example, such expressions as majide 'really' or yatsu, 'guy/thing'. It is also clear that in conversation with their boyfriends, the female participants are hardly conscious of any linguistic restrictions such as "women have to be quiet" or "women have to speak politely and elegantly" (Nakamura, 1995:180).

From the Questionnaire data that investigates the young Japanese female participants' perceptions of 'female' speech style, the young Japanese female participants acknowledge the traditional stereotypes of 'feminine' speech style. The Questionnaire data also indicated not only their different evaluations of the 'feminine' speech style but also their negotiation of gender
identity, for example, by taking advantage of the nature of 'feminine' speech style or resisting the image of the 'femininity' when speaking with the 'feminine' speech style. It should also be noted that the use of 'feminine' speech style depends on the individual evaluation of the given context, such as the relation between the interlocutors (psychological distance; power relationship).

In summary, this research indicates that 'femininity' in the young Japanese female participants' speech behavior does not always correspond to the quality of being polite, gentle, soft-spoken, non-assertive, and empathetic (Ide, 1979) and employing addressee-oriented speech behavior for a smooth flow in conversation (Fishman, 1978). In other words, from all of the above findings, the results of this research demonstrate that "there is no single unified way of doing femininity, of being women" (Coates, 1998:318). It also posits the importance of a more in-depth inquiry into the relation between the conversational style of different couples in a romantic relationship, female individuals in those couples, and how females perceive 'femininity' and employ their speech style in a given context.

5.2 Limitations and further studies

This section discusses the limitations of the research and provides suggestions or implication for further studies. First of all, the population of this research is very small and the one-hour recorded conversation is apparently not enough to reach a solid conclusion in the area of the target linguistic behaviors or linguistic forms in this research. The analysis revealed that age difference and social background may affect young Japanese female participants' perception and use of 'feminine' speech style. With a greater number of young Japanese female
participants aging from 18 to 25 or who live in more widely separated locations, we could have reached a more conclusive statement about the correlation between speech manner and age/social background. Also, as stated several times in earlier sections, although the young Japanese female participants provide answers to whom, when, in what context and why they are more likely to adopt the ‘feminine’ speech style characterized in the Questionnaire (see p.96), there seems no actual conversational data obtained which clearly shows their use of the ‘feminine’ speech style. This is partly because of the lack of recording time as well as the small research population. If we could recruit more participants, or obtain a more substantial amount of conversation from the young Japanese couples, it might have been possible to see their actual use of the ‘feminine’ features of speech style or linguistic forms even in conversation with their intimate counterparts (i.e., boyfriends in this case).

This research revealed that the young Japanese female participants are less pressured to acknowledge the traditional female speech expectation or ‘feminine’ speech expectation in general while conversing with their boyfriends. In order to investigate how young Japanese women perceive ‘femininity’ in language, how they express their gender identity and how it shifts according to whom they speak, more comprehensive studies are needed, which could examine the speech style of young Japanese women in conversation with different partners. One of the female participants suggested the following in the Questionnaire:

At the beginning when my boyfriend and I started to date, I might have spoken with a cute speech style. But now I am not conscious of any speech manner when talking to my boyfriend and I talk as I talk with my female friends. I suppose I am more ‘feminine’ when talking to my male friends. (Kimiko, Couple 3)
Thus, future research could investigate the discourse of young Japanese women with different groups of interlocutors including: (1) young Japanese women with their female friends; (2) young Japanese women with their male friends: (3) young Japanese women with their family: (4) young Japanese women with unacquainted persons (male and female) and (5) young Japanese women with those who have higher social status such as professors or superiors at work.

Here are the male participants' answers to the question regarding when they notice 'femininity' in their girlfriends' speech behavior during conversation and when they regard their girlfriends as 'cute' in terms of speech style, as introduced in the following:

Q. When do you notice 'femininity' in your girlfriend's speech manner in conversation?  
When do you think your girlfriend is 'cute' in terms of her speech style?

I never notice or see 'femininity' in any of Hanako's speech manner.  
(Fonta, Couple 1)

When Miki makes up with me, or begs me for something.  
(Fukumatsu, Couple 2)

When Kimiko finds something embarrassing in conversation.  
(Isao, Couple 3)

When Rin talks to me with an innocent smile, keeping her eyes fixed on me.  
(Keita, Couple 4)

Because of the lack of recording time, as discussed in the last paragraph, no data was obtained which shows such occasions as Fukumatsu or Isao commented on. The point to draw attention to is Keita's comments. Although this research restricted its focal area to verbal behavior, it may be interesting to analyze non-verbal behaviors as well— for instance, such features as facial expressions and gazes, as Keita in Couple 4 classified as 'feminine' behavior of his girlfriend. It might be fruitful to investigate 'femininity' in not only verbal behavior but also non-verbal, the
relationship between them (e.g., how young Japanese women combine the use of both verbal and non-verbal ‘feminine’ features) and the implication of the female participants’ employment of those features (e.g., motives, strategic goal, etc) in a given context. Although this research focuses on the linguistic behavior of the female participants, the findings of conversation between young Japanese couples in romantic relationships suggest the value of inquiring further about the linguistic behavior of young Japanese men as well. This subject is not yet controversial, but may be key to understanding the neutralization of the Japanese language, which is taking place especially in the speech style of young Japanese. In future studies, incorporating the viewpoint of young Japanese men’s speech style into the analysis of young Japanese women’s speech style may enrich interpretations of ‘femininity’ in Japanese language and the relation between the gender identity of both male and female participants and their linguistic behavior.

This research analyzed the conversation of young Japanese couples in romantic relationships with regard to several discourse functions (interruption, supportive questions and aizuchi) and a linguistic form (sentence-final form). It also investigated the young Japanese female participants’ interpretation of ‘femininity’ in Japanese language and how they practice it by way of the Questionnaire. A large number of studies have been conducted on the subject of gender and Japanese language (Ide, 1979, 1982, 1989, 1990; Kitagawa, 1977; Jugaku, 1979; McGloin, 1990; Mizutani & Mizutani, 1987; Reynolds, 1985; Shibamoto, 1985, 1987, 1990; Smith, 1992). However, surprisingly few studies have so far been done on the analysis of cross-sex conversations (e.g., cross-sex conversations of unacquainted persons (Ehara, Yoshii & Yamasaki, 1984) and Uchida, 1993). There have been even fewer studies on cross-sex conversations of couples in a romantic relationship. The results suggest the need for more
comprehensive studies of young Japanese women, which examine their linguistic behavior in relation to their linguistic ideology, gender identity and social backgrounds, in cross-sex conversation with their intimate counterparts as well as cross-sex conversation with unacquainted persons or same-sex conversation. As a place to start, I hope this research will contribute to the understanding of how young Japanese women and men interact in conversation with their intimate interlocutors and how they adopt particular speech manners and linguistic forms in negotiating their gender identity.
References


Appendix A

List of Definitions

Community-of-practice: The notion presented by Eckert and McConnell (1992) in their paper, "Communities of practice: Where language, gender and power all live" at a women's language conference in Berkeley. According to the following work (1995), 'Community-of-practice' is "ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations, in short, practices which emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavor" (p.490).

Feminine speech style: The speech style that exhibits typical characteristics of linguistic behavior which previous studies (e.g. Ide, 1979, 1990; Jugaku, 1979; Shibamoto, 1985) describe as feminine, onna-rashii, in terms of self references and address terms, sentence-final particles, pitch ranges, word order, etc. In the area of sentence-final particles, for example, it is stated that the use of such forms as wa and kashira make the speech style sound very feminine. The feminine speech style is often described as polite, gentle, soft-spoken, nonassertive and empathetic.

Floor-gaining: The amount of talk.

Linguistic ideology: Any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use. Dominant ideology affects speakers' strategies of language use. (Silverstein, 1979, cited in Okamoto, 1996).

Minimal responses: The verbal cues such as 'yeah', 'umm', 'huh' signaling that the listeners are following, i.e., aizuchi in Japanese such as un, hē, fūn, etc.

Neutral (linguistic) forms: The linguistic forms which are used by both men and women.

Neutralization: The phenomenon in which women use more neutral or mildly masculine-sounding linguistic forms while men use more neutral or mildly feminine-sounding linguistic forms.
Appendix C

Sample of Questionnaire

1. Please write background of yourself (e.g., age, where you are from, what you do, etc.)

2. How long have you been dating with your boy/girl friend?

3. Do you change your speech style depending on whom you are speaking to, the context, or the occasion? Please choose one of the following choices.
   a. I consciously change.
   b. I unconsciously change.
   c. I do not change very much.
   d. I do not know.
   e. Other (Please explain)

4. <For those who chose (a) or (b) in Question 1>
   (1) What kind of changes are they?
      a. Use honorific or polite expressions.
      b. Speed of the speech.
      c. Pitch.
      d. Word choice (e.g., using standard Japanese to be polite, or using dialect to show intimacy, etc.).
      e. The process of the conversation (e.g., speaking logically).
      f. Others. (Please explain)

   (2) In particular, to whom do you change your speech style?

   (3) In particular, on what kind of occasions do you change your speech style?

5. <For female participants>
   Do you voluntarily control your speech style because you are a ‘woman’, for example, trying to sound ‘feminine’ by not talking too much, using honorific words toward/for others, or speaking more elegantly?
   a. I always control my speech style.
   b. I control my speech style depending on the conversational partner, the occasion and the context.
   c. I do not voluntarily control my speech style, but I think my speech style often sounds feminine.
   d. I try not to control my speech style as much as possible.
   e. Other. (Please explain)
6. What kind of characteristics do you think make speech style feminine?

7. <For female Participants>
(1) Do you adopt the ‘feminine’ speech style as described in question 4?
   a. I adopt ‘feminine’ speech style depending on who I’m speaking to, the context, and the occasion.
   b. I do not adopt ‘feminine’ speech style at any time.
   c. I do not know.
   d. Other. (Please explain)

   (2) <Those who chose (a) in (1)>
      In particular, with whom do you adopt a ‘feminine’ speech style?
      In particular, on what kinds of occasions do you adopt a ‘feminine’ speech style?

8. Who do you think is a good model of ‘feminine’ speech style in public domain?

   What kinds of characteristics does she/he (the person(s) you chose in Question 6) has in her/his ‘feminine’ speech style?

9. Do you like ‘feminine’ speech style? (Please circle either yes or no) Yes / No
   Could you give reasons why you like or you do not like the ‘feminine’ speech style?

10. Which do you consider yourself, the listener or the main speaker, in usual conversation with your boy/girl friend? Which do you consider your boy/girl friend, the listener or the main speaker, in conversation with you?

11. Which of the following speech manners do you think best describes your style when conversing with your boy/girl friend?
   a. I want to avoid silence and try to make conversation continue.
   b. Regardless of interest in the topic, I try to actively participate in conversation.
   c. I pay extra attention to what s/he feels and try not to bore her/him.
   d. I am always conscious of expressions because I am concerned with how s/he sees me.
   e. In order to make conversation enjoyable, I pretend to agree with what s/he says even when I do not actually agree with her/him.
   f. I say whatever I want to say, no matter what.
   g. Regardless of her/his interest, I talk whatever I want to talk.
   h. I want to take a leading role in conversation as much as possible.
   i. None of the above
12. Please write any other comments you have on 'feminine' speech style in Japanese.