

Research into Discourse Patterns of Japanese Men and Women

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INTRODUCTION

A person's role determines how she or he usually relates to other people. Among the various roles that people have, there are roles that society arbitrarily attaches to people. Those are called ascribed statuses, and gender is the typical ascribed status. Like "most" other ascribed statuses, gender is a status which each person receives at birth ; categorization of men and women is based on biological characteristics. Once a person is given a gender status, society treats the person in different ways and expects different patterns of behavior. Each gender group has distinctive values, norms, lifestyles, and linguistic features.

How can men and women communicate across the gender gap? Cross-gender-interactions are unavoidable in everyday situations. Recent gender roles are far more flexible than they ever were before in industrialized countries, and a growing number of women are active in the world beyond the home. Consequently, men and women must compete, debate, discuss and negotiate in the same and equal fields. Notwithstanding lagging behind other industrialized countries regarding the advance of women into the workforce, cross-gender communication has become highly important in Japan.

However, when men and women communicate with each other, they often experience trouble. This is because women and men use different verbal strategies in interacting with others. According to Maltz & Borker, the cause of such verbal strategic differences is attributed to different sociolinguistic subcultures during childhood and the adolescence period (1982). Such verbal strategic differences could become a cause of communication malfunctions and provoke, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism between men and women.

Many sociologists and socio-linguists have studied the differences in linguistic behaviors between men and women from various aspects. Large numbers of people consider the communication patterns of the other gender to be incomprehensible and mysterious. Therefore, further research into verbal communication patterns of men and women is necessary. Furthermore, the research results should be disseminated to educators in various fields, for instance, linguists, language teachers, and communication specialists.

Language educators must teach not only vocabulary and grammar, but also how language is handled in actual communication. The speed of speech and tone of voice, for instance, can carry as much meaning as words do. Such a pedagogical approach can help

people having difficulties in cross-gender communication and also foreign language learners. When Japanese people who study English visit English-speaking countries, they cannot avoid encountering cross-gender communication.

There has been much research regarding gender-linked differences focusing on pronunciation, speed, rhythm, tone, intonation, accent, pitch, turn-taking pattern, etc. Among those, I will closely examine turn-taking patterns. At the same time, some former researchers work will be reviewed and consulted. The following are details of what will be examined :

- 1) Turn taking patterns in conversation between Japanese males and females
- 2) Comparison between 1) and turn taking patterns in conversation between English speaking males and females

(Comprehensive research in turn taking patterns in conversation between English speaking males and females by Zimmerman and West (1975) is considered in this paper.)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Comparison

In this paper, Japanese turn-taking patterns in cross-gender communication are compared with English speakers'. As many researchers (Lein & Brenneis 1978) have demonstrated, comparison of various cultures is essential for analyzing uniqueness of communication patterns of cultures. Studying the cultural differences and comparing them help in recognizing the cultural impact on turn taking patterns. The cultural impact on English speaking male and female turn-taking patterns is used for this comparative study.

It is relatively easy to compare Japanese culture and British and American culture since a gap between the two cultures is apparent. British and American cultures, two cultures in which the majority of people speak English as their first language, are defined as individualistic cultures, and Japanese culture is considered to be a semi-collectivistic culture.

In individualistic societies, people tend to focus on their personal achievement. In contrast, collectivist cultures are those that emphasize groupness, harmony, and maintaining face. Accompanying communicator style is correlated with each of these cultural dimensions, individualism and collectivism. One could expect assertive behavior and other personal-advancement issues to arise in individualistic cultures. Individualistic people also do not feel threat from competition and they are not persuaded by arguments emphasizing harmony and cooperation (Triandis, Brislin, & Hui, 1988 ; Triandis, 1990). On the other hand, collectivistic people prefer to use communication strategies of people pleasing and solidarity. They, therefore, tend to avoid competition if it may disturb group harmony. In this study, I will examine how the collectivistic characteristics and individu-

alistic characteristics of communication strategies affect cross-gender conversation.

Men and Women

In gender issue discussions, power is often used as a key word. Gender roles involve power relationships (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Even though increasing numbers of women work outside the home, men tend to have the most power in the high status fields of finance, politics, and industry. The tendency of males to dominate is referred to as paternalism. This tendency still remains in many industrialized countries, even though traditional paternalistic family forms have been disrupted. Social male-female interactions in everyday life also carry symbolic meanings of men's dominancy and women's dependency. For example, men open doors for women, brides often take the groom's last name, and men typically require more personal space than women (Sapiro, 1986 ; Henley, 1977) . Previous research supports that American and British males tend to dominate the direction of conversations. Tannen (1990) claims that women use the conversation pattern called "rapport-talk" : it is a way to gain connections and to negotiate with others. On the other hand, men talk using "report-talk." Tannen defines report-talk as "the primary means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order." (1990 : 77) Tannen explains how men tend to present their knowledge and talents through oral discourse while women tend to listen. Therefore, men tend to be dominant speakers in cross-gender communication. This study will examine if such male dominance like rapport-and report-talk exist in Japanese cross-gender turn-taking patterns through observing strategies used in cross-gender communication.

Turn-taking

a) Interruptions/ Overlaps

Turn taking is a considerable communication phenomena. There are no conversational interactions without turn-taking. When two people (at least) are involved in conversational interactions, each of the participants takes a role, either as a speaker or a listener. The participants are supposed to take turns with the two roles. Smooth turn-taking is based on fixed patterns ; if the current speaker selects a person to speak next, that person must take the role as a speaker. If the selection does not take place, all members of the conversation have an equal right to be the next speaker. If the listeners abandon their right to speak, then the current speaker can continue to take the role (Zimmerman & West, 1975). When all participants in a conversation comply with these patterns, the interaction will flow easily. In normal interactions, however, these ideal patterns are often not followed. Not following the patterns is disrespecting the guiding principles in conversations : (1) one person speaks at a time and (2) speaker change recurs (Sacks, 1974)

Such irregularities in turn-taking patterns happen frequently. There are three types

of irregularities, overlapping, interrupting, and minimal responses. Before proceeding with this study, it is necessary to define these terms, but in many turn-taking pattern studies, there are differences in definitions of these terms. Like Tannen (1996), some scholars refuse to classify overlaps and interruptions into two distinctive phenomena: “The phenomenon commonly referred to as interruptions, but which is more accurately referred to as overlap” (Tannen, 1996 : 35). According to Zimmerman and West (1975), an interruption is defined as a violation of turn-taking sequence; “...the second speaker ignores transition-relevance place and intentionally takes the floor”. An overlap occurs at transition-relevance place: when the second speaker fails to recognize accurate transition-relevance place and starts speaking.

In this study, overlapping and interrupting are considered two distinctive actions in order to record and analyze turn-taking patterns in detail. The definitions which Coates (1993) stated are adopted ;

Overlaps are...instead of beginning to speak immediately following the current speaker's turn, next speaker begins to speak at the very end of current speaker's turn, overlapping the last word (or part of it). Interruptions, on the other hand,.... Next speaker begins to speak while current speaker is still speaking, at a point in current speaker's turn, which could not be defined as the last word.

b) Minimal response

Minimal responses are very brief remarks often interjected by a listener or listeners in the middle of an utterance, for instance, “yeah” and “uhm” in English. Equivalent interjections in Japanese are “ee”, “hai”, “heee”, etc. Minimal responses can be differentiated from interruptions and overlaps. Even though minimal responses, like the other two irregular turn-taking strategies, “violate” the turn-taking pattern of the ‘one-person-at-a-time’ rule, there is no intention to deprive a speaker of ‘completion rights’.

According to Zimmerman and West (1975), listeners practice minimal responses in order to express the audience's active attention to what the current speaker is saying. When the listeners are participating positively and want to politely show interest, the listeners use minimal responses at appropriate times. Zimmerman and West compared how men and women practice minimal responses during cross-gender communication. They found that males often insert a silent period before giving a minimal response. In other words, their minimal responses tend to be a delay to the appropriate minimal response timing. Zimmerman and West conclude that delaying minimal responses are listener's manifestations of apathy or objection to the on-going conversation.

Interruption in Western Societies

The following is a brief summary of West and Zimmerman's findings (1975, 1983),

which will be compared with the collected data for this research and other research results. According to West and Zimmerman, when the second speaker starts talking while the first speaker is still talking, the second person's action is considered as inappropriate behavior in Western societies (Gaffman, 1967 ; West & Zimmerman, 1975, 1983). Many people believe the stereotype that women often initiate such interruptions. This stereotypical image is frequently used as a topic of jokes in which women are treated as being nosey, gossipy, talkative, and interruptive.

West and Zimmerman challenge and scientifically prove the inaccuracy of this cultural stereotype (1975). They successfully collected thirty-one conversations, taped in places where people's interactions commonly take place : cafeterias, coffee shops, stores, etc. Among the thirty-one conversations, ten conversations are between two men, another ten are between two women and the rest are between one man and woman. The result of their study is shown in the following tables (Table 1 and 2).

The results of their study are in contradiction to the above-mentioned stereotype. Men, not women, frequently infringe on completion rights. During the eleven conversations, in which one man and one woman are involved, the researchers found nine overlaps, and they found that male participants cause all of the overlaps. The total number of interruptions is forty-eight, and in forty-six cases out of the forty-eight (higher than 95%) are cases in which men interrupted women.

Other researchers support the West and Zimmerman's study. James and Drakich's findings indicate that despite the popular image of the nagging wife and her taciturn husband, men tend to talk more, in almost all discourse environments, than women" (1995 : 249). Johnson who has studied language behavior differences between men and women concludes that "Women fare poorly in comparison with men in terms of turn taking, interruptions, and holding the floor" (1997 : 9). Eggins and Slade (1997) underpin a concept, recipient design ; how what we say is designed for the convenience of the other speaker and how women may be more sensitive to such design of their utterances. Troemel-Ploetz (1998) argues that :

"Men are used to dominating women ; they do it especially in conversations : they set the tone as soon as they enter a conversation, they declare themselves expert for any topic, they expect and get attention and support from their female conversational partners, they expect and get space to present their topics and, above all, themselves" (1998 : 447)

Table 1 Turn-taking Irregularities in Eleven Mixed-Sex Pairs (1975, p.116)

	Male speakers	Female speakers	Total
Overlaps	9	0	9
Interruptions	46	2	48

RESEARCH METHOD

To study turn-taking patterns of Japanese cross-gender interactions, natural conversations in normal environments were recorded. The conversations (in Appendix 1) were recorded in various environments : a restaurant, a house, a karaoke room, and an office. The subject participants received a blank audiocassette to tape their conversations. All volunteer participants were aware they were being recorded. The participants reported feeling comfortable with their conversations being taped. The actual purpose of this research was, however, not told to the subjects in order to avoid the Hawthorne Effects.

All data, sample conversations, were transcribed. The transcription is fifty pages. The subject participants consist of nine men and nine women (total of eighteen subjects), and the number of recorded conversations is six, and the total time of the six conversations is approximately 200 minutes (three hours and 25 minutes). Using the transcriptions, the number of turn-taking irregularities, interruptions, overlaps, and minimum responses, are counted. Then, the result is compared with the research results of Zimmerman and West (1975).

FINDINGS

According to an analysis of the transcriptions of the cross gender conversations, male participants interrupted slightly more often than female (twenty-eight out of forty-six interruptions).

Although the difference between the number of interruptions engaged by the male and female subjects is not significant, various types of interruptions are found in the transcriptions. Many scholars have found different types of interruptions in their researches (Dindia, 1987 ; Goldberg, 1990 ; Kunsman, 2001). The scholars classified interruptions due to their different objectives : dominant and unsupportive interruptions and cooperative and supportive interruptions.

In this research, unsupportive interruptions are recorded. Among the unsupportive interruptions, different characteristics are found. One is unsupportive interruption practiced for the purpose of disagreeing with the current speaker's opinion (Conversation 1).

Table 3 Turn-taking Irregularities in the Daily Seven Japanese Cross-Gender Conversations

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total
Interruptions	28 (61%)	18 (39%)	46
Overlaps	63 (53%)	56 (47%)	119

Conversation 1

Female A Watashi kawatteruno. Majimena tokoto soo jyanaitokotono futatuni
wakare {teirun-

Male A {Soojyanaiyo(.) Ningen wa daredemo sooya.

Translation

Female A I think I am different from others. I have two completely opposite sides,
serious and not serious ...

Male A No. Everyone is that way.

In Conversation 1, the male participant failed to recognize accurate transition-relevance place and made a statement that implied disapproval or a challenge to the Female A. Instead of disagreeing with the intruder's statement, the interrupted Female A stated feelings of uncertainty about her previous comment.

Another characteristic of unsupportive interruptions observed in this research is utilizing interruption tactics consciously or unconsciously to divert the conversation topic from the original topic.

Conversation 2

Female B Mada 31 damono. Mada 31 dato omotte {korekarairo-
Male B {Cary to toshi

isshonandaneeee(.) Omoukedo, Cary tte hontto omoshiroyonaaa.
Konoaidamo isshoni karaoke itte saaa,

Translation

Female B I am still 31. I try to tell myself that I am still 31, and encourage myself
to do many....

Male B You are the same age as Carry. I think that Carry is very funny. The
other day, I went to Karaoke with her.

Conversation 3

Male D Bokuwa ikurademo taberemasu karanee ikura dattara.

Female D Nori to ikura dakedemo taberunjanai?

Female E Takusan ajiwo ajiga {aru-

Male E {Kore sen en gurai jyanai no kore sen en gurai.

Translation

Male D I can eat a lot of salmon eggs.

Female D You can eat salmon eggs only with seaweed, can't you?

Female E Salmon eggs have very strong tas...

Male E It is about 1000 yen, right? 1000yen.

The topic of Conversation 2 is "women's age." Female B complained about how

women's age affects social status. Male B interrupted and gained the floor while Female B was speaking and switched the conversation topic to another one, which had no relation to the original one. The Female B's topic was completely dropped. A similar phenomenon takes place in Conversation 3, recorded in a restaurant. Male E altered the original topic, the taste of the food, to its price before Female D finishes talking.

The above conversations are examples of interruptions, which result in abrupt topic changes. The interrupters' new topics are derived from the original topic content ; they initiate the new subject by mentioning people or matters somehow related to the original topic. On the other hand, interruptions in Conversation 4 and 5 are initiated by stating a topic, which has absolutely no relation to the original speakers' topic. Conversation 4 was recorded in a Karaoke room, and Male H cut into the conversation while two females were selecting their next song to sing.

Conversation 4

Female G Nani utaundesu?

Female H Nandemo nandemooo,

Female G Eeee.

Female H Nandemoo jibunga

Male H { sukina-
Konoaida anosaa nankanee tatoeba biginaazuuu
koosu toka aruyanai(.) Chanpion wo kimerutoka aruyanai. De, bigina-
azu wo yattenee,

Translation

Female G What are we going to sing?

Female H I can sing anything.

Female G Is that so?

Female H Any songs that you like...

Male H The other day, I tried the beginners' course to find out who is the winner in the group. So we tried...

The following is a conversation between a daughter (Female I) and her parents (Female J and Male I). The daughter talked about her trip and her mother gave an appropriate reply to the daughter. However, the father disturbed their talk with a comment of no relevance to Female I's trip. He did not make any remarks in relation to the trip.

Conversation 5

Female I Ashita anoo tomatte kurukotoni naruyo.

Female J Nanii { moo ki mattanoo? (Serving food to Male I)

Male I { Bokuwa moo iranyo

- Female J A (.) Hai Mata hayaku kimattaneee.
 Translation
 Female I I will stay overnight tomorrow.
 Female J Oh, it has been decided. (Serving to Male I)
 Male I I don't need any more.
 Female J Oh, OK. It has been decided very quickly.

Interestingly, no primary speakers seem to take offense to the interrupters' behaviors, although their right to speak was trespassed and their original topic was deviated from. Interrupted participants accepted the intrusions and the new topics initiated by interrupters.

Among interruptions recorded for this research, twenty-three interruptions are originated in the male subjects ; the eight unsupportive interruptions are initiated for the purposes of disagreement, alternation of topic, or neglect of other people's utterances. On the other hand, the female subjects practiced only one unsupportive interruption. Other interruptions by the female subjects are supportive interruptions engaged for answering questions, and consenting to previous speaker's comments.

Conversation 6

- Female J Demo saikin shizumatterundesuyoneee. Soree mensetu tokanaidesu
 monneee koko no {to -
 Male H {Un imano tokowa ne(.)
 Itudattakanee.
 Female J Rokugatu guraii.
 Translation
 Female J Recently, no changes have been made. There are no interviews, these
 days...
 Male H So far, yes. When was it?
 Female J It was in June.

Conversation 7

- Female K Tokuni jigyoobuno onnanoko naninmo okuranaide hoshii desuyonee
 inakutemo {-
 Male I {-San yonin ka irudeshoo meiwaku kakeru dakenoga.
 Translation
 Female K Especially, girls in the sales department should not send anything to us,
 anyway, they do not do anything...
 Male I There are three or four girls in the department.

Some overlaps recorded during this research are practiced for the purpose of answering a question that is presented by the first speaker. The other purposes are confirming what the first speaker said, and making comments without shifting on-going conversation topic. No overlaps that are practiced for the purpose of diverting conversation topics are recorded.

In Conversation 8, Female L replied to Male L's question about the statement of accounts. Her reply began at the very end of Male L's turn, overlapping the last word.

Female M and Male K in Conversation 9 are coworkers. Female M repeated what Male K had said to confirm it. Female N conducted an overlap by giving Male L an appropriate question.

The last irregularity of turn-taking patterns to be examined for this research is minimal responses. Among the three types of recorded interruptions, overlaps and minimal responses, the occurrence of minimal responses is the most frequent (Total of 289 cases). Most of the minimal responses are performed by the female subjects (258/289). The male subjects perform only 35 cases out of 289. The following are examples of the recorded minimum responses (all minimal responses are showed within parentheses).

Conversation 11

Male M Kanojyo keiyakuwa (Unn. [Female O]) ichi nen tte iteta (Un soneee. [Female O]). Wakannaikedo tabun nee anoo ni nen keiyakuni narunjyanaikatte hanashiwo shitetayone.

Translation

Male M She said she has a year contract ([Female O] yeah). I have heard she might be able to get a 2-year contract.

Conversation 12

Male N Konoaida anosaa nankanee(.) Tatoeba biginaazuuu koosu toka arujyanai (Aaa haihaihai. [Female P]).Champion wo kimerutoka arujyanai (Haihai. Haihai. [Female P]). De biginaazu wo yattenee minna kekko itoko ittandayoneee (Heeee. [Female Q]).

Translation

Male N The other day, well... For example, there is beginners' course (Yeah, yeah, yeah [Female P]), and some machines have functions to score people's singing (Yeah, yeah [Female P]). So, we did the beginners' course and everybody did quite well (Really [Female Q]).

Conversation 13

Female R Amerikajinwa purezenteeshon umaidesuyoneee. Chigaimasumon purezenteeshon no shikataga zenzen. Nihonjin ga nihongo no bunshoo o

sonomama toransureeto shitaraa (Un. [Male O]) okashiku nacchaun desuyone (Hoo hoo. [Male O]) yappari.

Translation

Female R American people can do presentations very well. Their way of doing presentations is very different (from how we do.) Direct translation of Japanese presentations into English must be extremely strange (yeah [Male O.]) It will be really strange (yes, yes [Male O]) I think.

As the above transcriptions show, a diversity of minimal responses was recorded, for instance, “Mmm”, “Huuun”, “Sodesuka”, “Hai, hai, hai”, “Sodesuyoneee”, “A hontoo”, “Aaa sooo”, “Naruhodoo”, and “Eeee”. Most of the minimal responses were inserted by listeners while the current speaker was talking, but some listeners inserted minimal responses within the interval after the current speaker finished a sentence and before the same speaker continued onward. Female O in Conversation 11 and Female P in Conversation 12 are examples. When minimal responses are inserted with appropriate timing, conversation proceeds smoothly.

Since the function of minimal responses is to show active listening, and to assist the speaker to continue, no speakers relinquish their right to speak because of minimal responses made by listeners. For example, Female O inserted a minimal response while Male M was speaking, but he continued to hold the status as a legitimate speaker.

ANALYSIS

From the findings of this study, it is difficult to draw a conclusion that Japanese men interrupt more often than Japanese women do during cross-gender conversation since the number of interruptions by the female subjects is also significant. However, the function of interruptions that Japanese male subjects practice and the Japanese female subjects practice seem to be different. As mentioned before, the main reasons for men engaging in such interruptive behaviors are to disagree with the current speaker, to shift the on-going conversation topic, or to show no interest in the present topic. Their interruptions are mainly unsupportive interruptions. In contrast, women tend to initiate supportive interruptions: interruptions with the intention of offering supportive feedback.

A great number of overlaps are recorded in this research. According to the results of Zimmerman and West's research (1975), 48 interruption cases are recorded during 11 different cross-gender conversations, but only 9 overlap cases are observed. Japanese subjects who perform interruptions 46 times perform 129 overlaps. The reason for the frequent overlaps in Japanese conversations could be attributed to how Japanese people speak. Japanese syllables that are basic units of Japanese language pronunciation consist of a single vowel and a single consonant, the semi-vowel and a single vowel, or single vowel (there are a few exceptions, like a nasal sound, and double voiceless consonants).

As the transcriptions for this research show, recently Japanese people, especially young Japanese women, frequently stretch the last vowel sound of the last word in order to draw others' attention and to express their self-assertiveness (Torii, 1994).

Conversation 14

- Female S Atto iuma desuyo neeee, Atto iumani watashiwa sanjyuudaikara yon-
 jyuudai ni narunjya naikatoo o-
 Female T o- Nanka
 sanjyudai kara yonjyudaai tte sugoi hayaittoka
 iimasuyone ee.
 Female S ee. Datte nijyuudai kara sanjyudaimo
 hayakkattadesho ooo?
 Female T ooo? Unnn so hontooniii ii.
 Female S ii. Sanjyudaikara
 yonjyudaitte sugoku hayakute yonjyudaikara gojyudai wa motto hayaitte. Kowa-
 iwaaaa

Translation

- Female S It will be very quick. I think that the 30s will pass very quickly, and I
 will be 40s soon....
 Female T I have heard that 30s were very short.
 Female S Did you feel that 20s were very short?
 Female T Yes, it was really....
 Female S I have heard that 30s pass very quick and the 40s pass quicker than that.
 It is so scary.

Conversation 15

- Male O Sonnaaa(.) Oranmo ore ichigatukara yamon
 Female U yamon Soyoneee satoo tenchoo
 Kanaaa soshitaraaa.
 Male O soshitaraaa. Satoo tenchoo ka kawagoe sanko kawagoesan
 kamosirenaiyo.

Translation

- Male O I don't think so. I started in January.
 Female U You are right, then maybe the manager, Mr. Sato.
 Male O Mr. Sato or Mr. Kawagoe...maybe Mr. Kawagoe

Conversation 16

- Male L Mononoke hime no uta utao kkanaa.
 Female N kkanaa. Nani sore mononokehime no utananka

arundesukaaa?

Translation

Male L I will sing Princes Mononoke.

Female N What is that? Is there a song, Princes Mononoke?

The above underlined vowel sounds indicate stretched vowels. These stretched sounds have no influence on the meaning of the sentences, words and grammatical structures. In other words, they are superfluous sounds. Because of the stretched sounds, sound boundaries become unclear, and listeners have difficulty judging if the current speaker is ending his or her talk and recognizing precise transition-relevance place. Moreover, 2 morae constitute a foot, and these 2-mora feet combine to form a 4-beat rhythm in Japanese. This 4-beat rhythm is the basic rhythm/prosody of spoken Japanese. Therefore, speakers tend to stretch the last vowel sound of a sentence to an amount of time for 2-mora feet. Then, listeners have to wait for a relatively long time. Some listeners take the floor before the speaker finishes stretching the last vowel. In Conversation 14 and 15, each overlap was initiated while the current speaker stretches the last vowel sound. It is difficult for listeners who are waiting to take the next floor to anticipate when a stretching sound will come to an end.

Japanese women tend to practice minimal responses frequently. This indicates that Japanese women often use overlapping and minimal response strategies to express their interest in and comprehension of on-going conversation topics. They are more active and cooperative listeners than Japanese men. The fact that the female subjects tend to avoid initiating interruption also suggests that Japanese women are likely to participate in conversation in a supportive manner. Japanese men' approaches in a conversation are taking a leading role, becoming a decision-maker, or expressing opinions. Many Japanese men use irregular turn-taking strategies to achieve these purposes.

However, it is still impetuous to conclude that women have a strong tendency to conform to turn-taking rules and that women are superior conversation participants compared to men. The aim of this study is not to discuss such superiority or inferiority, but to increase mutual understanding between men and women by examining their turn-taking strategies.

This study revealed that compared to English speakers, Japanese people tend to focus on maintaining harmony by using cooperative overlaps and frequent minimal responses. This study result indicates that cultural characteristics of individualism and collectivism affect cross-gender communication. In American and West European countries, in general, when an opinion of another conversation participant is not agreeable, people often express contrary opinions or try to persuade the others. In the same situations, Japanese people are more likely to try to maintain group harmony. They use polite communication strategies like minimal responses that indicate understanding or

agreement with another opinion and leave the conclusion of the discussion uncertain.

People feel anxiety during cross-gender conversations and people also experience frustration when talking with people of different cultural backgrounds. Then, communication in which both of the conditions are involved could end up with inextricable confusion and troubles. Having accurate information about each other's communication strategies might help to develop positive relationships.

The following are ideas and advice for future researchers who are interested in studying about the turn-taking patterns in cross-gender communication. Since in this research, all transcriptions are based on tape-recorded conversations, non-verbal styles of communication, body languages, eye contacts, etc., are not included as factors for this research analysis. For future studies, it is recommended that researchers videotape conversations and include the non-verbal communications to analyze violation of turn-taking patterns in the cross-gender and cross-culture communications. Relationships between the subjects, for example co-workers, boss and workers, family members, are key elements, which influence the turn-taking patterns.

Notational system of transcriptions

- . (period) indicates the end of an utterance with descent intonations
- ,
- (hyphen) indicates a sudden pause during an utterance
- ? (question) indicates ascent intonation
- (.) (a period within parentheses) indicates a micro pause
- { indicates simultaneous talks or overlaps

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