

Stance and Gender: Japanese Female Speech in Interviews

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Abstract

A cooperative stance has traditionally been associated with female communicative style and despite new developments in gender and language research that challenge a dichotomous approach, the few studies on 'institutional' interactions show that a more cooperative style is present in all-female interactions. However, automatic associations are problematic because there may be other factors that influence an interaction. In interviews, for example, it is known that interviewers can create a particular stance through question design. Nevertheless, precisely because question design is strategically accomplished, observing in detail how different interviews are conducted might enable us to know how particular stances are created. This study explores two all-female Japanese television interviews that feature the same guest. It qualitatively analyses the interviewees' responses to the various eliciting strategies. The findings show that stance is co-created by all interlocutors and that a communicative style should not be automatically associated to a particular gender.

Key words: *Japanese, stance, all-female interaction, interviews*

Introduction

A cooperative stance has traditionally been associated with female communicative style while a competitive and aggressive one with male style (see e.g. Coates, 1996; Holmes, 1995; Tannen, 1990). This tendency has been observed in the West and in Japan, where this dichotomy is even more pronounced because of the existence of 'genderlects'. However, automatic associations are problematic because numerous studies show that the interlocutors' genders do not predetermine a particular style (Endo, 1997; Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith, 2004; Reynolds-Akiba; 1993; Takano; 2005).

On the other hand, in formal interactions it is known that Japanese men and women choose gender-neutral lexical items and therefore we can assume that other strategies might be used to construct a particular stance. Unfortunately, research on formal Japanese and gender is still limited and it is still not clearly known what occurs in institutional interactions, for example, where participants must adhere to a formal speech style. Do all-female interactions exhibit a cooperative style? And if they do, how is that stance created?

In interviews, which are institutional exchanges, it is known that interviewers' question design can determine the stance of the interaction. Questions can create an adversarial stance, as seen in news interviews, or a more cooperative and conversational style, as observed in talk shows (Clayman and Heritage, 2002). By adopting a particular style, interviewers can strategically create friendly or aggressive interactions (Clayman and Heritage, 2002; Heritage and Greatbatch, 1991) and sometimes this style seems to be determined by the interviewees' gender (e.g. Johnson, 1996; Winter, 1993).

This paper analyses the speech of one female guest featured in two different Japanese television interviews to see whether all-female interviews are collaborative interactions. The study focuses on the interviewee's responses to the different interviewing styles, and looks at turn-taking, politeness strategies, lexical and syntactic choices. Results show that cooperative communication is co-produced by all participants throughout the interaction, and is not an *attribute* of women.

Background

Studies on all-female interactions have reported that women use a collaborative communication style while men's speech is characterized by a domineering style (e.g. Coates, 1996; Holmes, 1995; Tannen, 1990). Some scholars explain that women and men belong to 'different' cultures and use different communicative rules (Coates, 1996; Tannen, 1990). Others write that women are oppressed in society and this inequality is reflected in the language (Cameron, 1992; A. Uchida, 1992). More recently, scholars challenge the assumption that gender is dichotomous and question the notion of women's language as monolithic (Bing and Bergvall, 1996; Cameron, 1996; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Freed and Greenwood, 1996; Kothoff and Wodak, 1997).

This approach has been taken on in Japan and numerous studies dispute the existence of a traditional female language (Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith, 2004). Critics argue that earlier studies are from a particular social group and show that there is great language variation depending on social background, profession, age and rural or metropolitan residence (Endo, 1997; Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith, 2004).

However, what happens at the interaction level has been largely ignored (West et al., 1998). The few studies that have been done suggest that, indeed, differences in politeness level between men and women exist: males use confrontational strategies while women are cooperative (Ehara et al., 1993; Kochiyama, 2003; N. Uchida, 1993; Yoshii, 1996). However, N. Uchida (1993) and Tanaka (2004, 2009) write that status and age are more important factors than gender in determining speech style in formal settings.

Research on gender differences in Japanese 'institutional' settings reports that participants use formal style as their main form of speech and that communicative style is influenced by many factors that include participants' age, status and their personal relationship (whether they know each other outside the interview) (Tanaka, 2004). It is also reported that females use 'female' and 'male' styles strategically (Takasaki, 1996).

Johnson (1996) and Winter (1993) report a similar finding in New Zealand and Australian interviews respectively. Johnson found that the female interviewer used interruptions and questions with negative effect more often towards male interviewees, and female guests were given more opportunities to speak than the male guests. Winter (1993) also found a more adversarial style in an all-male interview whereas the female interviewer adopted a more cooperative stance. Despite results showing clear differences along gender lines, Johnson adds that it is not possible to explain these differences solely on the basis of the interviewees' gender, and that guests' professions, topics and other factors need to be included. He explains, for example, that topics discussed with male guests were controversial; therefore, a more adversarial stance occurred. These conflicting results undoubtedly call for further investigation.

The data

The interviewee in both programs is Tomiko Miyao (*M*) a widely published fiction novelist. The first interview is *Tetsuko no Heya* (*TH*) is conducted by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi (*T*), a popular program broadcast by a private TV channel, *Asahi Terebi*. Kuroyanagi is well-known as an interviewer and for her active role in promoting the arts. The second interview is *Sawayaka Intaabyuu* (*SI*) conducted by Motoyo Yamane (*Y*) and broadcast by Nippon Hoosoo Kyookai (NHK), a government-funded station. Yamane is a well-regarded professional newsreader. The interviews were recorded in 1994 and 2000 respectively. Despite the fact that the data is 'old' and that there is a gap of six years between the interviews, this data has the advantage of being ideal for the goal of the present study that focuses on all-female interactions; as both interviews are on the same topic and feature the same interviewee, they provide a *quasi*-laboratory setting.

Analysis

Turn taking

Turn taking in both interviews is mostly smooth although the relatively higher numbers of fillers and overlaps in the guest's turns in *SI* indicate some turn-taking problems while turns starting with *hai*

'yes' used as a discourse marker shows a smoother transition in *TH*. These numbers are a reflection of the turn-taking patterns in both interviews.

Table 1. Guest's turn-initial features

Interview	Fillers	Hai	Overlap	Pause	Others	Total
<i>TH</i>	6	10	1	3	15	35
<i>SI</i>	12	6	7	4	6	35

Tetsuko no Heya (TH), Sawayaka Intabyuu (SI)

The hosts' turn-ends show that while both hosts overwhelmingly use grammatically unfinished turns (UU), Y uses more canonical questions than T (7 vs 2). In addition, T uses more postpositions at the end of her turns, most probably to soften her turns and cause less imposition as seen in Table 2. Syntactically complete questions in Japanese are avoided to prevent conflict because of their illocutionary force (Oshima, 2001; Tanaka, 2004; Yokota, 1994).

Table 2. Hosts' turn-ending

Hosts	Question	RI	P P	UU	FU	Overlap	Pause	Interruption	Total
<i>Tetsuko (T)</i>	2	7	7	11	3	4	1	0	35
<i>Yamane (S)</i>	7	6	3	8	1	5	3	2	35

RI: rising intonation, PP: post-position, UU: unfinished utterance, FU: finished utterance

In terms of volubility, it is clear that in *TH*, participants speak more than in *SI* as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Intonational Units

		Turn	IU	IU Ave
<i>Tetsuko no Heya</i>	Tetsuko	35	321	7.64
<i>(TH)</i>	Miyao	35	456	10.86
<i>Sawayaka Intabyuu</i>	Yamane	35	150	4.41
<i>(SI)</i>	Miyao	35	193	5.67

Guest's answers and interviewers' questions

It is interesting to see the differences in both interviews. Firstly, the volubility (Table 3) of the three women was measured on the basis of intonation units. The numbers show that talk by M is almost twice-fold in *TH* (10.86) than in *SI* (5.67). This might be a case of the 'Matarazzo effect', namely that if the host speaks more, the guest will follow (Matarazzo, 1972). Alternatively, it might be the case that M feels more encouraged to talk in *TH* than in *SI* because of the question design. Notice that there are very few syntactic questions in the former. The other characteristic is that Y uses negative questions that are known for their conduciveness. In the next example, M had said that winning a literary prize did not guarantee a writer's career. However, prize recipients have one work published. A question about his had been asked in line 1, but the guest had clearly forgotten about it. Y's asks two questions: the first in the copula *deshoo* and the second in the negative form. Questions ending in *deshoo*, known as 'light questions', are used not only to obtain unknown information but to confirm what the speaker knows (Nitta, 1999). The following negative question is also a conducive one (Nakada, 1980) because it expects the listener to disagree (i.e. a positive answer). Note that the host repeats the same negative question after the guest's answer (line 2). The guest finally realizes that indeed she did have one novel published. She starts with an 'ah' in line 4, which indicates that the

question is problematic because of its content, relevance or because the speaker is reluctant to answer (Yamane, 2002). The insistence of the host to ask the same question causes some embarrassment to the guest, as is observed in her fillers (line 4), the inclusive *dake*, in her laughter, and in her addressing the host by her family name. It is clear that the guest thinks that having only one book published does not qualify her to be a writer.

(1) (S/)

- 1 **Y:** *jushou dai issaku te iu no ga arun desho? nain desuka?*
2 **M:** *ah. sorewa arimasen.*
3 **Y:** *nain desuka?*
4 **M:** *ah. ano= hitotsu dake (ah) ano= kakaseteitaite , sore wa ano..touji no*
5 *shousetsu tte iu koto iu no wa [xxxxx][(eh.)] ta kedomo. (eh.) hitotsu gurai*
6 *kaitatta tte... (eh.) sore wa Yamanesan, (@@@) kaitatte @@@@*

'Y: You have a prize-winning book, I think? Don't you?

M: Oh. No, I don't have anything like that.

Y: Don't you?

M: Oh. Well=, there is one (ah) well=, I was given the opportunity to write. That was uhm, a novel back then [xxxx (uh-huh) There was one but (uh-huh) I did write one. (Uh-huh) Ms Yamane, I did write one @@@']

Notice that the guest's turn starts with *ah* and the discourse marker *ano*- which is used when speakers are either looking for words, or when they are not comfortable (Yamane, 2002). This is also observed in the number of *M*'s turns in *SI* that start with fillers in contrast to the turn-initial *hai* that indicates a smoother turn-taking transition. It should be stressed here that *T* did not use any negative questions.

Different strategies, different responses

The guest's responses to different interviewing techniques are observed in this section. The next two examples deal with the same topic. Both interviewers ask *M* about her motivation and perseverance to keep writing. *M*'s response in (2) is interesting as she starts her turn with *demo*, a discourse marker to indicate a different opinion. However, in this case it is used to compliment *T*, which breaks the interview's rules but can be seen as a sign of positive politeness and one in which *T*'s face is enhanced. This response is because of *T*'s encouraging style. *M* had described how publishers rejected her work and says that her viewpoint is subjective as the publishers probably did not even remember her. *T* directs her talk to the audience emphasizing the long period of endurance (lines 2- 3). She says that what kept *M* writing was her passion. *T* shows empathy by acknowledging *M*'s accomplishments with positive politeness strategies seen in repetition and intensifiers: the expression *soredake* 'that much', *yappari* 'as expected', *nakanaka* 'quite' and *hontooni* 'really'. *T* stresses that her guest's endurance and passion are difficult to emulate. *T* praises *M* by repeating and stressing the span of time and her love of writing.

(2)(TH.3)

- 1 **T:** *maa sooiu kata mo kyoo miteirassharu kata gata takusan irassharu*
2 *to omoimasu. (hai. hai.) nee/ nijurokunen-kan yori motto*
3 *yatterasharassharu to omoimasu. dakedo yappari nijurokunenkan sukidatta*
4 *kara to ittemo / sore dake no jounetsu ga nakanaka tsuzukumon*
5 *janaikara to omou kara/ hontooni osuki datta none/ okakininaru koto ga*
6 **M:** *demo/ Tetsukosan datte, imamade denpa o oshigoto zutto ochisai toki kara*
7 *oyarininate[oyasumininaranakatta xxx]*

'T: Well, I think that many of them might be watching this program today (yes, yes), and, there might be people who have been writing for a longer period than 26 years. But, really, even if you say that you like writing, if you do not have enough passion, you cannot possibly continue writing for 26 years. That's why you must really love writing.'

M: But, you too, Tetsuko. You yourself have been working for the media from when you were a child [and you have not stopped]'

In stark contrast, *Y*'s reaction in (3) to the same topic is quite different and so is *M*'s response. *M* had explained about her terrible ordeal in a refugee camp in China right after WWII where her newborn daughter miraculously survived. Asked about her motivation to continue writing, *M* says that she wished to let her children know about the war, and also that she needed to have some income. *Y*'s comments on *M*'s motivations as merely financial (lines 1–2) are evidently inappropriate not only because writing is considered to be an intellectual activity and devoid of such mundane motives, but also because *M* had described at great length her traumatic experiences and her desire to tell her story to her children. *M* immediately reacts to *Y*'s comments trying unsuccessfully to take the floor (line 2). The filler *ma*, a hesitant marker used prior to issuing a negative or contrary opinion, shows her discomfort (Yamane, 2002). Note the discourse particles *yappari* and *yahari* used by both (lines 1, 3). Translated as 'after-all' or 'as expected', they carry no conceptual information but have procedural information encoded and denote some kind of expectation (Tanaka, 1998). Therefore, the first instance (line 1) intensifies the negative connotation implying 'as expected or as one would expect, your motives were financial'. Explaining that naturally her motives were other than economic, *M* enumerates other reasons with the variant form *yahari* (line 3).

(3) (SY. 4)

- 1 **Y:** *sosuto yappari keizaitekini jiritsushitai te iu omoi kara sono*
2 *nijuuokunenkan kaite kaite (e. ano) kakareta koto ga aru-*
3 **M:** *ma= sore/ bakari de wa [gozaimasen ne/][uhn.] yahari*
4 *ano= yono naka ni uttaita toka(uhn.) sorekara jibun de,*
5 *onna no.. ikikaata mitaina mono mo mosaku shitai toka, ((continues))*

'*Y*: So, I suppose that you kept writing for 26 years because you wanted to become financially independent (**well, uhm**) you kept writing/that's why you wrote(?)

M: Well. That wasn't the only reason (**uh-huh**) I suppose well-- I wanted to say something to the world (**uh-huh**) and other things like, I wanted to look at women's lives

M's response to *T*'s comment in (2) is a direct compliment and it is interesting because it breaks the interview format conventions. Firstly, *M* addresses her by first name, restricted to family or intimate friends in Japanese culture. Secondly, interviewees are constrained to answering questions; therefore asking the host is a turn-taking departure. The host has the choice of not answering her guest's questions. However, *T* gives a detailed personal account about her own experience which is rarely done in interviews. Clayman and Heritage (2002) write that famous or high status interviewees 'may have more latitude to do...other kinds of marginal actions. It is this which, in part, distinguishes them from their more restricted junior colleagues' (p. 121). A similar situation may be present in this analysis, where *T* has 'more latitude'. Due to her status she can transgress some interviewing rules, whereas *Y*, who is less known and is less popular, is bound by the rules of the interview, and by NHK's stricter broadcast style.

The use of boosters as positive politeness

By using intensifying modifiers such as adverbs and adjectives like 'extraordinary, fantastic, incredible', as well as prosodic features, a speaker can emphasize the illocutionary force of an utterance (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and therefore could elicit more talk. These boosters are not exclusive to positive politeness and can be used to intensify a face-threatening act with negative effect (Holmes, 1995); however *T*'s boosters show interest and are much more frequent than *Y*'s, as seen in next two excerpts. The topic in (4) and (5) is about the writer's perseverance. In (4) *M* had been introduced as a famous writer with a long unsuccessful period early in her career. *M* comments that she had not needed to work because she was married. *T* starts her turn with the continuer *mochiron* 'of course', showing agreement (line 3); however, twists her initial statement saying that *M* could have opted for the easy way and does not allow *M* to belittle herself. *M* comments that she did not do anything special but just sat down to write. In line 8, *T*'s disagreement with the guest's self-deprecation is a sign of the interviewer's supportive stance and a preferred action in response to self-deprecation. *M*, nevertheless, says that she has done nothing special, and stresses this by repeating the words *dake* 'only' and *tatta* 'simply'. *T* then starts her turn with *demo* in line 10, used to indicate a shift in perspective (Mori, 1999). In this turn, *T* praises her guest indirectly using repetition to stress the length of the time for which her guest had endured.

(4) (TH)

- 1 **G:** *hai. maa- atashi wa ne/ ano sore ga moo yuitsu no atakushi no (ah) sukui datta to*
2 *omoimasu. (sOodeirasshaimasuka.) hai. ano= maa ((lines omitted))*
- 3 **T:** *ma. mochiron goshuyujinsama no sono rikai toka ironna kazoku no rikai mo atta to*
4 *omoimasu ga, gyaku ni iueba (hai.) ja/ moo uchi mo arun dashi/ katei mo aru n dashi/*
5 *ii janai no tte atashi yamechau tte iu (hai.) koto mo aru to omou n desu ne. gyaku ni.*
((2 lines omitted))
- 8 **G:** *minasama ironna karucha toka ne/ ano kyohitsu ni okayoini natte,*
9 → *okeikogotonasatteru to onnaji yooni watakushi mo sono[(iyaa!)]jikan]*
10 *tsukue ni mukatta to iu dake no tatta sore dake no koto dakenan desu no.*
- 11 **T:** *demo, nijurokunenkan.. nijurokunenkan tte hontooni kuchi de iuto kantan*
12 *desu kedo,*

'**G:** Yes, well, I, you know, I think that was (**oh**) my only salvation (**Is that right?**) yes. Uhm- well-, (lines omitted)

T: Well, I imagine you had your husband's understanding about this and your family's understanding, or put it another way (**yes**) I imagine that sometimes you would have thought, I already have a house, and a family, couldn't I just stop now (**yes**) conversely (lines omitted).

G: Yes, but because I was a housewife, well, as you know, now there are a lot of leisure activities for housewives and many people attend culture classes or go for other activities. In a similar fashion, I spent that [(**no**)] [time] facing the desk. It is only [that].

T: [But 26 years...26-years, it is easy enough to say, (continues).']

In (5) *M*'s answer is extremely short. *Y* asks *M* whether she had someone to read her manuscripts. The 'trouble' spot is indicated by the pause and how the original question is changed. *Y* starts with the discourse marker *demo* followed by *sorenishitemo* 'still' emphasizing her tenacity and strong will to keep writing. It conveys a sense of admiration and is a very supportive strategy. A grammatical question beginning with *darenimo* would end in the negative form of the verb *misenai* 'not to show', which naturally could take other forms. However, *Y* changes her intended question, as is seen in the affirmative ending of the verb and the topic marker *wa* used to denote contrast (Kuno, 1990). After a very short answer in line 3, *Y* asks another question (line 4). The question is then completed with the word *sonnani* 'that much', which acts as an illocutionary booster, thus stressing the degree of support in the question.

(5) (SY.2)

- 1 **Y:** *demo, sorenishitemo (hai.) ma== juurokunenkan (hai.).. shinjinshoo*
2 *morau made kotsukotsu kotsukotsu, darenimo.. misete wa irashitan desu ka?*
- 3 **G:** *iya daremo miseru hito imasen.*
- 4 **Y:** *misenaide. (hai.)...↑ naze sonnani kaketan desu ka?(@@)*

'**Y:** But, still, (**yes**) well, during sixteen years (**yes**) until you received the Shinjin prize, you (wrote) assiduously, no-one, did you show it to someone?

G: No, there wasn't anyone I could show.

Y: Without showing [it to anyone] (**yes**)... how could you write so much? (@@@)'

The reaction of the guest in these two examples exemplifies the effect of the interviewing style on not only the length of turn but also on the stance of the interaction.

Face threatening acts

The importance of avoiding or minimizing Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) in interactions as public as television interviews is greater than in private interactions as the 'face loss' is more public. Several of *Y*'s turns are clear FTAs whereas there are none in *T*'s turns. An example is seen in the extract presented in (3) when *Y* asks if financial reasons motivated *M* to keep writing. Another is in (6) when *Y* says that *M* did not seem to be a person without 'pride' or 'self-respect'. Note the laughter that accompanies *Y*'s turn indicating that she knew this was not a very proper thing to say, demonstrated by *M*'s response. *Y*'s obvious awkwardness after *M*'s answer is seen in the five consecutive fillers before she tries to explain what she meant.

(6) (SY)

- 1 **Y:** *demo souiu itte wa are desu kedo, Miyaosan keshite*
2 *jisonshin no nai kata ni wa @@miemasen yo ne@@/*
3 **M:** *jisonshin.*
4 **Y:** *tsumari ano= uhn uhn sono= jibun no genkou o (hai. hai.)*
5 *kaesareta toki no (eh.) kizutsukikata tte iu no wa*
6 **M:** *kizutsukikata ne/... sore wa hontoo donzoko desune. (eh.) .*

Y: But, I don't know how to say this, but you definitely don't strike me as a person @@ lacking in self-confidence, Ms Miyao.

M: Self-confidence?

Y: Well, let me see, uhm, ah, uhm, feeling bruised when (**yes. yes**) your manuscripts are were rejected

M: Bruised?... Well, it is the worst (**yes**) ((continues))'

After *Y* explains what she meant, *M* takes the floor, but needs to think about the answer. Contrast this to example (2) where *T* asks a similar question in relation to how she felt being rejected and the stance is completely different to (3)

Discussion

Responses by the same guest and the interviewing strategies of two hosts (*T* in *TH* and *Y* in *SY*) were analysed. While both all-female interviews deal with similar topics and are 'institutional' interactions they revealed more differences than similarities. The guest's volubility and turn-initial characteristics are quite different in the two interviews. Firstly, the guest talks more in *TH*, while *T* talks more than *Y* and there could also be the influence of the 'Matarazzo effect' (Matarazzo, 1972). Secondly, the guest's turn-initial features indicate that a smoother turn-taking occurs in *TH* than in *SI*. On the other hand, hosts overwhelmingly use grammatically unfinished elicitations; however, *T* uses unfinished turns, considered more polite as they do not impose on the listener, while *Y* uses more grammatically finished questions. Moreover, *Y* uses conducive questions with negative effect whereas *T* does not use them at all. As a result, there are more 'problematic' spots in *SI* in the guest's turns which exhibit hesitation markers and pauses.

Openly aggressive or antagonistic exchanges are absent and both interviews are polite. The guest exhibits a similar degree of cooperation to that of her hosts. The fact that she asks *T* questions, which indicate in-group affiliation, shows that she feels comfortable in *TH*. On the other hand, the numerous turns containing hesitation markers indicating troubles in *SI* reveal her discomfort. However, due to *T*'s use of more positive politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987), the stance in *TH* is friendly creating an in-group atmosphere. She exaggerates positive points, praises the guest's accomplishments, and uses repetition or multiple boosters for that purpose. In response, the guest praises *T* and tries to belittle herself. In contrast, *Y*'s use of negative politeness strategies creates a psychological distance between herself and the guest. Moreover, some remarks by *Y* are judgmental (e.g. she assumes that the guest's motive for writing was financial) and she does not use mollifiers in FTAs. The guest shows her discomfort via the use of discourse markers or the use of short answers.

Although her stance is not aggressive, *Y*'s communicative strategies are in contrast to *T*'s cooperative strategies traditionally associated with 'female' language. Where *T* shows empathy by using back-channels, for example, or contradicts her guest when she self-deprecates, *Y* has no empathy markers and does FTAs without redressive action or changes the topic (see example 3 and 6) and does not acknowledge *Y*'s self-deprecation.

When interactions such as *TH* are analysed, it is easy to understand why the 'difference' theory evolved; this program is a classic example of an all-female interaction in a cooperative and relaxed atmosphere (e.g. Coates, 1996; Tannen, 1990). On the other hand, 'dominance' theorists would argue that conflicts of power or gender in *TH* are absent because everyone is aware of the interview's rules. However, *Y*'s strategies are difficult to explain because the power distribution in interviews situation is clearly defined; the host does not need to be uncooperative in order to project her authority. *Y*'s less supportive, conducive questions with negative effect and her lack of empathy challenge the notion that women are cooperative and friendly.

The reasons for these differences could also be due attributed to the nature of the broadcasting companies. While *TH* is a production of a private company and entertainment is central, *SI* is produced by NHK, the national broadcaster that is seen as more conservative.

Several questions arise from this study for future research. Can we expect a similar situation with male interviewers, namely that they will use different strategies? Will mixed-gender interviews exhibit similar findings? Further research should look into the preference organization in interviews, particularly the grammatical construction of dispreferred answers. Due to limited space in this paper, this aspect was touched upon only briefly, but deserves a closer look.

Conclusion

The findings in this study show that a 'cooperative' communication style is co-produced by the participants. A warm and cooperative eliciting technique will trigger a similar response whereas a critical attitude will generate a defensive one. These results show that communication is an on-going process and that 'styles' are not a gendered characteristic feature.

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