

**“Investigating the Relationship Between
Simultaneous Speech and Gender: A
Comparison of Two Same-Sex Groups of
University Students”**

**Richard Shiel – Undergraduate Dissertation
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Chapter 1 – Introduction to the study

1.1 Brief outline of the study

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between simultaneous speech and gender in interaction. Two conversations were recorded and transcribed. One was produced by a group of four male university students and the other was produced by a group of four female university students. The transcribed conversations were examined by quantitative and qualitative methods in order to investigate the role and function of simultaneous speech in each interaction. The findings from both analyses were then discussed and interpreted.

1.2 Reasons for undertaking the study

I had several reasons for choosing to carry out this study, the most important being that it combines my main research interests, namely gender and conversation analysis. The investigation also brought together areas of language that have been the subject of a lot of attention in the past. I felt this gave me the opportunity to approach the study in a well-informed manner, benefiting from the wealth of research that had been carried out previously. Of course, practical considerations were also of great significance. Data was easily accessible, and there was no shortage of people willing to take part in the research.

1.3 Structure of the write-up

The write-up can be split into two clear parts:

i) Chapters 2 and 3 focus on linking the study to established work carried out in this area. Chapter 2 contains a literary overview of previous research related to the study, including theories of language use and gender, theories of simultaneous speech and past studies investigating the relationship between simultaneous speech and gender. Chapter 3 explains how the findings from the overview have been incorporated into the study, with the formulation of key objectives and research questions.

ii) Chapters 4 to 6 centre on the study itself. Chapter 4 gives a thorough explanation of the methodological practices involved in collecting and analysing the data used in the study. Chapter 5 presents both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the collected data. Chapter 6 concludes the write-up, providing a discussion of the outcomes of the study and a reflection on the weaknesses of the research, along with ideas for future investigation.

Full transcripts of the conversations and details of the typology employed in the quantitative analysis are included in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

1.4 A note on terminology

Before continuing, I feel it is vital to make a point about the use of terminology in this study. James and Clarke (1993) note that this has been a problematic issue in previous work, with researchers tending to attach their own varying definitions to the same set of terms. As a result, the precise meaning of expressions such as ‘overlap’, ‘interruption’ and ‘simultaneous speech’ differ from study to study.

In this work, I have refrained from using the term ‘interruption’ to describe any type of simultaneity, as it sounds necessarily intentional and aggressive. Instead I have employed the more neutral term **‘simultaneous speech’** to describe all instances during which two speakers talk at the same time. Where I have used the term ‘interruption’, it is to either

- i) describe simultaneous speech which does constitute forceful conversational behaviour
- or
- ii) accord with the terminology employed by another researcher.

Chapter 2 – Literary Overview

2.1 Introduction

The reason for compiling a summary of the literature is twofold. It is intended to provide a theoretical background to the work carried out in this study, setting the scene by exploring what has gone before. More importantly however, it functions to show how the course of research presented here has been shaped by the outcome of previous investigation (see chapter 3). The overview consists of three sections:

2.2 Theories of language and gender – The first section provides a brief and simplistic outline of the different ways in which the relationship between language use and gender has been conceptualised in terms of ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’. Also looked at are current issues, such as the need to identify similarities between male and female language use and poststructuralist notions of the relationship between language and gender.

2.3 Theories of simultaneous speech - The second section considers some of the ways in which simultaneous speech has been examined. Included here is an account of three progressive attempts to develop a system for classifying different types of simultaneous speech, as well as an overview of research into the conversational functions performed by this linguistic phenomenon. Recent perspectives are also summarised, including a call for more specific investigation of simultaneous speech.

2.4 Previous studies - The final section provides an overview of the key investigations conducted into the relationship between simultaneous speech and gender. Regarded here are the origins of this line of enquiry, as well as the way in which research has developed over the last 30 years. Also considered is the negative effect of inconsistency between previous studies, something which has hampered clear and balanced investigation of this area.

2.2 Theories of language use and gender

2.2a The 'dominance' approach

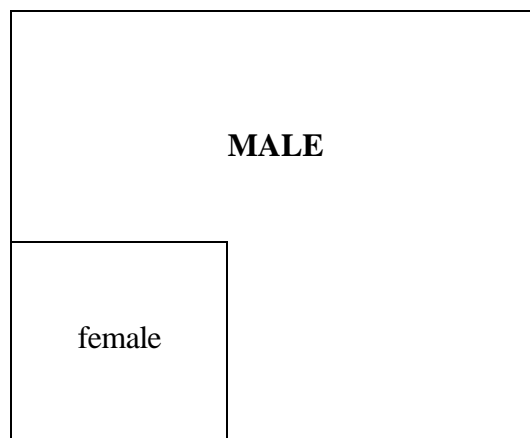
The concept of dominance emerged as a re-interpretation of the early theory of 'deficit', which supposes that the language used by females is inferior to that used by males. The dominance approach is based on the idea that asymmetries evident in the language used by males and females are representative of male domination in wider society - 'a patriarchal social order' (Talbot, 1998: pg131). Hence females are oppressed by, not subordinate to, males. The relationship between male and female language use proposed by this framework is shown in figure 2.2a:

Figure 2.2a – The dominance gender

The dominance approach was research on language and and early 1980s, with Henley (1975), Fishman (1978), Spender (1990)❶.

However, the been censured for implying a dominance (Talbot, 1998:

dominate all women is a generalisation that is easily disproved through reference to obvious exceptions.



approach to language use and

particularly prevalent in gender between the late 1970s proponents such as Thorne & Thorne et al (1983) and

dominance framework has since 'blanket conception' of male pg134). To say that all men

2.2b The 'difference' approach

The difference approach to language use and gender developed as an alternative to the dominance framework, providing a more neutral explanation for disparities in communicative behaviour between males and females. The belief is that, when growing up, males and females socialize and develop in gender-specific cultures. It is within these cultures that they acquire different sets of rules on how to communicate, and this is carried through with them to adult life. Talbot (1998: pg131) summarises this process, stating that 'the difference model depends on a 'two cultures' account of male and female socialization'. The view presented, therefore, is that male and female language is equally valid but different. The relationship between male and female language use according to the difference approach is shown in figure 2.2b on the following page:

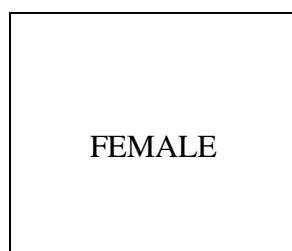
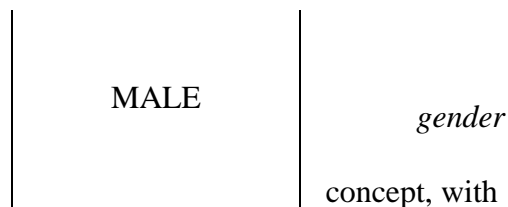


Figure 2.2b – *The difference approach to language use and*



Unlike dominance, difference has remained a popular notable advocates such as Tannen (1991). Its appeal stems from the notion of equality between males and females, something that fits in neatly with both sociolinguistic ideals and social perceptions outside the academic realm.

Yet despite its widespread acceptance, the difference approach has been the focus of much criticism. A major problem identified by Crawford (1995) and Talbot (1998) is that the framework only regards difference within talk, and not the power-related consequences of those differences. The approach also fails to explain how ‘sex-typed socialization’ (Priesler 1986) occurs during childhood, and why it is that males and females should belong to different subcultures (Johnson, 1997). Difference also implicitly assumes that each sex has a single, fixed interactional style. However, both males and females are quite capable of adopting each other’s way of talking (Talbot 1998).

2.2c Recent perspectives

Previous theories of language use and gender have been intent on placing males and females in positions of ‘binary opposition’ (Johnson 1997). Yet the dichotomies of gender proposed by both dominance and difference fail to take into account the fact that males and females are drawing on the same linguistic resources and are using the same communicative system. Therefore, as Johnson (1997) remarks, some degree of similarity or overlap must be evident in the way males and females use language. Attention is now being directed towards identifying and describing these similarities.

Another limiting preoccupation of past investigation has been with ‘the exclusive problematization of women’ (Johnson 1997). Females have always been the focus of enquiry, whereas males remain unchallenged as the ‘masculine norm’ (Priesler, 1986). Consequently little is known about masculinities, and so this too has become a focus of interest.

However, perhaps the most important theoretical development has come in the form of a poststructuralist perspective on the relationship between language and gender. Poststructural thinking suggests that gender is not something ‘pregiven’ and static (Talbot, 1998), but the product of social practices and processes. Masculinity and femininity are thus *constructed* by society - a process in which language plays a key role (Johnson, 1997). Hence gender is shaped and produced by language, not the reverse.

2.3 Theories of simultaneous speech

2.3a Typologies

One of the first attempts to distinguish between different types of simultaneous speech came in the form of research carried out on communication in schizophrenic families by Mishler & Waxler (1968). They proposed that interruptions in conversation could be placed in one of two categories:

Successful interruptions (interrupting acts) – where the second speaker prevents the first speaker from completing their turn. Thus the first speaker is ‘talked down’.

A: I don't think that .
 B: 't mind if I was going..

-example taken from Mishler & Waxler (1968)-

Unsuccessful interruptions (simultaneous acts) – where the first speaker continues to talk (simultaneously with the second speaker) until their turn is complete. Thus the second speaker fails in their attempt to seize the conversational floor.

A: I just said I don't .
 B: e was more

-example taken from Mishler & Waxler

(1968)-

In 1977 Nicola Ferguson developed an alternative system for classifying simultaneous speech. This consisted of four categories: simple interruptions, butting-in interruptions, overlaps and silent interruptions, all of which she contrasted with a ‘perfect speaker switch’ – where the first speaker completes their turn and no simultaneous speech takes place. The correspondence between these categories and those identified by Mishler & Waxler is shown in table 2.3a, below:

Mishler & Waxler (1968)	Successful interruptions	Unsuccessful interruptions		
Ferguson (1977)	Simple interruptions	Butting-in	Overlaps	Silent interruptions

Table 2.3a – Correspondence between categories of simultaneous speech proposed by Mishler & Waxler (1968) and Ferguson (1977)

Ferguson's 'simple interruptions' are effectively the same as Mishler & Waxler's 'successful interruptions', describing instances in which the first speaker is broken off by the second speaker with their turn incomplete.

However, Ferguson claimed that Mishler & Waxler's category 'unsuccessful interruptions' was too broad. She suggested that it was possible to differentiate between two types of interruption which involve turn completion by the interruptee:

Butting-in interruptions - in which the second speaker fails to seize the conversational floor and breaks off before completing their utterance:

A: I don't know [] mixed feelings, I think it would be nice to have a baby
B: [] -

-example taken from Ferguson

(1977)-

Overlaps – in which the second speaker manages to take the conversational floor but not before the first speaker has completed their turn:

A: I expect you would like to go [] n
B: [] 'd prefer it

-example taken from Ferguson

(1977)-

Ferguson also includes an additional interruptive behaviour in her typology, that of 'silent interruptions'. Silent interruptions describe instances in which the second speaker begins to talk immediately upon the first speaker's completing the utterance of a word while in midturn (James & Clarke 1993). Consequently the first speaker stops talking and gives up the turn. This action is executed so swiftly that no simultaneous speech actually occurs, hence the term *silent* interruption.

A: it wasn't in ours actually it was a bloke and um
B: [] but anybody who's a bit
lazy

-example taken from Ferguson

(1977)-

Ferguson's system of classification was certainly seen by many as an improvement over Mishler & Waxler's, and features in several studies, including Beattie (1981), Marche (1988 – quoted in James & Clarke 1993), and Craig & Pitts 1990.

Yet Roger, Bull & Smith (1988) argued that Ferguson's work was not a significant improvement. They noted three main problems with her typology:

1) Simple and butting-in interruptions merely replicate, rather than modify, Mishler & Waxler's successful and unsuccessful interruptions.

2) Overlaps may not necessarily constitute purposive intrusions into another speaker's turn. They are equally likely to be the result of enthusiasm or involvement in the conversation.

3) Silent interruptions are based on the assumption that because an utterance is incomplete, the speaker intended to continue talking. This is not always the case, as speakers may trail off midway through an utterance simply because they have finished what they wanted to say.

Because of these limitations, Roger et al devised a new simultaneous speech classification system. This took the form of a binary flow chart, reproduced in figure 2.3a below:

Figure 2.3a – Simultaneous speech classification system devised by Roger, Bull & Smith (1988)

Roger et al's system is clearly a lot more complex than anything developed before, distinguishing between seventeen different simultaneous speech 'events'. A key improvement is that it makes a clear distinction between purposive and incidental simultaneous speech in conversation. Both Mishler & Waxler and Ferguson limited their typologies only to those instances which they considered purposive. Roger et al also incorporate both solitary ('single') and multiple ('complex') instances of simultaneous speech into their classification, allowing a broader range of occurrences to be classified.

Despite these advancements, Roger et al's typology has not been without its critics. For instance, Hawkins (1990) feels that the system is limited as it only defines interruptions from the perspective of the analyst - something that she feels is subject to inconsistency (*cf.* Talbot's comments in 2.3c). Another problem is that the typology is based on the same distinction between 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' interruptions made by Mishler & Waxler. This implies that purposive simultaneous speech is necessarily interruptive, its 'success' depending on whether control of the conversational floor has been obtained at the expense of the original speaker. As discussed in the following section, this is a rather blinkered interpretation.

2.3b Functions

Early research into conversation portrayed simultaneous speech as performing a singular interruptive function in interaction. It was seen purely as a means through which one speaker could wrest conversational control by encroaching on the turn being taken by another. This view was based on a model of conversation proposed by Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974). They suggest that interaction is based on a 'one-at-a-time' turn-taking structure, in which overlaps between speakers are rare and brief. The principles of Conversation Analysis adhere closely to the Sacks et al model, identifying speaker exchange as an orderly process (Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998). Simultaneous speech, which disrupts this procedure, was regarded by conversation analysts as an aberration and thus had dysfunctional associations.

The only recognised exceptions to this general rule were 'back-channel utterances' (Yngve 1970), single word utterances such as 'yeah', 'right', and 'mmm' produced by the listener to indicate interest and attentiveness to what is being said by the speaker. As James & Clark (1993: pg238) note, 'these need not be, but frequently are, uttered simultaneously with the speaker's talk'.

In the last decade, however, several researchers have taken a more contextual approach to simultaneous speech, looking at occurrences in relation to the conversation as a whole rather than in isolation. In doing so they have revealed a broad range of positive interactional applications for this phenomenon.

Edelsky (1993) suggests that it is possible to distinguish between two types of conversational 'floor' depending on the nature of interaction taking place. Formal conversation has the 'one-at-a-time' floor described by Sacks et al (1974). Conversely informal, casual interaction between friends is characterised by a collaborative conversational floor on which it is permissible for several speakers to contribute to the interaction at the same time. Thus where such a collaborative floor is in place, simultaneous speech functions as a cooperative act, indicative of speakers 'working together to produce shared meanings' (Coates, 1989). Goldberg (1990) reinforces this interpretation, terming such instances 'rapport type interruptions'.

Goldberg (1990) also identifies that simultaneous speech can occur as a 'relationally neutral act'. She argues that, under certain circumstances, it is necessary to interrupt another speaker in order to deal with 'the immediate needs of the communicative situation'. The term 'relationally neutral' is used because the occurrence of simultaneous speech has no bearing on the relationship between the speakers. Interruptions of this kind may be used to:

i) convey a lack of understanding:

P: Okay the doc [] ctor Eddington

He's the first

D: Ehrinton?

P: Eddington. He works out've...

-example taken from Goldberg

(1990)-

ii) communicate a need for clarification:

P: = It um, (hh.) (0.3) I see- I have wip [] theath 'n'
seen a little blood. (hh) That's every [] a great while,
havin' seen any recently. That wz the e-

D: There was discharge, where?

-example taken from Goldberg

(1990)-

iii) respond to an emergency situation:

A: I'm just going to pick up []

B: [] n't touch that it's hot!

-example adapted from James & Clarke (1993)-

Finally, James & Clarke (1993) make the important point that simultaneous speech can occur simply as the result of mistiming errors in conversation. Therefore not all instances of simultaneous speech can be associated with a particular communicative function.

2.3c Recent perspectives

Recent ideas about defining and interpreting simultaneous speech have placed emphasis on closer consideration of specific examples. James & Clarke (1993) suggest that in order to adequately determine the function of simultaneous speech, one needs to draw on various features specific to the interaction in which it occurs. Broad contextual characteristics such as the trend and content of the conversation and the relationship between the conversationalists should be considered, along with the semantic content of the simultaneous speech itself. A similar point is made by Greenwood (1996: pg80), who writes:

"As frustrating as this may be, the task of defining and interpreting (simultaneous speech) forces us away from global generalizations and broad categorizations to careful examination of specific interactions."

Talbot (1991) goes a stage further. She argues that it is only the participants in the conversation who are in a position to determine the part played by simultaneous speech. Thus accurate interpretation through external observation is, in Talbot's opinion at least, unlikely.

2.4 Previous studies

2.4a Origins of research

Research into the relationship between simultaneous speech and gender can be traced back some thirty years. The studies generally accepted as the pioneering works in this field were carried out by Don Zimmerman and Candace West in 1975 and 1978^③.

Their first investigation (Zimmerman & West 1975) examined 11 cross-sex and 20 same-sex dyads of acquainted persons in natural settings (*cf.* section 4.1b).

They found that interruptions ('violations of a speaker's right to complete a turn') were clustered together in only a few of the conversations between the same-sex pairs, but distributed almost uniformly across all of the conversations between the cross-sex pairs. Virtually all of the interruptions in the cross-sex interactions had been initiated by males. In interpreting these findings, Zimmerman & West concluded that 'female's...rights to speak appear to be casually infringed upon by males' (pg 117).

The second study conducted by the pair (West & Zimmerman 1983) was a follow-up to the first. Their aim was to see if the results from the 1975 investigation would be replicated under reverse conditions. This time 5 cross-sex dyads of unacquainted persons were observed in an experimental setting (*cf.* section 4.1b). West & Zimmerman claimed that the outcome of this second study was the same as the first, noting that the results were 'substantially similar' to their previous findings.

These investigations were hugely influential, their impact still evident in current literature (Talbot 1991). Yet they have also attracted much criticism. Murray & Covelli (1988) state that Zimmerman and West's claims 'tax credulity', and suggest that the data they collected was interpreted selectively. Talbot (1991) refers to the structural methods of simultaneous speech distinction used in both investigations as 'rather crude'^④. She also supposes that Zimmerman and West were intent on working with the theory of dominance, being 'anxious...to identify the male oppressor' (1991: pg 2).

2.4b Development of research

Since the early work of Zimmerman & West, research into simultaneous speech and gender has developed considerably. In their survey of the gender-related simultaneous speech literature, James & Clarke (1993) refer to fifty-four different studies conducted since 1975. Broadly speaking, one can divide these studies into two main categories^⑤:

- 1) Those looking at cross-sex interaction.
- 2) Those looking at same-sex interaction.

Within each of these categories, both dyadic and group interactions have been observed. The development of research into simultaneous speech and gender is summarised in figure 2.4b, below:

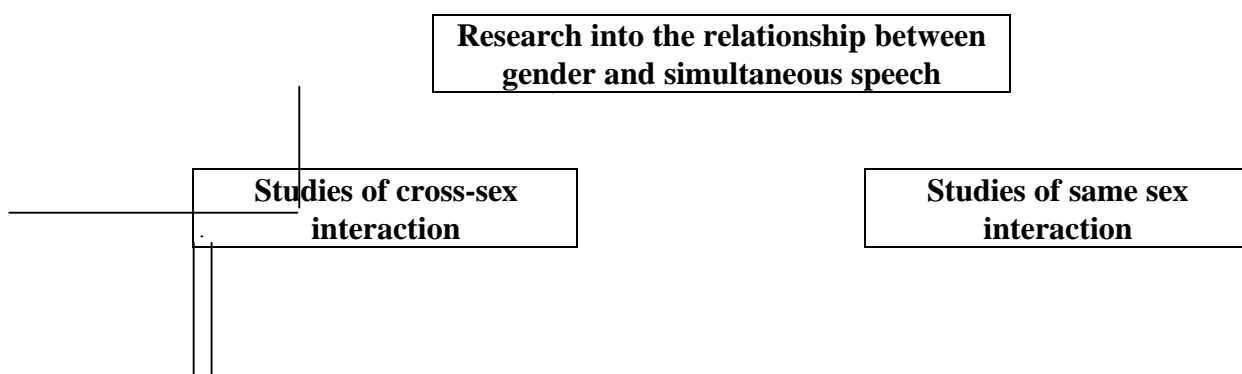




Figure 2.4b – Development of research into simultaneous speech and gender

Associated with the two main branches of research are slightly different lines of enquiry. Examinations of cross-sex interaction have traditionally been concerned with the distribution of simultaneous speech, or more commonly interruptions, between males and females in conversation. Research objectives have typically been to either:

- a) reveal whether males interrupt females more or less often than females interrupt males – for example, studies by Kollock, Blumstein & Schwartz (1985) and Woods (1989).
- b) ascertain whether each gender interrupts males or females more – for example, studies by Beattie (1981), Murray & Covelli (1988) and Craig & Pitts (1990).

Investigations into same-sex interactions have regarded whether there is any difference in the simultaneous speech behaviour exhibited by males and females when they are conversing with members of the same sex. Again, interruption has been the preoccupation here, with many studies comparing the number of interruptions in all-male conversation with the number of interruptions in all-female conversation. Notable investigations of this issue include Dabbs & Ruback (1984), de Boer (1987), Smith-Lovin & Brody (1989), McLachlan (1991) and Simkins Bullock & Wildman (1991).

The majority of both same-sex and cross-sex investigations have found that there is little difference between males and females with regard to interruptions (James & Clark 1993). However, recent work addressing the broader functions of simultaneous speech has revealed gender disparities. A good example of this is a study of all-male interaction conducted by Coates (1997). She suggests that talk between males is characterised by a one-at-a-time conversational floor (*cf.* section 2.3b). Consequently, males rarely employ simultaneous speech in the same consistently collaborative manner as females.

2.4c The problem of inconsistency

A significant problem that has affected a lot of research in this field is inconsistency. Variability between studies has made it difficult to compare their results and formulate definite ideas about the relationship between simultaneous speech and gender. James and Clarke (1993) identify three areas in which these inconsistencies are manifest:

- 1) Subject and situational variables – The influence of factors such as the age, status and acquaintanceship of participants and the topic and setting of the interaction has not been ‘systematically addressed’ in previous work. As a result, these variables have not always been subject to the same level of control.
- 2) Methods of counting instances of simultaneous speech – In many studies, occurrences of simultaneous speech have been counted in raw numbers. Yet others have used statistical methods to calculate the *rate* of simultaneities. The results of these different forms of measurement are often quite dissimilar.
- 3) Distinctions and definitions of simultaneous speech – Researchers have tended to adopt rather idiosyncratic perceptions of simultaneous speech, using the same set of terms to describe their own distinctions (*cf.* section 1.5). Consequently definitions of simultaneous speech vary from one study to the next. This incoherence has made it difficult to draw effective parallels between investigations.

James and Clarke (1993) conclude that irregularities such as need to be ‘ironed out’ if future research is to be effective and reliable.

Notes to chapter 2:

❶ This book was originally published in 1980 – however, the version referenced is the second edition, reprinted in 1990.

❷ A similar distinction had been made some years earlier by West & Zimmerman (1983). They differentiated between ‘shallow’ interruptions (incidental) and ‘deep’ interruptions (purposive). However, whereas their distinction was purely structural, Roger et al’s is more interpretative and therefore, in my view at least, more effective.

❸ This study was actually conducted in 1978 – however, the version referenced is the 1983 reprint.

❹ It is interesting to note that this structural definition has been employed in a recent study by Hawkins (1990) – evidence that Zimmerman & West’s early work remains influential.

❺ Several works have incorporated observations of both cross-sex and same-sex interaction – examples include Zimmerman & West (1975), Bilous & Krauss (1988), and Redeker & Maes (1996).

Chapter 3 – Intentions and objectives

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly explain how I applied the findings of the literary overview to my own research. This significant process enabled me to sculpt the study by incorporating and addressing the important issues that had been raised in earlier work.

3.2 Theoretical stance

I have adopted some of the newer perspectives on the relationship between language use and gender to frame the research. The investigation is founded on the notion that language shapes gender, with emphasis on identifying the characteristics of simultaneous speech that seem to define masculinity and femininity. Also of prime importance was a need to reflect gender similarity as well as difference. I endeavoured to do this by highlighting simultaneous speech features common to males and females. Furthermore, the research has been structured in such a way that equal weight is placed on both male and female use of language.

3.3 Principal considerations

At the heart of the study were two key considerations. I felt it was crucial to reflect the multi-functional nature of simultaneous speech in the data analysis, avoiding synonymy with interruption and its negative

connotations. This seemed particularly pertinent to the analysis of informal interaction. As Coates (1989: pg113) points out, ‘interruption is hardly ever appropriate as a description of instances of simultaneous speech which occur in gossip’. I was also wary of methodological shortcomings that could affect the research (*cf.* section 2.4c), and so paid particular attention to the control and manipulation of subject and situational variables in order to obtain the best possible data for analysis.

3.4 Research questions

Two research questions were central to the study:

- 1) What are the main similarities and differences between the two groups in terms of simultaneous speech?
- 2) How does the form and function of simultaneous speech characterise gender in the groups observed?

These research questions were formulated both to guide the focus of the research and provide a tool for effective analysis of the data.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

4.1 Methodology – data collection

4.1a Introduction to data collection

This section contains a thorough explanation of the various methodological issues and considerations involved in obtaining and handling the data used in the study. It has been divided into four parts, each of which concerns a different component of the data collection process:

4.1b General methodological approach: - the broad methodological stance that governed the way data was obtained.

4.1c Organising the interactions: - the various measures involved in forming the two groups of participants and setting up the conversations.

4.1d Recording the interactions: - the steps taken to produce good recordings of the conversations.

4.1e Transcribing the recordings: - the procedures associated with making clear and accurate transcriptions of the conversations.

The relationship between these components is represented in figure 4.1a on the following page.

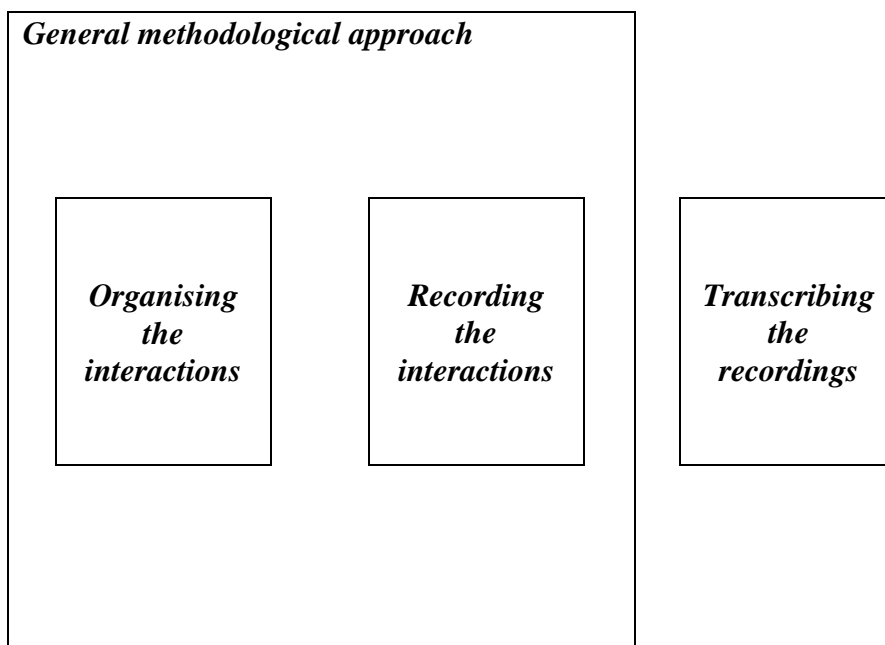


Figure 4.1a – Components of the data collection process

4.1b – General methodological approach

A central consideration in carrying out research into interpersonal interaction is the methodological approach to obtaining data. There are two well recognised, contrasting approaches to collecting interactional data. Roger & Bull (1988) identify these methods as ‘experimental’ and ‘naturalistic’.

The experimental method is based on exerting substantial control over the interactions being studied. This control involves manipulating key variables in order to see what effect is had on the data collected. Conversely, the naturalistic method centres on obtaining interactional data that has been subject to no forms of control whatsoever. The aim here is to examine the most unaffected and spontaneous interaction possible. Which of these methods produces the most accurate and reliable data has been a focus of debate amongst researchers for some time. Interaction produced under experimental conditions has been deemed artificial and contrived by the likes of Heritage (1984). At the same time, the naturalistic approach has received equal condemnation for generating data that lacks focus and is open to a wide range of possible interpretations.

An alternative route is to combine both experimental and naturalistic procedures in collecting data. This compromise allows one to take advantage of the benefits of both methods whilst avoiding many of their drawbacks. It also makes the process of obtaining data more flexible, overcoming any rigidity imposed by being purely experimental or natural in approach. Huls (1988) advocates merging the two methods. She points out that one can combine experimental and naturalistic procedures in different measures to achieve particular research goals - objectives that might not be fulfilled by adopting an orthodox standpoint.

Based on these considerations, I felt it was important to employ both experimental and natural procedures in the process of collecting data for this study. Exerting control over significant variables was vital, helping to ensure that comparisons made between the groups were associated with gender and nothing else. Yet ensuring the data was as unconstrained and natural as possible was an equally weighty concern, related to the general validity of the findings.

4.1c Organising the interactions

a) Pre-selection of participants:

The pre-selection of informants taking part in the study was an experimental procedure used to control variability in the research process. In order to isolate gender as the only source of variation between the two groups being observed, I considered it necessary to hold constant other variables that might have affected the interactions produced. Therefore I pre-selected participants on the basis of three main criteria; age, social status and acquaintanceship:

i) Age and social status

Many researchers have noted the effect of both age (Helfrich 1979, Blum-Kulka 1997) and social status (Labov 1972, Bernstein 1990) on language use. For that reason, I anticipated that age and status differentials within each group would have a significant impact on interactional conduct. Participants of a higher age or status may have felt more at liberty to dominate and control the interaction, whereas younger or lower status participants may have become withdrawn and less willing to make contributions. To eliminate this possibility and permit effective inter-group comparisons, I pre-selected participants on the basis that they were all of roughly the same age and 'achieved' social status (Wardhaugh 1995, Mesthrie et al 2000). Recruiting final year undergraduate students as informants fulfilled both of these requirements - all were 20-21 years of age and in the same social position

ii) Acquaintanceship

A considerable advantage of observing groups of informants who are well acquainted is the spontaneity of the interaction produced. Roger (1988) comments that conversations between strangers are subject to constraints imposed by 'social norms', and so do not reflect natural interactional behaviour. Coates (1996) also notes that sensitivity to the presence of recording equipment is less marked with groups of friends, so reducing the effects of observer intrusiveness. On the strength of these observations, I felt that a further basis of pre-selection must be that all participants forming each group should know each other well. Thus each group was composed of close friends, all of whom were living together during their final year at University.

b) Group size:

Another variable that had to be kept constant was the size of the groups being observed. Both groups needed to include the same number of participants to make comparisons between them effective. I decided that each group should have four members, as the structure and distribution of interaction produced in groups of this size might offer the most interesting data for analysis.

c) Setting:

The choice of location in which the interactions were to be recorded was a crucial part of attempting to ensure the collection of natural data.

Roger & Bull (1988) argue that, regardless of where an interaction is set, the naturalness of what is produced will always be compromised by the effects of the observer. This is certainly a valid point, but I would reason that, although the setting will never *completely determine* whether an observed conversation is natural or not, it certainly *contributes* towards making it so.

On this premise I selected two separate settings in which interactions were recorded. Each setting was specific to the group being observed. The male group was recorded in the living room of their house in Lancaster. The female group was recorded in a participant's bedroom in the University halls of residence.

d) Participant briefing:

Both groups of informants were made aware of the following prior to the start of recording:

- The recording was part of research being carried out for a dissertation.
- The topic of conversation was irrelevant.
- All participants would remain anonymous throughout the research process.

I had two reasons for briefing participants in this way:

i) I felt it was important to be open with participants about the reason for recording the interaction, both to satisfy their curiosity and ensure their full co-operation. Yet at the same time I also knew it was crucial not to be explicit about the focus of research. Revealing what was being examined in the study may have led to participants monitoring this aspect of their interactional behaviour during the conversation.

ii) Equally critical was a need to make participants feel comfortable and relaxed with the prospect of having their conversation recorded. Natural, unconstrained interaction was more likely to result from a sense of ease with the situation. I therefore took the opportunity to express a disinterest in the topic of the conversation and stress the assurance of anonymity for all those involved in the research.

e) Topic of interactions

Several researchers have identified the topic of conversation as a potential source of disruption when looking at gender and interaction. James & Clarke (1993) suggest that males or females may perceive themselves to be more of an 'authority' on certain subjects, affecting the way they interact. A necessary step in avoiding this might be to predetermine a gender-neutral topic for discussion. However, I decided not to take this measure for the following reasons:

i) Setting a topic for discussion would have imposed a degree of constraint on the interactions, the effects of which would be particularly obvious if the subject selected had not been of equal interest to all participants. I also wished to avoid making conversational content an issue with the participants (see 'participant briefing').

ii) Setting a topic also seemed to be rather impractical. As each conversation progressed, the subject of discussion was likely to change several times. I had no way of monitoring or controlling this.

To avoid these problems and promote more natural interaction, I felt it best to allow participants to develop their own topic of conversation. In doing this, the observation made by James and Clarke seemed to become less of an issue. It was unlikely that participants in same-sex groups would choose to talk about a 'gender-specific' subject they knew nothing about.

4.1d Recording the interactions

a) Equipment used and placement

I used a Sony TCM-939 portable tape machine (with built-in microphone) to record both interactions. I believed that any attempt to conceal this apparatus would be inconsequential. The participants were already aware that their conversations were being recorded, and so exposure of the equipment was likely to have made little difference to the way they interacted. Indeed, hiding the tape recorder may have drawn more attention to it, with participants curious as to its location. Placing the tape machine out in the open also ensured a good sound signal to the microphone.

b) Reduction of background noise

To further enhance the quality of the sound signal to the microphone I tried to eliminate as many sources of background noise as possible. This involved closing windows and turning off appliances such as televisions and radios.

c) Observer position

As the recognised observer of the interactions, it was imperative that I was absent from the room whilst recordings were in progress. My presence would almost certainly have been intrusive, making participants feel as though they were being ‘watched’.

d) Duration of recordings

Each recording lasted a total of twenty minutes. The first ten minutes was intended as a ‘warm-up’ period in which the participants could settle down and get used to the situation. Consequently I discarded this section of the recording when it came to transcribing the interactions. I expected the final ten minutes to be the time during which participants would be most relaxed and thus producing the most natural, unconstrained interaction. Therefore only this part of the recording was transcribed. The division of recording time is summarised in figure 4.1d.

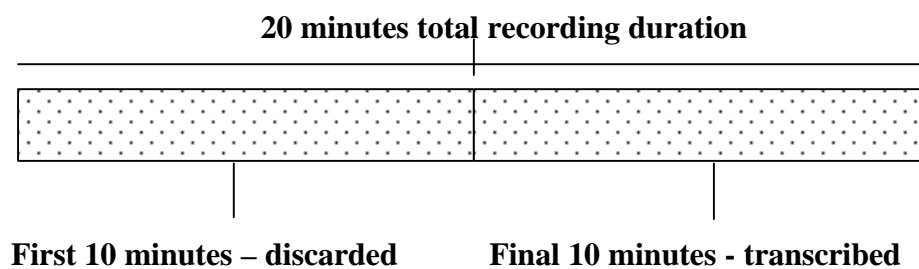


Figure 4.1d – Division of recording time

4.1e Transcribing the recordings

a) Level of detail

Ochs (1999) identifies two key factors that are central to the production of a clear, perspicuous transcript. The first is that it should not contain too much information. Overly detailed transcripts are difficult to follow and appraise. The second is that information presented on the transcript should be relevant to the focus of research.

In essence, transcriptions need to be selective (Have 1999). To fulfill these requirements, I have transcribed only those details that I feel are relevant to the examination and analysis of simultaneous speech.

b) Layout

Relevance to the focus of the study also had to be reflected in the visual characteristics of the transcripts. The form of layout I have selected is the musical-stave type as used by Eckert (1993) and Coates (1996, 1997), which seems to present the features being studied particularly clearly. A diagrammatic description of the transcript layout is included in Appendix 1 (pg II).

c) Symbols

The symbols used on the transcripts were derived from Gail Jefferson (reproduced in Maxwell-Atkinson & Heritage 1984), and Coates (1996). I have also included some of my own minor adaptations. A detailed list of these symbols is included in Appendix 1 (pg I).

4.2 Methodology – data analysis

4.2a Introduction to data analysis

This section explains how each of the transcripts produced from the recordings have been investigated and examined through both quantitative and qualitative analyses. It is quite unusual that both of these methods should be applied within a single study. As Roger & Bull (1988) observe, quantitative interpretation of data tends to be associated with experimental investigation, whereas qualitative analysis is employed in naturalistic research. However, in view of the fact that I used both experimental and naturalistic features to collect the data, it seems appropriate to include both types of analysis in the study. By using both methods in combination, I also feel I have been able to explore the conversational data more thoroughly, using quantitative and qualitative interpretations to support each other. The process of data analysis is summarised in figure 4.2a:



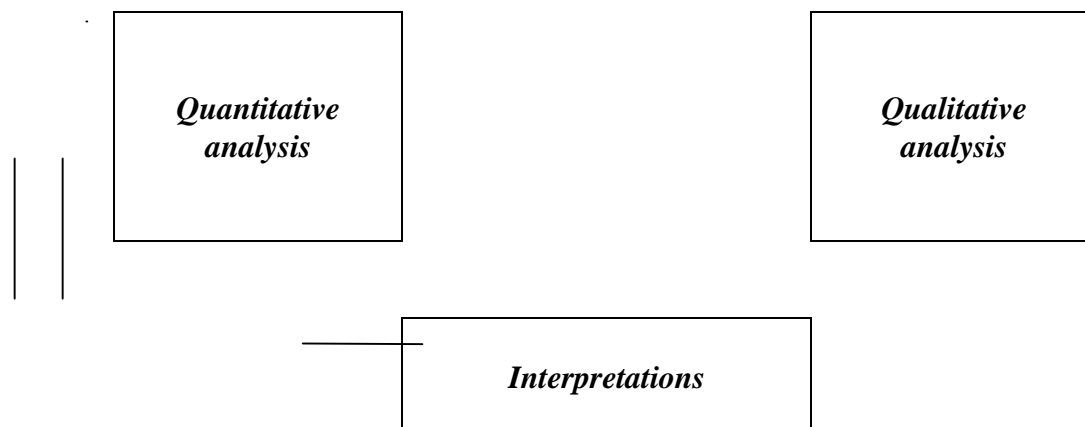


Figure 4.2a – *Process of data analysis*

4.2b Quantitative analysis

Central to the quantitative analysis was the development and implementation of an analytical framework (a typology) to inspect the data collected. As Roger & Bull (1988: pg141) comment ‘a natural consequence of a quantitative approach to the study of communication is the need for categorisation’. The typology used in this study is derived from Roger, Bull & Smith’s (1988) simultaneous speech classification system (*cf.* section 2.3a). I have adopted this system as the basis of the quantitative analysis as it is particularly clear, being based on a ‘sequential decision procedure’ (Redeker & Maes 1996). In developing the typology used in this research, I made three important adaptations to Roger et al’s original system:

- 1) - The classification system devised by Roger et al is comprehensive, attempting to account for every possible variation of simultaneous speech in conversation. To apply this system in its entirety to the relatively small samples of data collected in this study would be impractical. Therefore I have been selective, including only those categories that pertain to the data.
- 2) - A more important adaptation concerns the terminology used by Roger et al to describe different types of simultaneous speech. In line with my earlier criticism of the system (*cf.* section 2.3a) I have seen fit to replace some of the original terms with my own descriptions. In doing this I hope to reflect more accurately the broad range of functions that simultaneous speech can perform in conversation (*cf.* section 2.3b).
- 3) - The final adaptation is the addition of a further category, ‘indeterminable’. This describes instances of simultaneous speech that were not covered by Roger et al’s system.

As a result of these adaptations, I created a typology consisting of 9 simultaneous speech ‘types’. This typology was then applied to each transcript to quantify the different simultaneous speech instances present. Table 4.2b provides a general outline of the typology. A full description of each simultaneous speech type, along with illustrative examples taken from the data, is included in Appendix 2.

Type	Description (original term used by Roger et al in parentheses)
1	Interruption (‘successful single interruption’)
2	Second speaker break off (‘unsuccessful single interruption’)
3	Second speaker turn within first speaker turn (‘unsuccessful single interruption with completion’)
4	Deep Overlap (‘unsuccessful single overlapping interruption’)
5	Shallow Overlap (‘overlap’)
6	Listener response
7	Interjection
8	False Start
9	Indeterminable

Table 4.2b – *Outline of simultaneous speech typology*

4.2c Qualitative analysis

The qualitative analysis was less methodical, involving a simple procedure of selecting and examining key examples from the data. The aim of this was to use illustrative extracts to exemplify broader points about the occurrence and function of simultaneous speech in each conversation. Talbot (1996) is a firm supporter of this approach. She comments that it allows the researcher to see simultaneous speech ‘in action’.

Chapter 5 – Data Analysis

5.1 Quantitative Analysis

Table 5.11 provides information on the total amount of simultaneous speech in each conversation analysed. Table 5.12 gives a full breakdown of simultaneous speech in each conversation by type. Proportional representation has been achieved through conversion of raw figures to percentages. Chart 5.11 on the following page presents the relative frequency of simultaneous speech types in each conversation in terms of percentage proportions.

	Total Number of simultaneous speech instances
Male Group Conversation	96

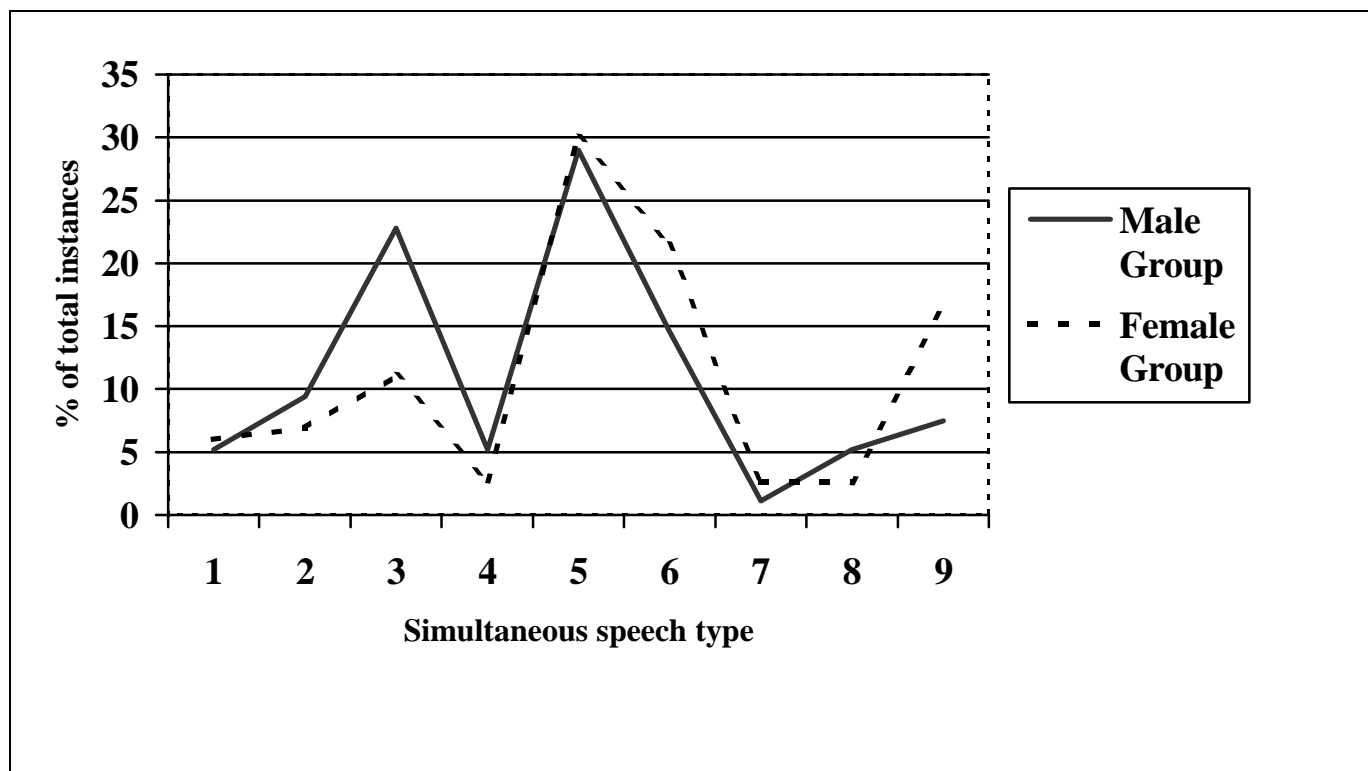


Table 5.11 – Total number of simultaneous speech instances in each conversation

Simultaneous Speech	Male Group Conversation		Female Group Conversation	
	Number of instances	% of total instances	Number of instances	% of total instances
Type 1	5	5.2	7	6
Type 2	9	9.4	8	6.9
Type 3	22	22.8	13	11.1
Type 4	5	5.2	4	2.7
Type 5	28	29	35	30
Type 6	14	14.6	25	21.5
Type 7	1	1.1	3	2.6
Type 8	5	5.2	3	2.6
Type 9	7	7.5	18	16.6

Table 5.12 – Breakdown of simultaneous speech in each conversation by type

Chart 5.1 – Relative frequency of simultaneous speech types in each conversation

The most obvious point to make about the findings presented here is that simultaneous speech occurs more frequently in the female group conversation. Simultaneities took place than in the male group conversation, a notable difference.

However, closer inspection of the breakdown of simultaneous speech types reveals that beneath this surface-level disparity, three clear and important similarities are present between the male and female groups. The first is that all types of simultaneous speech identified were present in both male and female conversations. No simultaneities failed to feature in either interaction. Thus within this data sample, none of the simultaneous speech varieties specified in the typology were 'gender-specific'.

The second important similarity regards the general distribution of the different types of simultaneous speech within each of the interactions. The frequency lines on chart 5.1 follow a similar course, indicating the comparable spread of the different varieties. This observation appears to be reinforced by the fact that in both conversations, type 5 simultaneities (shallow overlaps) were most frequent, and type 7 simultaneities (interjections) were least frequent. However, this may not necessarily be related to gender per se. The high number of overlaps might be accounted for as a sign of speaker enthusiasm, a probability in informal interactions such as these. The low frequency of interjections may be a reflection of the fact that these are particularly difficult simultaneities to 'pull-off' in conversation, involving precise synchronization between the first and second speaker.

A further key likeness concerns the low numbers of interruptions in both conversations. Intentional attempts to wrest the conversational floor from another speaker account for less than 6% of the total number of simultaneities in each conversation. Thus interruptive behaviour was certainly not a central characteristic of either group.

However, differences between the groups were equally marked. The male conversation was characterised by an abundance of type 3 (second speaker turn within first speaker turn) simultaneities. These accounted for over a fifth of the total number of instances, double the proportion in the female group interaction. In turn, a distinctive feature of the female group interaction was a high frequency of type 6 (listener response) simultaneities. Although these occur quite frequently in the male group conversation, they are particularly prominent features of the female interaction.

A further dissimilarity between the groups concerns type 9 (indeterminable) simultaneities. The extent to which this can be attributed to gender is unclear, as the simultaneous speech types are unclassifiable instances. This area would certainly receive more detailed attention if space was permitting.

5.2 Qualitative analysis

In presenting the findings from the qualitative analysis, I have found it possible to group related observations together under general headings:

a) Male group collaborative style

Simultaneous speech played a key role in the collaborative style adopted in the male group conversation. There were several periods in the interaction where simultaneous utterances were chained together, forming a collective idea between the speakers:

137					
D:	= year		the Ball		and the
M:	Fairy				
R:		the day of the Ball			
J:	story =	it was the day	of my	very first	Ball

In this example, the group members are making a joke out of a previous utterance. They join in the joke by speaking over each other's turns. At first sight the simultaneities appear to be interruptive, but instead comments are being piled up together between the speakers to share the humour of the moment. It seems that the male group members are quite comfortable with encroaching on each other's turns. Another case of this occurred a little earlier in the conversation:

40					
	d			deepest darkest	
	a				
	if you're in Antarctica you	have to support Man United			hhh.

Again, it appears as though the two speakers are competing with each other to gain control of the turn. Yet closer examination of the content of their turns shows they are building a humorous idea together. Another prominent feature of the male group conversation was the frequent addition of simultaneous comments with a speaker's turn. This feature was often used to support the first speaker's utterance in some way:

72					
D:					
M:					
R:	no no I think it's the	morning the morning one that does the Ministry			
J:		it sounds right			

Here, J reinforces R's idea by providing a supportive comment providing his own positive opinion of what has just been said.

However this feature was not always used in this cooperative manner. On several occasions, comments were uttered simultaneously to express disagreement or disapproval:

26					
D:				you didn't (x x x x)	
M:			per that		
R:	you did (.) you	did you ruined it completely (+)			no well I'd
J:					

In this example, M contests what R has said, attempting to falsify the claim that has been made against him.

b) Female group collaborative style

The female group conversation also involved a great deal of collaborative simultaneous speech. However, this took a notably different form to that used by the males. The female group members seemed to extend each other's turns by overlapping and providing further comments.

1	
H:	[]
K:	what do yo [] Jules
R:	it was BRILLIANT (+) [] yeah
J:	was it not a pile of shit = I liked

In this example, R extends K's turn by overlapping with her own supportive comment. This adds further emphasis to the comment that K had previously made.

A similar effect was also achieved through assistance in completing turns through simultaneous speech:

10	
H:	[]
K:	slapping
R:	I just kept cri::nging at he::r she needed (+) s- slap yeah <whipping sound>
J:	

Here, K shares the idea being expressed by R through simultaneously uttering the same word in R's turn.

Listener responses were also forms of simultaneous collaboration that occurred frequently in the female group interaction. These were consistently employed as a means of expressing agreement and understanding:

140	
H:	[]
K:	somewhere be [] to go
R:	some sort of discount for your (.) erm buddies and all that wouldn't
J:	mmm mmm

c) Turn holding strategy

An interesting feature of the male group conversation was the use of simultaneous speech with raised voice to maintain control of the conversational floor. This only took place on one occasion, but the example was so prominent that I felt it warranted analysis:

34	
D:	[]
M:	
R:	yeah (.) BUT WE beat them two one (.) last time (.)
J:	that it oh it's usually a lot more

Originally, J attempts to comment on R's previous utterance. However, R clearly sees this as a challenge to his turn, and so to force control of the turn he not only speaks over J but does so with a raised voice. This seems to be a particularly effective way of maintaining control of the turn. However, shortly afterwards J makes another comment simultaneously with R's utterance. Once again, R appears to view this as a challenge to his turn, and so raises his voice once more to thwart the perceived interruption attempt:

35	
R:	which is PRETTY GOOD for a first division team =
J:	((go away)) = five nil's (.) just as good

It seems quite revealing that this type of simultaneous speech behaviour should have been exhibited in the male group conversation.

The female group did not attempt to control simultaneities in the same way. Instead, turns seemed to be held by a quick succession of speaker changes between which there was no overlap:

44	
H:	actually I quite like them there =
K:	I
R:	
J:	= an I quite like your room like this Hannah =
45	
H:	do (.) I was just thinking that (.) it seems bigger
K:	
R:	
J:	it does doesn't it (+) you've

d) Organisation of the conversational floor

A significant difference between the male and female group conversations was the organisation of the conversational floor. For the most part, both conversations seemed to operate a collaborative conversational floor on which several speakers were able to converse at the same time. However, on three separate occasions the male conversational floor seemed to revert to a one-at-a-time organisation. In each case, one speaker would occupy the floor and give an anecdote about a recent occurrence. In contrast, the female conversational floor remained collaborative throughout the conversation. It seems apparent to me that this differential organisation of the conversational floor in each of the interactions accounts for the greater amount of simultaneous speech in the female interaction, noted in the quantitative analysis.

Chapter 6 -Conclusions

6.1 Discussion of findings

The analyses of the data presented here are by no means exhaustive. Due to constraints of space, I have focused on the most salient features of simultaneous speech in each interaction. I am sure that a more intensive examination could reveal more from the samples. However, within the limits of my analysis some interesting findings have emerged.

It appears that, in general terms, the type of simultaneous speech employed by the male and female group members was quite similar. Both conversations involved a comparable distribution of the same types of

simultaneous speech. However, exceptions to this general similarity identified in the quantitative analysis seem to have been clarified through the qualitative examination. The large proportion of type 3 simultaneities in the male conversation seems to reflect a central part of their collaborative style. They frequently add simultaneous comments to each other's turns to support and reinforce what is being said. Likewise, the high frequency of type 6 simultaneities in the female conversation seems to be indicative of one of their collaborative methods of conversation. The qualitative analysis also seemed to reveal some of the characteristics of simultaneous speech that define masculinity and femininity. Simultaneous speech that displays collaboration through infringement of turns seems to be a characteristic of masculinity. There is a disregard for orderly communication, with contributions made in a seemingly disruptive manner (yet this is not the case). Femininity on the other hand seems to be characterised by a more orderly development of collaboration through extension of each other's turns and frequent agreement and affirmation through listener responses and feedback. Differential development of the conversational floor also seems to characterise gender (in common with the findings of Coates 1997).


6.2 Weaknesses of the study

This study suffered from several drawbacks, all of which became apparent during the process of transcribing and analysing the data.

The first shortcoming of the work presented here concerns the validity of the data obtained from the female group of participants. Despite my best efforts to minimise observer intrusiveness while data was being collected (*cf.* section 4.1d), it seems that its effects have not been fully avoided. This became particularly clear at one point in the female group conversation:

74				
H:				
K:		NASA <laugh>		
R:				anyway we
J:	should			
	intelligent people (#)	can I just can I (x x x x) (#)		
75				
H:		= this this was a	<input type="text"/>	=
K:	could			
R:			= mmm	=
J:	think of a topic shouldn't we really =		= (x x x x)	=

The participants are evidently aware of the fact that they are being recorded, feeling that they should be discussing a particular topic. Thus, despite briefing the female participants before the start of recording (*cf.* section 4.1c), they still seemed to consider the topic of conversation an important issue. The problem was made even more obvious when I was considered as a subject for the interaction:

77				
H:				
K:				no
R:	let' 			
J:	about Rich shall we talk about Rich (.) yeah let's talk about Rich (+)			

Therefore, despite ensuring physical absence from the location of recording, it seemed I had maintained a mental presence with the female group. As this was a brief instance that occurred in only one of the interactions recorded, I do not think the results of the study have been entirely undermined. However, it is clear that the naturalness of what I did collect could be questioned to some extent. It would seem then that more stringent methodological planning is required to ensure the collection of data that is not compromised by the observer in any way.

Another problem with the research concerns the way interactions were recorded. The quality of recordings obtained for this study were quite poor, making conversations difficult and laborious to transcribe. The effects of the low standard of recording are obvious in the transcripts, with inaudible and incomprehensible utterances featuring frequently. This certainly hampered the analysis of the data, as certain instances of simultaneous speech were impossible to determine.

A final weakness of the study regards the implementation of the typology to the data. The points noted by Hawkins (1990) and Talbot (1991) about the inconsistency of the analyst certainly became clear as I attempted to categorise the various types of simultaneous speech in the data. I am sure that many of my classifications are potentially open to re-interpretation.

In hindsight, I would do many things differently if I were given the opportunity to conduct the research again. With the benefit of the knowledge I have now acquired on the subject, I would almost certainly consider conducting an entirely qualitative analysis, as I believe this is by far the more effective method of investigation. I would also be more experimental with certain variables, perhaps comparing simultaneous speech in formal and informal interaction.

6.3 Suggestions for future investigation

I have two suggestions for future research associated with the topic of this study. The first is to consider the effects of culture on the role and function of simultaneous speech in conversation. Virtually all of the previous research carried out in this area has been within the Anglo-American sphere. As a result, little is known about the subject outside of western culture. A recent study by Brody (1996) has suggested this might be a fruitful focus of future investigation. She observes that in the Tojolab'al culture of Southern Mexico, women have a competitive conversational style that is regarded as cooperative. Presumably the conventional ideas about simultaneous speech would be turned effectively upside-down by such a different cultural view on conversation.

The second suggestion concerns a closer analysis of the dynamics of simultaneous speech in large group interaction. Much work has looked at dyadic interaction with regard to simultaneous speech. However, while analysing the data for this study I came across many interesting examples of simultaneous speech which seem to be specifically related to group interaction. Little investigation has been carried out in this area, and so I feel this may also be a worthwhile route for future study.

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Appendix 1 (Transcripts)

Transcription symbols.....	I
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Male group conversation.....	III
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Appendix 2 (Typology)

Typology – Full descriptions and examples.....I

Type 1 – Interruption

Description:

The second speaker talks simultaneously with the first speaker. The first speaker breaks off without completing their turn and the second speaker continues with theirs. This is the same as Roger et al's 'successful single interruption'. I have used the term 'interruption' as all instances in the data were definite attempts to wrest control of the conversational floor from the first speaker.

Example:

51	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> H: = alright w <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> eeeping </div>
K:	
R:	
J:	course it is = <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> we're the north of campus that's the north

Type 2 – Second speaker break-off

Description:

The second speaker talks simultaneously with the first speaker but breaks off before completing their turn. The first speaker continues to complete their turn. This is the same as Roger et al's 'unsuccessful single interruption'.

Example:

6	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> D: <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> at </div>
M:	mics (.) and one of them's got a little can <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> tle a little palm
R:	
J:	

Type 3 – Second speaker turn within first speaker turn

Description:

The second speaker talks simultaneously with the first speaker, completing their turn. The first speaker continues to complete their turn. Effectively, the second speaker's turn is enveloped within the first speaker's turn. This is the same as Roger et al's 'unsuccessful single interruption with completion'. I felt it was very important to avoid associating these instances with the term 'interruption', as they frequently perform a cooperative function.

Example:

72	
D:	
M:	
R:	no no I think it's the morning the morning one that does the Ministry
J:	it sounds right

Type 4 – Deep overlap

Description:

The second speaker talks simultaneously with the first speaker. The first speaker completes their turn and the second speaker continues. This is the same as Roger et al's 'unsuccessful single overlapping interruption'.

Example:

37	
D:	you should really support City
M:	ye ([] k too))
R:	
J:	(#) I live nearer the United

Type 5 – Shallow overlap

Description:

The second speaker starts their turn just before the first speaker has finished talking. This is the same as Roger et al's 'overlap'.

Example:

43	
D:	= yes you [] lowed [] if you
M:	yes Joh- you're allo [] to John
R:	
J:	I'm allowed = hooray

Type 6 – Listener response

Description:

The second speaker provides a listener response (or back-channel) simultaneously with the first speaker's turn. I have used Roger et al's term to describe these instances.

Example:

134	
H:	[] mmm go and find
K:	
R:	wanna rip [] as well 'cause it's not as though it's (.) cheap
J:	

Type 7 - Interjection

Description:

The second speaker talks simultaneously with the first speaker. The first speaker breaks off momentarily as the second speaker takes a very brief turn, after which the first speaker resumes with their original turn. I have used Roger et al's term to describe these instances.

Example:

29	
H:	funny when s [] says = ah I've got a rash I'm really ill it's
K:	
R:	
J:	[] who's that =

Type 8 – False start

Description:

Two speakers start speaking simultaneously after a pause or gap in the conversation. There is no way of determining a first or second speaker. I have used Roger et al's term to describe these instances.

Example:

56	
H:	[] all I'm kind of sleeping north south if you think that this (+) is north and
K:	
R:	
J:	[] yeah it is

Type 9 - Indeterminable

Three types of indeterminable instance occurred in the data, each of which was unclassifiable according to Roger et al's typology.

i) The utterance of one speaker is inaudible.

126	
D:	my best ma [] owland
M:	your best mate from Bowland (+) [] the people
R:	[] (x x x x)
J:	

ii) Three speakers talk simultaneously.

<p>70 D: M: R: J:</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> <p>his name (.) begins with p the old bloke no e DJ Paul Peter</p>
---	--

iii) A non-fluency feature occurs simultaneously with the first speaker's turn.

<p>67 H: K: R: J:</p>	<p>(x x x x) =</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> <p>hh. oh I don't know (+) erm = where's the Hubble Space Telescope over</p>
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