Gender Marked Intimate Conversational Interaction of Spouses in Modern English

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Abstract

This article aims to provide both quantitative and qualitative account of married couples' intimate conversational interaction. The correlation between gender and gender social role of conversationalists and the use of particular conversational signals, strategies and speech genres is shown. Language and communicative units mobilized for such gendered intimate conversational interactions are connected with the level of assertiveness, fluency in intimate conversation between a woman-wife and man-husband, dominance and the general flow of intimate interaction. The linguistic discourse analysis is done on the examples of samples from American and British fiction and films.

Keywords 1

Gender; status; intimate conversational interaction; speech genre; discourse linguistic multilayered analysis

1. Introduction

Gender and language in contemporary linguistic studies are researched predominantly in two frameworks. According to the first or variational, the relationship between an individual's gender and specific features of his or her language is investigated. Whereas in social constructionist one, the focus is on the way individuals "do" or "perform" their gender identity in interaction with others, with an emphasis on dynamic aspects of interaction [1].

It is valuable, however, to combine the methodologies and explore the relationship between the quantitative patterns identified using the variationist approach, and the insights revealed by more detailed qualitative discourse analysis of interactions involving conversational interaction of sexes in different natural settings.

Even though research of gender and language in different types of discourse abounds ([2], [3], [4],[5]), there is little research done [6] concerning "doing" gender in intimate conversational interaction, particularly in marital one. The presented study is a step in the direction of shifting research focus away from middle-class professionals and looking at the interaction in the intimate context. The information about the way men-husbands and women-wives use language is fundamentally important for understanding how spouses interact in intimate conversation and how language use contributes to mutual understanding in marriage, which is the key to marital satisfaction and continuation of marriage.

Thus, a detailed discourse analysis of relevant intimate conversational interactions is conducted. However, there is also a place for elements of quantitative analysis for understanding the significance of particular linguistic choices at specific points in an interaction. My main aim has been to analyse 53 excerpts of intimate conversational interaction of spouses, taken from fiction and films.

The practical significance of our study lies in identifying, analysing and making some generalizations about the various strategies and variational linguistic behaviour of males and females in intimate conversational interaction between gendered spouses. The received results may prevent the

malfunction in marital intimate conversational interaction and bring some of the deeply-rooted gender stereotypes to the surface. There then will be a chance that the issues related to inequality of genders, inability to truly express oneself due to unjust arrangement between sexes and misunderstandings caused by using a different "language" will be resolved. More importantly, the study allows for a more complete explanation of goals, interests and attitudes with which men-husbands and women-wives adopt particular conversational signals, strategies and speech genres in intimate conversation.

The presented article is structured in the following way: related works are reviewed, variables and research questions are introduced and set; next, methods and results are discussed; and finally, the discussion is presented and conclusions are drawn.

2. Related works

D. Maltz and R. Borker [8, 200] report extensive research that shows that men and women develop assumptions about the role of language in close relationships from their childhood friends. Little girls play with other girls, and the center of their social life is a best friend with whom they share secrets. It is the telling of secrets that makes them best friends. Boys, in contrast, tend to play in groups, so their talk is less likely to be private. Rather, it is competitive talk about who is best at what, or performance talk that places the speaker at center stage, like Othello talking about his travels. What makes boys friends is not what they say to each other but what they do together. Therefore, when a man is close to a woman, doing things together makes them close; nothing is missing for him if they do not talk about personal details. But she is missing what, for her, is the definitive element in intimacy.

Intimate conversational interactions are very important in an intimate relationship. They define the quality of such a relationship and make it intimate. L. Kit [7, 173] points out that the following parameters must be considered when analyzing the intimate communication: ability of the addressee to produce genres of intimate interaction, and the addressee's ability to interpret them properly, the psychological state of the participants of communication, as well as the presence of intimate relationships between them. Intimate communication is entrusting, sincere, it is one of the parameters through which the concept of intimacy is realized. Besides, the results of intimate conversational interaction are clearly demarcated types of utterances or speech genres of intimate conversation, like *confidences, intimate conversation, confessions, talk in relational terms and flirting*. These speech genres in intimate conversational interaction are realized as private, inter-personal and cooperative talks about thoughts, feelings and facts from personal lives of communicants or their relationship. The tonality of intimate conversation is ease, sincerity, mutual acceptance, friendliness, light-heartedness, gaiety, delicacy, negative emotions, intimacy, emotionality, serious attitude to the topic, equal rights of speakers to speech activity. The stress is on inner, confessional openness with tonality of cordiality, heartfelt mutual acceptance, frankness, and pleasantry.

To either confirm or to refute this general assumption that women are more prone to intimate conversations than man are, I will analyze the collected data to find out who initiates the marital conversational intimate interactions the most to establish intimacy (intellectual, spiritual, emotional).

While social constructionist approach predominates, it is clear that the contribution and important influence of gender stereotypes, gender-based cognitive categories, and sociocultural conceptions of differently gendered roles must be factored into our research. There are studies [9] that reveal a consistent picture of gendered expectations of the language and communicative strategies use of women and men. J. Coats [10, 86] points out that gender stereotypes regarding the conversational behavior of men and women are as follows:
1. women speak more;
2. women gossip;
3. men swear more;
4. to speak confidently or to disagree is not feminine;
5. women are more polite.

Also, scientists ([11] and [12]) claim that perceived female language norms, appear to be particularly influential to the language in conversation, because only when the partner is female do speakers use the stereotypical language of their communication partner, gender producing greater influence on a speaker's language than the immediate situational context of communication. This view is verified by

A. Weatherall [13, 287-8] and M. Lazar [14, 180], who claim that gender is "omnipresent" and "potentially relevant" to all interactions. E. Goffman [15] believes we cannot take a step without taking stances that are prescribed by society and gender specific. We enact and create our gender, and our inequality, with every move we make.

The present research aims to probe whether this gendered conversational behavior and language use pointed out by J. Coats are typical of intimate conversational interaction of spouses. In other words, do gender and sociocultural preconceptions of differently gendered roles GENERALLY SHAPE THE INTIMATE COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOR OF INTIMATE INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR LANGUAGE USE?

To answer the research questions posed, 13 works of English and American fiction novels, plays and films containing communicative situations of intimate interaction of spouses have been analyzed.

Scripted and fiction dialogues were studied before as a representation of face-to-face conversation, especially in historical research. J. M. Rey [16], for example, used the American television show Star Trek for a diachronic study of language and gender. Rey [16: 138] claims that popular media is an appropriate source for the study of sociolinguistic differences, noting that "while the language used in television is obviously not the same as unscripted language, it does represent the language scriptwriters imagine that real women and men produce." In a similar vein, D. Biber and J. Burges [17, 158] describe the artificial dialogue of fiction and drama as "useful representations of historical spoken language." R.T.Lakoff and D.Tannen [18,323] believe that "artificial language may represent an internalized model or schema for the production of conversation."

3. Methods

The corpus of fiction literary texts has been used to analyze intimate conversational interaction of spouses, which is chronologically and thematically restricted to satisfy the requirement of linguistic homogeneity of the sample. The fiction and films are focused on intimate relationships (Maugham S. "Of Human Bondage", Galsworthy J. "The Forsyte Saga", Davidson M. "Fight the Best Fight", Wild O. "The Ideal Husband", Bold and Beautiful). Also, fiction novels related to the literary genres of 'women's literature' and 'romance novels (Townsend E. "In love and war", Segal E. "Love story", Bushnell C. "Lipstick Jungle") have been analysed. In particular, the interactions between marital partners have been chosen, who have an official status of a wife and husband in the society.

Since only a fraction of the interactions in an intimate relationship is intimate [19,18-19], it has been possible to find only 53 excerpts containing intimate interactions or dialogues between people that have certain specific characteristics for quantitative and discourse analyses.

The data collected has undergone three stages of analysis proposed in the Spilzmuller J.& Warnke J.U. [20] model DIMEAN (discourse-linguistic multilayered analysis), where basic layers are believed to be texts, knowledge and actors.

3.1. Intratexual level

The first level has been the word level analysis employed to establish a possible gender relevance in intimate conversational interaction of spouses. The texts have been scrutinized for the following lexical items: *patterns with qualifiers (I think/suppose/guess, maybe) or hedges, tags, pause fillers (Um, Oh, Look), expletives, personal pronouns and perlocution softeners*. These items have been chosen due to the fact that in different linguistic sources ([11], [21], [22]) they are named as variables according to which language use of both genders varies. These, mostly one-word units, perform the function of communicative signals in interaction and serve as important references to discursively enchored emotions, attitudes, values and identities of discursive gendered marital partners.

The next "larger" layer unit of analysis has been the proposition or sub- or transphrastic utterances, such as *secondary function interrogatives, disagreeing responses, encouragements, interruptions, direct imperatives, gossiping and affirmative responses* and *verbosity*.

The frequent use of such lexical items and utterances could be attributed to gender stereotypic conversational behavior mentioned by J.Coats [10].

The largest intratexual unit have been the text extracts that constitute speech genres of intimate communication of spouses, their types and functions have been defined and their initiators identified.

Frequency counts have been conducted to identify the ground against which individual's choice of language units can be interpreted. In particular, the frequency of functioning of lexical features that serve as conversational signals (table1), frequency of functioning of sub- or transphrastic utterances that serve as conversation strategies (table 2) and gender-linked tendencies in speech genres of intimate conversational interaction functioning (table 3) have been established. The Concordance Tool AntConc 3.5.8. has been used to search and count gendered words and word-combinations and utterances. The program allows to see where the search results are in the text for them to be investigated in more detail to reveal why conversational signals and strategies are used by conversationalists and who the initiators of speech genres are.

Table 1

Frequency of functioning of conversational signals

Conversational signals/quantity	Men-husbands	%	Women-wives	%
Patterns with qualifiers (I think / suppose / guess /maybe	15	45	18	55
Tags	13	43	27	57
Pause fillers (Um, Oh, Uhh) Expletives	17	52	16	48
Perlocution softeners	0	0	2	100
Personal pronouns (you,we,us)	770	32	660	68

Table 2

Frequency of functioning of conversational strategies

Conversational strategies/quantity	Men-husbands	%	Women-wives	%
Secondary function interrogatives/indirect questions	40	27	110	73
Disagreeing responses	15	56	12	44
Verbosity	4398	48	4695	52
Encouragements	4	22	14	78
Interruptions	13	34	25	66
Direct imperatives	13	76	4	24
Gossiping	0	0	2	100
Affirmative responses	12	46	14	54

Table 3

Gender-linked tendencies in speech genres of intimate conversational interaction functioning

Speech genres/quantity	Men-husbands	%	Women-wives	%
Confiding	6	20	24	80
Intimate conversation	7	33.33	14	66.67
Confessions	278	60	18	40
Talk in relational terms	14	77.78	4	22.2
Flirt	7	70	3	30
Total	61	47.4	63	52.6

Summarizing the results in the tables, it is safe to claim that the body of evidence taken as a whole runs counter to the expectations that intimate conversational interaction is free from the influence of gender and social role connected with it. The variables of gender, status and situational context of communication interact to form husband/wife language use in the communicative situations of intimate conversational interaction.

3.2.　The agent layer

On the agent level, the roles of interactions have been included, as well as extrinsic attribution (such as expert quotes, critique on third parties, etc.) also needs to be considered in this context. The key question addressed has been how actors position themselves or are positioned, which is linked with social hierarchies, issue of power or dominance and submissiveness. In other words, the ways in which conversants make themselves understood and their status in intimate conversational interaction has been examined. The findings will be discussed below in discussion section 4.

3.3.　The transtexual layer

Transtexual analysis has, first and foremost, become a search for patterns that emerge from multiple texts [20, 87] to reconstruct collective knowledge that manifests itself in systematic linguistic practice. All in all, an attempt has been made to ascertain who is using which phenomena when and how. The phenomena that have been added to this layer are: stereotypes, i.e. culturally rooted preconceptions, metapragmatic evaluation of linguistic or non-linguistic action (talking emotionally, talking intimately, being rational), historicity, social and political context.

4.　Results and Discussion

As the chart shows, women-wives in intimate conversational interactions with their husbands use more personal pronouns that include the other speaker (we, us), use expletives, qualifiers and tag questions oftener. Wives disagree nearly as often as husbands do, but they tend to use perlocution softeners to soften the disagreement, give polite negation. Conversely, husbands' language in intimate communication is associated mostly with the use of pause fillers, personal pronouns (you and I) and somewhat with patterns with qualifiers.
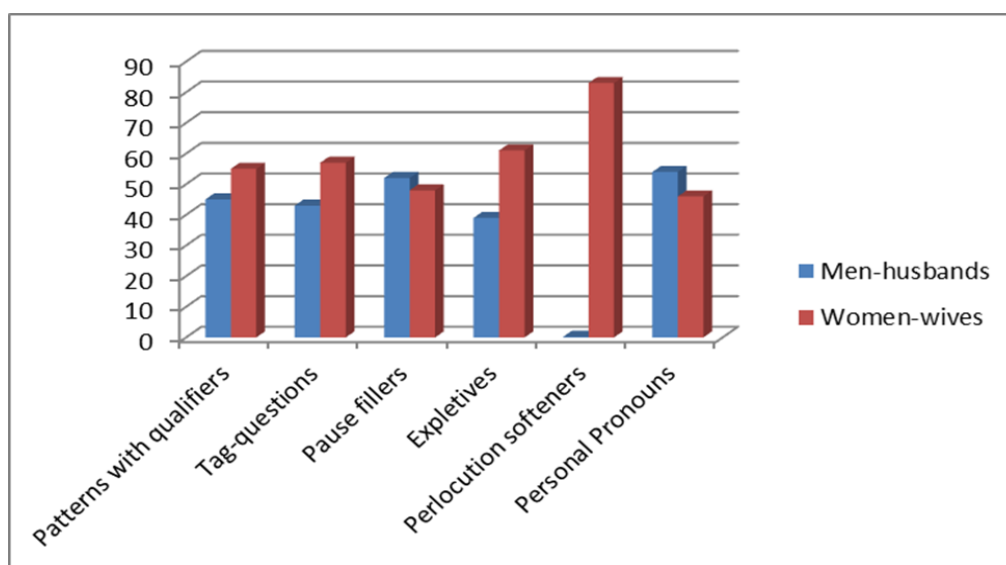

Figure 1: Conversational signals

Qualifiers and tag questions have been attributed to the level of assertiveness and pause fillers to ease and confidence in intimate conversation between a woman-wife and a man-husband in intimate interaction. The role of expletives in intimate conversation has also been analyzed. The use of expletives / swearwords / taboo expressions is said to be characteristic of feminine style of expressing negative emotions [23, 163–166]. Whereas in our corpus the expletives are used not only to express negative emotions (mostly men), but mostly the use of taboo expressions is an index of closeness of relationship and the expression of informality.

It has been found that women-wives use more qualifiers (55% : 45%) and tag questions (57% : 43%), which makes them less assertive. The finding leads us to the hypothesis that women-wives in this aspect of their language use conform to the gender stereotype that being assertive is not feminine.

However, social status overrides gender stereotype that women should not speak in authoritative voices in context where wives need to assert authority and protect their home and the love of their husbands. That is, assertiveness and aggressiveness (interruption strategies (66%:34%)) serve to maintain the underlying purpose of controlling the relationship or keeping the positive face of the husband in the society. Pursuing such a purpose in communication, women-wives seem to be switching to a masculine conversational style to be heard and understood. And they successfully manage to do it.

Apart from being less assertive overall, women-wives showed more confidence in communicating intimately using less pause fillers (55%: 45%). Men-husbands used pause fillers and quantifiers when they felt uncertain, anxious, or had difficulty in expressing feelings that overwhelmed them. The analysis shows that it is easier for conversants to communicate intimately if their relationship is 'harmonious' rather than in crisis or at risk of termination. Thus, this use of conversational signal is also depended on a quality of the relationship variable.

The personal pronoun variable became the marker of a woman's speech as noted by L. Hirschman ([21]), who discovered that women used 3 times as many personal pronouns involving the other speaker. In our data women-wives have been discovered to have this tendency as well (68%: 32%).

All in all, the difference in the use of the discussed gendered language is small. It is significant only in the use of perlocution softeners, expletives and personal pronouns.

Women-wives are more indirect and use more encouragement devices to show active listenership, interrupt more frequently. They keep silence (withdraw from conversation) when offended, monopolized the intimate conversation if angry (hogging the floor) and adopt a dominant mode of expression (become assertive and aggressive grabbing the floor) whenever the social role of a wife requires it. Husbands, on the other hand, practise disagreeing outrightly as often as not, grabbing the floor (1 utterance of a man-husband contained 363 words compared to 168 words of the women's) and using direct imperatives.
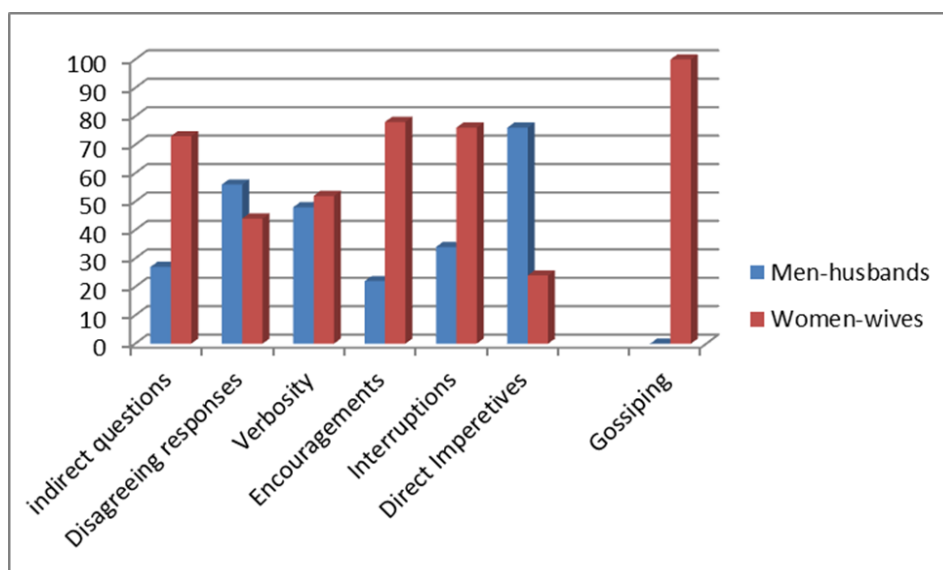

Figure 2: Conversational strategies

The conversational strategies analyzed form the communicants' gendered styles in intimate communication. These are interruptions, encouragements and affirmative responses or words of support and active listenership, disagreeing responses, secondary function interrogatives/indirect questions, and gossiping. Let us take a closer look at each of the points and the results obtained.

It has been revealed that a woman-wife tends to talk much (verbosity), interrupt (63%:37%) and keep silence, which can be interpreted as a sign of aggressiveness. The number of words spoken by spouses was counted in order to identify who is more verbose in intimate interaction (a wife or a husband). Women were found to be slightly more verbose (4,695 words) than men (4,398 words) during intimate communication. However, men's verbosity is much more significant when they monopolize a conversation: one utterance of a man contained 363 words and the longest one of a woman had only 169 words.

Husbands are more aggressive and more willing to use expletives with negative connotations. In addition, in 5 communicative situations, the woman-wife broke the turn-taking sequence by non-cooperation (silence) and it was the man-husband who had to make the conversation going. Silence seems the wives' aggressive strategy when she wants to show she is hurt and offended.

The fluency of communicants in intimate conversational interaction is identified by pauses. Women-wives were more fluent overall in intimate conversational interaction, whereas men-husbands were more likely to pause (73%: 27%). The woman-wife can undoubtedly be called an attentive and polite interlocutor, since all the identified cases of the use of the speech acts of encouragement and support, signals of the active listener belong to her. Even when she disagrees with her husband, she does so using perlocution softeners, e.g.: *I suppose it does - in a way; Yeah, yeah, but ... .* A man can be delicate or ironic when he disagrees, but he is also more categorical and emphatic while ignoring or denying the importance of what his wife says, like *Nonsense, you don't know what you're talking about; Bullshit; No, a thousand times no,* or the emphatic disagreement that is a professional jargon*: "The case is closed," I would reply, being after all the husband and head of household*" [24,109]. It is possible to claim that men-husbands produce outright negation, whereas women-wives produce polite negation using perlocution softeners to soften the disagreement or defer an embarrassing answer.

Wives are more likely to violate the turn-taking sequence (5 cases of monopolization or holding the floor and 2, respectively).

Women-wives are also more emotional and indirect. It has been established that out of 150 indirect questions 110 belong to wives. They use them both to express emotions and to argue and reason.

Drawing conclusions, it is possible to assert that when communicating intimately, female partners use their most indirect and relaxed language and men make use of their most direct and assertive language. Thus, it can be concluded that femininity and masculinity that are the components of gender, have different content attached to them by the society and shape the gender identity and intimate communicative behavior of spouses.

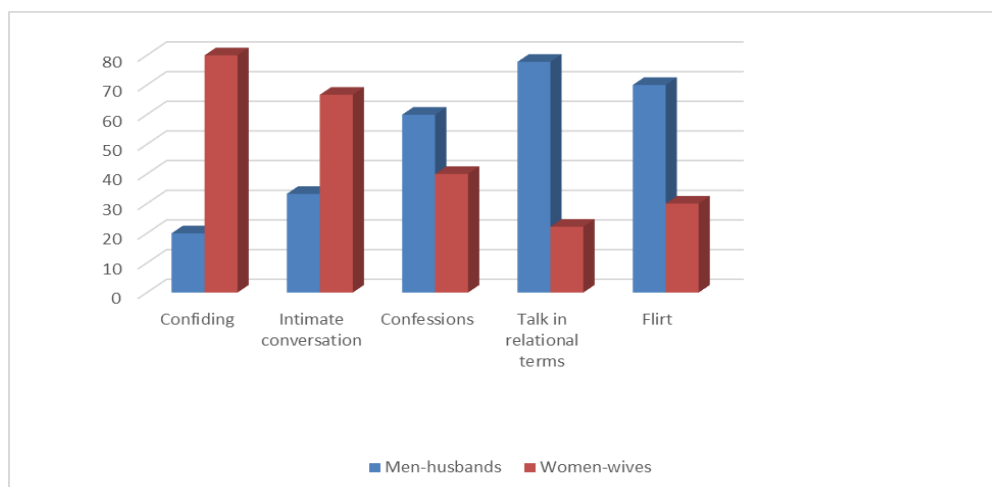As for the initiation of different speech genres, the following variations have been observed:

Figure 3: Gendered use of speech genres

More often than not men initiate confessions (60%:40%) and much of the time talks in relational terms (77.8%:22.2%). Again, we see the influence of gender stereotype on intimate interaction (the declaration of love and the proposal to marry are 'masculine talks'). Flirt seems to be the 'man's job' as well with 78% of men compared to 22% of women initiating this speech genre. Men are also the ones who shun intimate conversational interaction altogether. Women-wives initiate intimate conversational interaction by about 5% oftener. Most of all wives seek to share (80%: 20%) or discuss/establish intimacy (6.7% : 33.3%).

Based on the analysis conducted, it is concluded that intimate conversations are more often initiated by women-wives (52.6%), but men-husbands also show a significant need or desire to converse intimately (47.4%). The purpose of the initiator is to establish intimacy (intellectual, spiritual, physical) in the relationship. Most often, wives seek to share (80%: 20%) or discuss/establish intimacy (66.7%: 33.3%). Using informative and intimate tactics, a wife strives to share her emotions, joys and achievements, anxieties and problems and expects care, understanding and respect in response. A man-husband shares intellectual thoughts, plans for the future and his confiding is more generalized and abstract. Men are more likely to share emotional, spiritual experiences if they are provoked / encouraged to do so, that is, if confiding is elicited. These results coincide with the Tannen's suggestion about men's report style and women's rapport one [6]. More often than not (80%:20%) whenever a husband opens up, sensing his vulnerability, his wife responds to her husband's confiding with support, trust, understanding and recognition.

Most often men initiate confessions (60%:40%) and talks in relational terms (77.8%: 22.2%). They do this for the purpose of terminating or rekindling their relationship. Again, we see the influence of gender stereotype on intimate interaction (the declaration of love and the proposal to marry are 'masculine talks'). Flirt seems to be the 'man's job' as well with 78% of men flirting compared to 22% of women initiating this speech genre.

Intimate communication in a "harmonious" intimate marriage is characterized by mutual: understanding in conversation, exchange of thoughts, emotions and feelings, signals of a careful and interested party. Tactics that are informative and intimate predominate and are aimed at self-disclosing the intentions of the communicant and maintaining their relationship. It is a vicious circle, though, because the reverse could be said to be true: intimate interaction contributes to intimacy in relationships:

She knew they were supposed to talk about it, but there was something about Seymour's manner that didn't invite those kinds of intimate, couple discussions [25, 147].

Also:

But then he had never exactly encouraged intimacy. Never, not once in the two years they had been together, had he ever told her he loved her [26, 93].

Talks in relational terms are dominant in intimate interaction of spouses who are in a conflicting relationship (spouses in a state of mediation or crisis). Lack of understanding, love and trust, a deep rooted sense of offence in such relationships do not give rise to the desire to share, confess or flirt neither in women-wives nor in men-husbands. But if they did (share, confess or flirt), it could improve their relationship significantly.

With the help of discourse analysis on transtextual level it has also been revealed that the content attached to gender components of femininity and masculinity varies over different periods of time. It has been noted that the role of women in public life in XIXth century was less important, her task being the home and hearth creation and "keeping the fire burning". On the other hand, it was masculine to be ambitious and pursue ambitious goals in society, because there existed the stereotype of "the man as a woman's defender and breadwinner, political and social leader / dominator". It was believed also that a woman belongs to the world of emotions and a man belongs to the world of intelligence, as is stated in the following quote from *The Ideal Husband* by O. Wilde [27]:

Women are not meant to judge us, but to forgive us when we need forgiveness. Pardon, not punishment, is their mission. Why should you scourge him with rods for a sin done in his youth, before he knew you, before he knew himself? A man's life is of more value than a woman's. It has larger issues, wider scope, greater ambitions. A woman's life revolves in curves of emotions. It is upon lines of intellect that a man's life progresses. Don't make any terrible

mistake, Lady Chiltern. A woman who can keep a man's love, and love him in return, has done all the world wants of women, or should want of them [27, URL].

Thus, in intimate family relationships the role of the wife was to "keep her husband's love and to love in return" [27, URL], not make an ideal of her husband, but love a real man, despite all his shortcomings. The role of a wife was also to be "the source of comfort and support for her husband, not his critic" [27,URL]. It follows from the quotes that wives had a lower status in marriage and had to obey her husband who was an authoritative leader and the communication between wives and husbands was asymmetrical. Men denied equal status of women as conversational partners and this attitude runs through a number of interactions and is expressed either explicitly or through conversational behavior. This factor, but not only this, can account for husbands being the dominant group and wives – the muted group [28], which to be heard had to adopt some dominant mode of expression in conversation. As far as husbands' dominance and wives' submissiveness in conversations are concerned, it had its roots in social stratification of that time. It had been a legal fact until it was outlawed by the previous century's Act (*The Married Women's Property Act* 1870 [29]) that when a woman married a man, she ceased to exist as a separate legal being. All of her property prior to marriage – whether accumulated through wages, inheritance, gifts or anything else – became his, and any property she came to possess during marriage was entirely under his control, not hers. Let alone the right to vote, which was granted to women with restrictions by *The Representation of the People Act 1918[30]*. Women were only granted equal suffrage with men in 1928. This social inequality was coded on the language level and reproduced in literature.

Similar conversational gender stereotypes to those cited above were expressed by the character named Athelny in the novel "Of Human Bondage" written by S. Maugham in 1915[31]. His view was that "*man wants a wife who can cook his dinner and look after his children*". This man "*doesn't want to talk politics to his wife, and cares nothing about her views upon the Differential Calculus*". It is not the lady the man needs, but the halcyon:

"D'you know the legend of the halcyon?" said Athelny: Philip was growing used to his rapid leaping from one subject to another. "When the kingfisher, flying over the sea, is exhausted, his mate places herself beneath him and bears him along upon her stronger wings. That is what a man wants in a wife, the halcyon"[31, online].

M. Komorovsky [32] claims that this gender expectation is class specific and it is confirmed by this proposed research on intimate interactions of spouses. It has been found, in particular, that the more middle class a couple was, the more the wife and husband considered each other friends and it was expected that a husband should talk to his wife. Among those who had not graduated from high school, the expectation was that wives should talk to their female relatives and leave their husbands alone.

In late XXth century and the beginning of XXI, a significant decrease in the polarization of gender roles, the interpenetration of female and male components, the leveling of differences in the composition of gender stereotypes can be observed. However, traditional perceptions of the role of woman-wife and man-husband continue to influence relationships between spouses even in egalitarian society. The gender stereotype of the women's role as a home-caregiver formed in the distant past (consider the proverb "Men make houses, women make homes") exists in the society till present day, despite undergoing significant changes:

"Why was he torturing her? "Angel, - she said patiently. "You know what Ragged Pilgrims means. To us. To all of us.

"To you, Wendy", he said. And added meanly "It's always about money, isn't it".

That was a low blow, Wendy thought. Why was it that when men were concerned about making money, they were admirable, while women in the same position were considered suspect?" [25, 115].

In the excerpt cited from the story by Candace Bushnell we can observe a role conflict between Wendy's involvement in film industry (movie executive) and her commitment to her responsibilities as a wife and mother. This conflict, as D.Zimmerman & C.West [33, 140] claim, can be viewed as a dynamic aspect of our current "arrangement between sexes"[15], an arrangement that provides for occasions on which persons of a particular sex category can 'see' quite clearly that they are out of place and that if they were not there, their current troubles would not exist. Thus, gender is not only what men and women are, but what they do as well.

5. Conclusions

As the results discussed above show, a woman-wife achieves dominance and power in intimate interaction by more frequent use of such conversational practices as talking too much (verbosity), interruptions, silence and being assertive, despite the existing stereotypes. Differences in frequency of fillers, affirmative responses, qualifiers and disagreeing responses reveal the minimal differential linguistic behavior in men and woman and can be related to women-wives trying this way to converge to the husband's style. All in all, women-wives have proved to be powerful interlocutors in intimate communication exploiting varied linguistic means in achieving their communicative purposes in intimate conversational interactions.

Women-wives are also conversation facilitators in intimate interaction of confiding: they initiate it and encourage husbands to confide; they ask questions to make the conversation going. Men, on the other hand, are more comfortable in initiating the talk in relational terms and confessions.

Discourse multilayered linguistic analysis of communicative situations of intimate conversational interaction of spouses indicates that the desire to communicate intimately is influenced by gender or gender role. Specifications of situations under which gender roles become relevant to the conduct of conversationalists that giving rise to gender-linked variations in intimate conversational interaction of spouses have been discussed in the article.

Thus, we conclude that gender and gender-related social roles influence the way communicants converse in intimate communication, which can cause miscommunication, poor interaction and disrupted relationships. The solution could be to connect with each other on a deeper level oftener and try to accommodate and to attenuate one's gender-specific style. If men-husbands respected the equal rights of women-wives in intimate conversational interaction, supported for development of ideas expressed by them, engaged their women-wives in meaningful intimate conversations and acknowledged their interest in a conversation more frequently than they usually do it, it could improve their intimate relationship and breed understanding.

As for the limitations of the study the following should be mentioned. The samples chosen for the analysis have not been rich on spontaneous speech markers that point to dysfluencies and hesitations. Most of the information on how something is said is conveyed by author's remarks. Still, these neatly structured dialogues provide a valuable data for linguistic analysis of intimate conversational interactions, even though they are surrogates.

Extraction of gendered language has been automated. Specific software used has provided accurate results based on which discourse analysis has been done. Software system also automated a portion of data analysis by performing functions such as frequency counts of specific words and coded variables.

The conclusions drawn from such an amount of empirical material are not exhaustive and warrant further exploration in this direction. But they are sufficient to state the tendencies as far as husband/wife communicative behavior in intimate conversational interaction is concerned. It would be significant to test whether the differences registered in the present

research still hold if the agents are different. In other words, promising are the studies of intimate conversational interaction of friends and romantic partners in gender aspect.

The statistical data could be used as framework for constructing psycholinguistic theories of male and female types of speech behavior in marriage.

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