A linguistic hybrid?

A study of male linguistic features in female conversation

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Abstract

This study investigates four women’s use of typically male linguistic features in casual same-sex conversation. The aim of the study is to see whether and how this group of women use the linguistic features; swearing, interrupting, disagreeing and ignoring, questions and monologues (‘playing the expert’) which are all more common in male conversation and often part of a competitive communication style. I will also attempt to answer if these women’s linguistic behavior is typically female or male. The four women were tape recorded during a planned conversation in a casual setting and the recording was transcribed. The transcription was analyzed by using definitions of the linguistic features above made by, for example, Jennifer Coates (2004). The results show that these four women were neither typically female nor male, but a mix of the two; a hybrid.

Keywords: gender, female language, male language, collaborative communication style, competitive communication style, swearing, interruptions, disagreeing, ignoring, questions, monologues, ‘playing the expert’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. <strong>Introduction</strong></th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Equality and feminism</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Language and gender</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Aim and purpose</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Linguistic features</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.1 Swearing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.2 Interruptions (dysfunctional turn-taking)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.3 Disagreeing and ignoring</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.4 Questions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.5 Monologues and ‘playing the expert’</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Method</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Material and data</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 <strong>Result</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Discussion</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Swearing</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Interruptions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Disagreeing and Ignoring</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Questions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Monologues and ‘playing the expert’</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Reflection on the use and necessity of the terms ‘female’ and ‘male’</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

This essay will investigate female use of typically male linguistic features. The features that will be investigated are; swearing, interrupting, disagreeing and ignoring, questions and monologues and ‘playing the expert’.

1.1 Equality and feminism

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Genesis 3:16

People have been fighting for equality throughout history; the Women’s Liberation Movement, the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Martin Luther King are a few of the movements, people and documents that have made a difference in the world. Relevant to this study is the feminist movement and the feminist ideology.

Feminism’s main purpose and goal is not only to make women’s social status equal to men’s, but also make it possible for women to do the same things as men, for example; vote and work. Historically, Feminism has come in two ‘waves’; the first ‘wave’ of feminism came in the middle of the 19th century together with the women’s suffrage movement and their goal (women’s right to vote), was achieved in many western countries in the first decades of the 20th century. The fight for civil and legal rights continued, but a sense of no longer having one unifying cause made the first ‘wave’ fade. The second ‘wave’ came in the 1960’s and was more radical and revolutionary in some aspects, but softened during the 1970’s. There are different types of feminism, for example liberal Feminism and socialist Feminism (derived from Liberalism and Marxism) (Heywood 2004: 62). Feminist organizations world wide do not always agree, especially not on the methods of attaining equality between the sexes (Østerud 2002: 223).

Today, in many countries, women are allowed to vote, work, be the chief executive officer of a large corporation or even be the leader of a nation. We, as citizens of the world, citizens of nations, members of communities and members of families, have come
a long way, but there are still things to be done; even though discrimination, against anyone, for any reason, is illegal in many countries, feminists claim that women are still subjects to this discrimination (Østerud 2002: 223). Even if there are different kinds of feminists with different methods and priorities, most agree on that the gender stereotypes are created by society, and are not results of biological factors (Heywood 2004: 62), a view that is shared by Jennifer Coates, author of *Women, Men and Language – A Sociolinguistic Account of Gender Differences in Language*, 2004, on whose research this study will be based. If one believes that gender is a social construct, one would also believe that gender is something we do, which amongst other things, we do through language (Coates 2004: 7). I chose to base this study on Coates’ research and this particular book because it was what introduced me to sociolinguistics.

### 1.2 Language and gender

Women and men have always been assumed to use language differently. There are rules on how to use language; for example semantics and pragmatics, and if these rules are broken, most people detect it, even if we are not familiar with the terminology and the science behind it. But can we decide if a piece of language was constructed by a man or a woman? Writers of television series, often successfully, manage to make the characters’ utterances believable, in the way that they use typically female or male language features, for example; in the series House M.D, Dr. Gregory House and Dr. Allison Cameron go on a date. They have just sat down at the restaurant, and he has just given her a wristlet (wrist corsage);

Cameron – It’s beautiful. And **you look very handsome.**
House – Thank you.
Cameron – I’ve always loved this restaurant.
House - Yeah, It’s changed a lot since the last time I was here; it used to be a strip joint. **Nice earrings.**

Episode: Love Hurts (aired 2005)

This is a good example of how women and men compliment others; women’s compliments tend to have first or second person focus, while men’s tend to have third person focus (Coates 2004: 99), so the writer of this particular dialogue has probably
made it believable in the sense that we, as viewers, recognize it from our own lives, even if we may not be conscious of it.

Women are typically associated with tentative language (using hedges, tag questions etcetera). In sociolinguistic research, females and males have been assumed to be opposites (Coates 2004: 4), which would mean that male language use is assertive. Women whose language use is tentative are more likely to be liked by men, but at the same time seen as unintelligent while women whose language use is assertive are not liked as much, but instead seen as intelligent (and are often referred to as, for example, a bitch) (Scott A. Reid, Nicholas A. Palomares, Grace L. Anderson and Beverly Bondad-Brown 2009: 465). Jennifer Coates’ (2004) research, however, shows that the gender stereotypes may have been exaggerated and that the differences may be smaller than both linguists and ‘ordinary’ people have believed.

1.3 Aim and purpose

In this case study, I will investigate the use of typically male linguistic features in female language. Many studies have been carried out investigating differences, but I think it is time to investigate the similarities instead to avoid making the gap between us even bigger. I will attempt to answer the following questions;

*Do the women use the typically male linguistic features; swearing, interrupting, disagreeing and ignoring, information-seeking questions, monologues and ‘playing the expert’?

*If they use them; how do they use them?

*Is their linguistic behavior ‘male’ or ‘female’?

1.4 Linguistic features

In this section, I will present the five linguistic features that will be investigated. These features are; swearing, interrupting, disagreeing and ignoring, questions, monologues and
‘playing the expert’. These linguistic features are all, according to research (by, for example Jennifer Coates 2004) more common among men, and considered to be typically ‘male’, which is why I chose these particular features.

1.4.1 Swearing

The belief that men swear more than women goes back a long time in history. Women’s language has been believed to be more polite and, as Jennifer Coates puts it; “…more refined…” (Coates 2004: 13) It was also believed that lower class women swore more than the women that were members of the aristocracy and that the latter were more lady-like (Coates 2004: 14). Instead of using swear words, women supposedly use euphemisms; “women don’t use offcolor or indelicate expressions; women are the experts at euphemism” (Lakoff in Coates 2004: 15). Coates claims, however, that this belief is false, and that both women and men use swear words, and that the stereotypes distort reality (Coates 2004: 97-98). These claims are supported by Ronald Wardhaugh (2010: 249-52), who, based on McEnery’s study in 2006, claims that women and men swear, approximately, to the same extent, but that men use stronger swear words. Women and men also use more swear words in same-sex communication, and less in mixed-sex communication (Wardhaugh 2010: 250). A study mentioned in Coates (2004: 97) carried out by Gomm (1981) shows that men swear more often than women and that men’s use of swear words drops proportionally more than women’s in mixed-sex communication.

1.4.2 Interruptions (dysfunctional turn-taking)

Interruptions are when

The next speaker begins to speak while the current speaker is still speaking, at a point in the current speaker’s turn which could not be defined as the last word. Interruptions break the symmetry of the conversational model: the interrupter prevents the speaker from finishing her or his turn, at the same time gaining a turn for her or himself… (Coates 2004: 113-114)

This definition of interruptions is based on Sacks’, Schegloff’s and Jefferson’s (1974) “…model of turn-taking in naturally occurring conversation” (Coates 2004: 112). This model is also called “no gap – no overlap”. ‘No gap' means that the speakers can
predict the end of another participant’s turn and therefore start their own turn without any noticeable gap. ‘No overlap’ means that the speakers can predict the turn of another participant and start their turn without overlapping on the previous speaker’s. Overlapping would be when one speaker starts their turn and overlaps the last, or last few words, of the previous speaker. A study by Zimmerman and West in 1983 (Coates 2004: 113) shows that, in mixed-sex conversation, men are much more likely to interrupt women, while women are not likely to overlap on men’s utterances. As put in Coates (2004: 115):

These results indicate that in mixed-sex conversations men infringe women’s right to speak, specifically women’s right to finish a turn. Conversely, the fact that women used no overlaps in conversation with men (while they did use some in same-sex conversations) suggests that women are concerned not to violate the man’s turn but to wait until he’s finished.

Coates also claims that women are more likely to be interrupted by men even if she is, from the context, in a powerful position/of high status; “…it is her gender, not her status, which enables us to predict who interrupts whom.” (Coates 2004: 109).

1.4.3 Disagreeing and ignoring

When trying to define women’s and men’s speech, some say that women’s communication style is collaborative or cooperative and that men’s communication style is competitive. Women support and build on each other’s utterances while men disagree and ignore each other’s utterances more (Coates 2004: 126). The reason could be that “It seems that men pursue a style of interaction based on power, while women pursue a style based on solidarity and support.” (Coates 2004: 126).

1.4.4 Questions

Questions are used for many different reasons in all kinds of conversations; there are information-seeking questions which are used when there is some sort of information gap and, as is obvious from the name; seek information. This type of question is typically used by males as they encourage somebody else to ‘play the expert’ (which will be explained in the next section), and this is a situation that women mostly avoid (Coates 2004: 134). An example
of an information-seeking question could be; *What time is it?* Questions can also be used to invite others into the conversation, for example; *You know how to play the guitar, don’t you?* A question can also be used to introduce a new topic; *Is it not great that Anna and Paul are getting married?* Questions can also be rhetorical and not require an answer; the intention is not to receive an answer. Another type of question is the information-confirming question, which is used to confirm what someone else has said, for example to make sure the information was understood correctly. Women ask more questions all-in-all than men, but these are not the information-seeking ones (Coates 2004: 93).

### 1.4.5 Monologues and ‘playing the expert’

In most conversations, there is some kind of turn-taking. There are different models for turn-taking, and two of them are the collaborative floor (labelled by Carole Edelsky 1993) or jam session (labelled by Jennifer Coates 2004) and the one-at-a-time-model. Both models are used by both women and men, but women seem to use the jam session model more frequently and men the one-at-a-time-model. Coates’ definition of the conversational jam session is;

> “The defining characteristic of a conversational jam session is that the conversational floor is potentially open to all participants simultaneously. Two key features of a conversational jam session are (a) that speakers construct utterances and (b) that speakers talk at the same time.” (Coates 2004: 131)

The one-at-a-time-model is exactly what it sounds like; the participants of the conversation take turns and speak one at a time, which is, as stated above, more common among men (Coates 2004: 131). Monologues and ‘playing the expert’ are common in this one-at-a-time model. A monologue is when one participant holds the floor for a longer period of time and men often take turns to make these monologues. Something that often accompanies monologues is ‘playing the expert’, which is what it sounds like; “…a kind of game where participants take it in turns to hold the floor and talk about a subject on which they are an expert” (Coates 2004: 134). ‘Playing the expert’ is not a linguistic feature like the monologue is, but rather a phenomenon in conversational practice. The difference between the conversational jam session and the monologue is that the participants either talk simultaneously and the floor is a conversational free-for-all or they take turns and only one participant can hold the floor at a time. ‘Playing the expert’ mainly occurs in monologues.
2. Method

I asked a group of friends of mine, who are all advanced learners of English, to participate in this study. They were asked to participate in a tape recorded conversation for approximately 30 minutes in a casual setting. The women all knew each other (including me) and the setting for the conversation was in one of the participants’ kitchen drinking coffee. I did not participate myself, but I observed the whole conversation. The four women are all comfortable with each other and with me, and the conversation was no different from what they are used to, except for me being silent, them being recorded and that they were given a topic to start off the conversation. The starting-off topic was ‘having a baby’, but they were free to talk about anything they pleased. The topic of having a baby has been discussed many times in this group outside this study, so I chose this particular topic to make sure they would get started. What I had in mind when giving them this topic was the decision to have a baby, but it developed into becoming a discussion about what it is like to have a baby. When the conversation was approximately 25 minutes long and the women ran out of things to talk about, I signaled that they could stop, but they continued for a few more minutes. The women did not know what I was looking for, only that I would be looking for a few language features, but since they were all familiar with sociolinguistics and female and male language features, I did not tell them, in an attempt not to ‘taint’ the conversation.

When the recording was finished, I transcribed the recorded conversation, but left out approximately ten seconds at the beginning because it only contained information about how loud they had to speak etcetera, and about a minute at the end, because there was a long pause and the conversation became forced. By cutting these parts out, the conversation has a beginning and an ending, and is very fluent.

After transcribing the conversation, I marked the features with different colors, so they would be easier to find in the text. I also marked when they spoke simultaneously; (SIM), when what they were saying was impossible to decipher; (XX). Laughter is indicated in two ways; when one person laughs, ‘(HAHA)’ is put after that person’s alias and when more than one laughs, ‘LAUGHTER’ is used. There was a baby present, so the baby’s cries have been marked “BABY CRYING” and when the participants address the baby “(TO THE BABY)” has been put after the utterance. When the women say the names of the people within the group, their alias has been put in citation marks, and when they say names of
people outside of the group, a capital letter without citation marks has been used. Other information relevant to understand the conversation has been put in brackets in capital letters.

2.2 Material and data

The participating women are 23, 24, 24 and 34 years old. They have all attended English classes at the University, three of them for three semesters and one of them for two. None of the women are native speakers of English, but one of them has lived in England for about ten years, thus; they can be regarded as competent and fluent. Three of them have Swedish as their native language, while one has Bosnian (she learned Swedish at a very young age and is fluent). The four of them all met in English class and have known each other (as well as me) for two years. They are all students at the university and they are all becoming English teachers. “S” has graduated from University and works as a teacher occasionally, but still studies there, and “P” is on maternity leave. “I” and “N” finish their English studies in June 2011.

3. Result

In this section, I will present the results of the approximately 24-minute-long conversation between four women, who are all advanced learners of English. I will show if and how the women have used the conversational features; swearing, interruptions, disagreeing and ignoring, questions, monologues and ‘playing the expert’.
Table 1 Occurrence rate of the investigated linguistic features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Number of occurrences</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swearing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruptions/dysfunctional turn-taking</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(5 of the instances were in a “battle” between two participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive (disagreeing and ignoring)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(disagree: 2, ignore:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information-seeking questions</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Other questions: 40 (mhm?, yeah? etcetera have not been counted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monologues have not been counted due to their nature, but will be discussed in section 4.5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first feature investigated in this study was swearing, but there were no instances of swearing in the recorded conversation.

There were 15 instances of the women interrupting each other (five of them being almost at the same time; two of the participants interrupting each other several times with one of the women ‘winning’ the ‘battle’ and grabbing the floor). There were many more instances of overlapping, but that feature will not be further discussed in this report to leave room for discussion of other features. What could be called ‘failed interruptions’ also occurred; participant 1 attempts to grab the floor and interrupts participant 2, but participant 2 manages to grab the floor back.

There were two instances of disagreeing in the whole conversation, both by the same participant; P.

There was one instance of one participant ignoring another participant.

There were 62 questions all in all (mhm?, yeah? etcetera not counted), and 22 of them were information-seeking questions. 40 of the questions had other functions, such as minimal responses, tag-questions and making jokes (asking a question to prove a point, to be sarcastic or to be funny).
Table 2 Occurrence rate of the investigated linguistic features per participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“S”</th>
<th>“P”</th>
<th>“N”</th>
<th>“I”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utterance total</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruptions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrupted</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree/ignore</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 disagree</td>
<td>1 ignore</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information-seeking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 (other questions: 4)</td>
<td>2 (other questions: 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(other questions: 19)</td>
<td>(other questions: 14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monologues:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see section 4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the number of utterances per participant. The utterances counted were sentences or one-word answers (for example no); minimal responses or sounds such as: aw or oh have not been counted (neither has laughter). The table also shows the amount of times each participant uses the different features investigated (if used at all).

The participant “S” has the largest utterance total of the participants; 127, participant “P” has an utterance total of 117 and the participant “N” one of 74. The participant “I” has the smallest utterance total; 20. Out of 14 interruptions, “S” accounts for eight if them, “P” for two, “N” for two and “I” for two. “P” accounts for both instances of disagreeing with another participant, and “N” for the only instance of ignoring another participant’s utterance. There were a total of 23 information-seeking questions, of which participant “S” has the highest rate; 12. Participant “N” has the second highest rate; seven and participants “P” and “I” both have the rate; two. All participants except for “N” used less information-seeking questions than other questions (first number being information-seeking questions); “S”; 11 – 19, “P”; 2 – 14, “I”; 2 -3 and “N”; 7 – 4.
4. Discussion

In this section of the essay, I will analyze and discuss the use of swearing, interruptions, disagreeing and ignoring, questions and monologues and ‘playing the expert. I will also reflect on the use and necessity of the terms ‘female’ and ‘male’.

4.1 Swearing

Swearing is, as stated above, used by both women and men, but supposedly, men swear more often than women. However, both sexes usually swear more in same-sex conversation; “…both women and men swear more in the company of their own sex; male usage of swear words in particular drops dramatically in mixed-sex conversations.” (Coates 2004: 97) None of the women in this study used any swear words at all, perhaps because none of them are native speakers of English, and are all advanced learners of English, which means they all use English primarily in a somewhat formal manner, and not at all much in casual conversation. This is, however, merely speculation and will not be further discussed.

4.2 Interruptions

There was a total of 14 interruptions in the conversation. A few of them were accidental, and were not fully ‘carried out’; the person who interrupted did not finish the sentence, but let the person who was interrupted finish their turn.

(1)

S – Where did she hide them?
N – Behind the curtains.
I – Hmm…
N – Just for fun…
S – She’s going to be…
N – …and then she, and then she woke up one morn… one night and went to their aquarium and took out the fishes and put them on the floor. And her excuse were; “but I…” she thought she freed them. But no, she killed them.

In this example, “S” accidentally interrupts “N”, but as soon as she realizes it, she stops talking and lets “N” finish her story - i.e finish her turn. There were also times when the interruptions were fully ‘carried out’; the person interrupting someone else does not let the person they interrupted finish their turn;
And I read afterwards. I'd started craving melon before I knew I was pregnant, but then I read that, especially Galia melon, eh, contains a lot of folic acid.

I – Mhm?
P – Cause the baby really really needs…XX
S – Yeah, doesn’t that acid help you to get pregnant also?
P – It can help you get… No, I'm not sure but they want… If you *are* trying for a baby…

In this example, “S” interrupts “P” with the question; *Yeah, doesn’t that acid help you get pregnant also?*, and “P” answers the question and never finishes what she originally planned to say. However, in this example, “P” does not lose her turn, she just did not get to finish it the way she planned. There are also instances when the person interrupted does not get to finish their turn at all;

Nine months is a long time to get used to it though, and it is…
I – Mmm…
N – And it is…
P – As a woman, you can start to feel it move, you feel it growing, and all these hormones that start pumping inside of you they make you feel affectionate for the baby, I think.

In this example, “N” starts a sentence, but “P” interrupts her, and “N” never finishes her turn at all. What “N” had planned to say was ignored.

### 4.3 Disagreeing and Ignoring

The occurrences of participants disagreeing or ignoring were proportionally few; there were two occurrences of disagreeing and five occurrences of ignoring. “P” was the only participant to disagree with another participant;

S – Maybe the body, in one way, shuts off, in one way, if you feel very low, very… it’s like if…
P – Yeah like “this is not right”?
S – Yeah! In one way, I.. Maybe it isn’t that way but, I do…
P – I don’t think it is that way…

And
Why couldn’t you change your mind?
Because the baby is seven months old.
Yeah, well you…you would have to give birth to it, but you can change
your mind.

Disagreeing is often a part of the competitive communication style, a way of playing a ‘power
game’, but “S” did not seem to perceive it that way. The illocution may have been
competitive, since “P” and “S” are the participants using the investigated features most
frequently; they are more ‘male’ than the other two.
The only occurrence of a participant ignoring another was in connection to an
interruption; one participant interrupts another participant and ignores what that person had
started saying, as in example (6);

Nine months is a long time to get used to it though, and it is…
Mmm…
And it is…
As a woman, you can start to feel it move, you feel it growing, and all
these hormones that start pumping inside of you they make you feel
affectionate for the baby, I think.

In this example, “N” starts a sentence but “P” interrupts her and grabs the floor, without
letting “N” finish her sentence later on in the conversation, “N’s” sentence is ignored
and ‘disappears’. There were, however, no instances of participants ignoring each
other’s utterances if it did not follow an interruption. These findings tell us that these
women are not typically male when it comes to disagreeing and ignoring each other,
since these features are so-called competitive, which is typical of male speech (Coates
2004: 126)

4.4 Questions

The number of information-seeking questions in the analyzed conversation is 22. There were
almost half as many information-seeking questions as there were other types of questions (40). This is consistent with previous research, as I have stated in section 1.4.4; women often
use questions for hedging, introducing new topics and inviting others into the conversation
but they do not use information-seeking questions as often and
“Women’s avoidance of information-seeking questions seems to be related to their role in constructing a speaker as ‘someone who knows the answer’, an expert.” (Coates 2004: 130)

The women in this study have not avoided the information-seeking questions, but rather used them quite frequently. This may be a result of them being given a topic (having a baby), and one of them “naturally” being an expert (the only participant having a child). Questions may also be a way for the women to keep the conversation going, since they are fully aware that they are being tape recorded. The conversation was started with “N” asking a question;

(7)

N – Okay, having a baby?
S – Okay “P” (HAHA)
P – Okay
N – How is it?
S – Yeah, you’ve had a baby, so.
P – What’s it like having a baby? Well, I have a four month old and what’s it like? Uhmm, very nice once they’re finally out. (HAHA)

Okay, having a baby? is not an information-seeking question, but rather a way of starting off the conversation. The invitation failed, and “N” asked “P”, the participant with a baby, the information-seeking question How is it? which invites “P” to grab the floor and “play the expert” (will be discussed in section 4.5). There were 40 occurrences of other types of questions than information-seeking ones. The functions of these vary; some were tag-questions, as in example;

(8)

P - …because then rape victims certainly wouldn’t have babies, would they?

Some questions were rhetorical, and the person asking the question did not expect an answer, as in example;

(9)

S – The first thing, maybe you should find a nice man. Maybe that’s like the biggest thing?
I – Haha.
P – Oh yes that’s…
S – Where do you find them?
P – That’s what I did. Of course I had…XX
In this example, “S” asks two questions that she does not expect anyone to answer, and this is acknowledged by the other women, who do not really answer the questions, but interprets them as rhetorical questions.

4.5 Monologues and ‘playing the expert’

There are some passages in the conversation where one participant holds the floor for a longer period of time, especially in relation the other participants. In a typically “male” conversation (especially same-sex conversation), the participants would take turns holding the floor and ‘play the expert’ on their ‘own’ topic or area of ‘expertise’, but the women in this group do not do this. The woman getting closest to this ‘male’ feature is the only woman in the group that has a child, and since the topic given to the women was ‘having a baby’, this is very natural; she is the only person who has had the experience. If there had been anybody else in the group who had had a child, there would probably be more of these monologues and they would not be given by only one person. The monologue in this conversation is perhaps not a classic monologue; the woman who ‘plays the expert’ does so in ‘pieces’, and not constantly for a certain period of time, instead; she is interrupted, and there are minimal responses and comments from the other women, but the ‘story’ she is telling goes on. The conversation becomes a hybrid of competitive communication style (typically male) and collaborative communication style (typically female). The monologue is there, but is integrated with support (comments, questions etcetera) from the other women. The monologue made by “P” is underlined and in bold.

(10)

N – Okay, having a baby?
S – Okay “P” (HAHA)
P – Okay
N – How is it?
S – Yeah, you’ve had a baby, so.
P – What’s it like having a baby? (SIM) Well, I have a four month old and what’s it like? Uhm, very nice once they’re finally out. (HAHA)
LAUGHTER
S – (HAHA), once it’s finally out.
P – Haha, if that answers it… No, but pregnancy was surprisingly painful. It started with back pain, uhm, you get this thing where your, sort of, your skeleton starts depleting itself to give... to give the baby calcium...
I – Oh…
P - ...,which means you’ve got the hips of a very old woman (HAHA),
S – That is like the scary part, you have to get that baby out.
I – Mhm…
N – Mhm… (SIM)
S – Of course, you can have a baby and it’s a lot of work, but you have to get it out, that’s what I’m afraid about.
P – You have to carry it for nine months…
S – Yeah
P – …and people around you have to adjust… uhm, to you being pregnant and becoming a mother, so you might lose some friends, even at my age…
I – Mmm…
S – The first thing, maybe you should find a nice man. Maybe that’s like the biggest thing?
I – (HAHA)
P – Oh yes that’s…
S – Where do you find them?
P – That’s what I did. Of course I had…XX
S – You went out looking! (SIM)
P – I…I had to go clubbing for a year…XX
S – Yeah… You were like; “are you a good donor?”
LAUGHTER
S – Handing out forms…
P – Height, eye color…
S – Yeah
P – IQ…
S – Yeah!
LAUGHTER
I – Did you have any cravings?

P – Cravings? Uhm, melon!
I – Melon?!
S – Mmm!
N – That’s… That’s good!
N – Could have been worse!
S – That’s really good! (SIM)
I – Yeah!
P – And I read afterwards, I’d started craving melon before I knew I was pregnant, but then I read that, especially Galia melon, eh, contains a lot of folic acid.
I – Mhm?
P – Cause the baby really really needs…XX
S – Yeah, doesn’t that acid help you to get pregnant also?
P – It can help you get… No, I’m not sure but they want… If you are trying for a baby…
S – Yeah
P – …you should be eating folic acid, because it can prevent Spina Bifida, which means the curvature of the spine, which can be, uhm, in certain cases, it it’s severe, it’s so debilitating, it’s horrible.
S – A frie…
P – That’s why..
S – A friend’s mother, she ate crayons.
N – (HAHA)
S – With the black, uhm, black board, like you had before, in the class room?
P – Oh yeah.
I – Yeah.
S – She ate those and her grandmother ate like mud.
N – What?
S – Her husband had to go out and dig a whole…
I – No? (HAHA)
S – …And then pour in some water and like, mush around. And then she sat there ate…
N – It isn’t… XX
S - I don’t know.
N – How…
S – It’s…I can… (SIM)
N – How healthy!
S – Yeah!
LAUGHTER
S – I can understand if you get like cravings for something that, like, melon; I’ve eaten it before…
S - Yeah, but, like, yeah, crayons?
N – Yeah, where do you get it from?
S – Yeah. I have no idea!
I – Ew..
P – No, I wouldn’t know, and I’m telling you the truth, no secrets…
LAUGHTER
P – I really really…XX
S – No, no one’s going to read this so…it’s okay.
LAUGHTER
S – You can be honest.
P – No, what else could I say about having a baby? Uhm, you have to, uhm, be on the ball so to speak, you have to check up with, uhm, all the government agencies that you need to sort of inform, which..
Försäkringskassan. Uhm, check that they send you the right forms.
BABY CRYING
P – Yeah? (TO THE BABY)
LAUGHER
S – He wants to join in!
P – Yes, he can join in. And then, of course, once, as soon as they are born you, you sign them up for a place at nursery.
S – I thought you were going to say; “sign him up for adoption”!
LAUGHTER
S – Oh my God! That’s what I thought you were going to say!
P – Naaaw…
S – No. Of course not!
P – Ja… And then when they come, it comes naturally, I think, for most people.
S – To give birth or take care of them?
P – To take care of them, really. Giving birth was, haha, not nice!
LAUGHTER
I – I’m kind of scared of the depressions you’ve heard of, after giving birth.
P – Yeah.
I – Some yeah…that some get.
P – And almost every woman…You…You… Few women get depressions, they thought I might have it, but I mean, almost every woman get, get, uhm…Baby blues, it’s called, from when they’re about two months. Because it’s, it’s, it’s such hard work, you won’t get any sleep…
I – No….
P – Especially if you breast feed.
N – Does that hurt?
P – No, it doesn’t hurt at all, but you will not sleep. And, of course, there are hormones pumping in your body that make uhm, your hearing becomes very sensitive.
S – The hearing?
P – Yes, your hearing.
I – Hmm…
P – You become…
I – As you want to…
P – Oh, yeah, you want to hear him.
I – Yeah.
P – And that’s just the biology of it. And, you wake up all the time, but of course, you have to wake up everytime he needs you, you need to wake up. And you get sudden(?) (stirred and) emotional, but they say all this is because you have to be empathic to the baby’s needs also, and it does pass.
S – Mmm.. But look, aren’t there women that don’t feel anything? Like Brooke Shields, she got like a depression, she wrote a book about it also. That she couldn’t connect to the child. She was like…
P – That is one of the symptoms of post-natal depression, and that’s one of the clues that I did not have it, because I’ve never had a problem connecting with O.
S – Mmm… How can you not connect?
P – No, but of course, if you don’t, that’s a chemical imbalance in your brain. So, it’s not like you’ve made a decision not to feel anything for your child. I feel very sorry for any woman who maybe feels ten times what I felt when I had the baby blues, because that was no fun. At all.
As seen in example (10), the group invites “P” to ‘play the expert’ by using questions addressed to “P”, which she willingly accepts. This is a typically male feature as women mostly avoid these monologues (Coates 2004: 134). The monologue in this example consists of several monologues by the same person (“P”) and they are all about different aspects of having a baby, some aspects decided by “P” and some by the other participants (the other women asking questions and commenting on the current matter). In the beginning, “P” herself decides what she wants to tell the others, but as a result of the other women’s questions and comments, she follows the topic changes as the main topic is still “hers”. At one point, in the middle of “P’s” monologue, “S” starts her own; “P” has just been asked the question if she had had any cravings during her pregnancy, and answers that she craved melon, after which “S” tells the other women about a friends’ mothers who had, what “S” considered to be odd cravings, as in example (11). This example is an extract from the previous example (10), the reason for the passage being presented twice is to make it easier for the reader to see the two different monologues. (“S’s monologue is indicated using italics);
“S” does not only comment on “P’s” answer, but starts her own monologue, which is much shorter than “P’s”. “S” is not invited by the other participants to hold the floor, but they all accept and support her through comments. “P” finally grabs the floor back by inviting herself to speak; No, what else could I say about having a baby? The other women accept “P’s” attempt to grab the floor back, and “P” can continue her monologue.

“N” also did a monologue (indicated using italics);

(12)

N – But I love children…and babies and… especially my brother’s girls.
S – How old are they?
N – H is three years old and E is ten. And they’re perfect...
S – Mmm...
I – Mmm...
N – They love me...
LAUGHTER
S – “They’re perfect; they love me”! That is the only...
N – And… they’re so nice. And H, she’s crazy!
S – The ten-year-old?
N – No, the three-year-old. She’s really funny. She does the craziest… craziest things all the time.
S – Like what? Eating candy on a Thursday?
N – No, she’s h… uhm… uhm… you know the cakes where there’s a lot of...
I – Oreos, no?
N – No, no.
S – Ballerina?
N – No.
S - Cheesecake?
N – Can I code switch?
I – Yeah.
N – Semlor.
S – Ah!
N- Uhm, her mother bought them a couple of semlor, and she hid them, so nobody could eat them.
S – She was like…
N – No, she…
S – Hit them?
N – Yeah. No, not hit; hid!
S – Jaha! Hid them! I was like; “what?”
LAUGHTER
S – Where did she hide them?
N – Behind the curtains.
I – Hmm…
N – Just for fun…
S – She’s going to be…(SIM)
N – …and then she, and then she woke up one morn… one night and went to their aquarium and took out the fishes and put them on the floor. And her excuse were; “but I.” she thought she freed them. But no, she killed them.
S – She’s going to be a girl that’s… when she’s 16, you have to pick her up from like, Heartbreak or something.
N – And she’s just three years old! Where did she get that idea from?
S – You.
4.6 Reflection on the use and necessity of the terms ’female’ and ’male’

I have discussed typically female and male features at some length in this essay and I will, in this section, reflect on these terms and their relevance to the essay, sociolinguistics and everyday-life.

Sex and gender are two different things; sex is biological and, as I stated in section 1.3, gender is a social construct. Our sex is determined by our hormones and physical appearance (genitals) while our gender is determined by society. Sex and gender often go hand in hand; individuals with female genitals are raised to be women and individuals with male genitals are raised to be men. What it means to be a woman and a man is decided by society. Some people defy the norm completely, some to some extent and some not at all. Is this categorization necessary? On the one hand, if we look for differences, we will probably find them, especially since we have learned from a young age that there are differences between women and men.

If we start looking at similarities, what will we find? In my essay, I have investigated similarities between what we call female and male language, and found similarities. I have found that it is not black and white, but grey, as is the case with many things in life. To categorize is to draw a line between things we see as different, and I think by drawing that line, we keep them different and separate. Perhaps it would be better not to categorize, not to
call it female and male, and instead look for other reasons for us behaving linguistically different (or differently in all aspects of life). I believe these differences exist, but only because we have decided that there should be differences and I also believe that women are discriminated against. But I think that we, for now, can use these terms to make these thoughts easier to access and therefore it may be easier for us to start making a change. When we have come a little bit further, we might be able to name these differences differently and no longer have the need to use the terms “female” and “male”, and that the only difference between women and men are the physical differences. Hopefully, there will only be differences between individuals.

5. Summary

This study has looked at typically male linguistic features in an all-female conversation. The investigated features were swearing, interruptions, disagreeing and ignoring, questions and monologues and ‘playing the expert’. I wanted to see if and how these women used typically male linguistic features in same-sex conversation, and if their linguistic behavior was typically ‘male’ or ‘female’. The results of the study show that these women use some of the chosen features, but mix them with a typically female communication style. They are male in the sense that they asked many information-seeking questions, while at the same time used other types of questions (such as tag-questions, to introduce new topics and invite each other to speak), which is a typically female feature. They did interrupt each other, but many of the interruptions can be perceived as unintentional and often a part of the conversational jam session typical of women. There were only two instances of someone disagreeing with another participant, which makes them female in that sense, since females often are more tentative in their language use. They also used monologues and ‘played the expert’, but in a collaborative communication style; one participant held the floor for a while and talked about a subject that they were the expert on, but let the other women into it to make comments and build on the monologue. So, these women were not all typically female or typically male; they used both typically female and male linguistic features, but on a typically female foundation; a hybrid so to speak.
References

Primary sources

Transcriptions of tape – recorded April 7th 2011

Secondary sources


Electronic source

The Holy Bible<http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Genesis-3-16/> [Accessed on June 14th 2011]

Audio-visual source

House M.D, Season 1, Episode one; Love Hurts, Aired 2005 (US)
Appendix

Interruptions
disagreeing and ignoring
info-seeking questions
other questions
monologues and ‘playing the expert’

N – Okay, having a baby?
S – Okay “P” (HAHA)
P – Okay
N – How is it?
S – Yeah, you’ve had a baby, so,
P – What’s it like having a baby? (SIM) Well, I have a four month old and what’s it like?
Uhm, very nice once they’re finally out. (HAHA)
LAUGHTER
S – (HAHA), once it’s finally out.
P – Haha, if that answers it… No, but pregnancy was surprisingly painful. It started with back
pain, uhm, you get this thing where your, sort of, your skeleton starts depleting itself to
give… to give the baby calcium…
I – Oh…
P - …which means you’ve got the hips of a very old woman (HAHA).
S – That is like the scary part, you have to get that baby out.
I – Mhm…
N – Mhm… (SIM)
S – Of course, you can have a baby and it’s a lot of work, but you have to get it out, that’s
what I’m afraid about.
P – You have to carry it for nine months…
S – Yeah
P - …and people around you have to adjust… uhm, to you being pregnant and becoming a
mother, so you might lose some friends, even at my age…
I – Mmmm…
S – The first thing, maybe you should find a nice man. Maybe that’s like the biggest thing?
I – (HAHA)
P – Oh yes that’s…
S – Where do you find them?
P – That’s what I did. Of course I had…XX
S – You went out looking! (SIM)
P – I…I had to go clubbing for a year…XX
S – Yeah… You were like; “are you a good donor?”
LAUGHTER
S – Handing out forms…
P – Height, eye color…
S - Yeah
P - IQ…
S – Yeah!
LAUGHTER
I – Did you have any cravings?
P – Cravings? Uhm, melon!
I – Melon?
S – Mmm!
N – That’s… That’s good!
N – Could have been worse!
S – That’s really good! (SIM)
I – Yeah!
P – And I read afterwards. I’d started craving melon before I knew I was pregnant, but then I read that, especially Galia melon, eh, contains a lot of folic acid.
I – Mhm?
P – Cause the baby really really needs…XX
S – Yeah, doesn’t that acid help you to get pregnant also?
P – It can help you get… No, I’m not sure but they want… If you are trying for a baby…
S – Yeah
P - …you should be eating folic acid, because it can prevent Spina Bifida, which means the curvature of the spine, which can be, uhm, in certain cases, it it’s severe, it’s so debilitating, it’s horrible.
S – A frie…
P – That’s why..
S - A friend’s mother, she ate crayons.
N – (HAHA)
S – With the black, uhm, black board, like you had before, in the class room?
P – Oh yeah.
I – Yeah.
S – She ate those and her grandmother ate like mud.
N – What?
S – Her husband had to go out and dig a whole…
I – No? (HAHA)
S - …And then pour in some water and like, mush around. And then she sat there ate…
N – It isn’t… XX
S - I don’t know.
N – How…
S – It’s…I can… (SIM)
N – How healthy!
S – Yeah!
LAUGHTER
S – I can understand if you get like cravings for something that, like, melon; I’ve eaten it before…
S - Yeah, but, like, yeah, crayons?
N – Yeah, where do you get it from?
S – Yeah. I have no idea!
I – Ew..
P – No, I wouldn’t know, and I’m telling you the truth, no secrets…
LAUGHTER
P – I really really…XX
S – No, no one’s going to read this so…it’s okay.
LAUGHTER
S - You can be honest.
P – No, what else could I say about having a baby? Uhm. you have to, uhm, be on the ball so to speak, you have to check up with, uhm, all the government agencies that you need to sort of inform, which.. Försäkringskassan. Uhm, check that they send you the right forms.
BABY CRYING
P – Yeah? (TO THE BABY)
LAUGHTER
S – He wants to join in!
P – Yes, he can join in. And then, of course, once, as soon as they are born you, you sign
them up for a place at nursery.
S – I thought you were going to say; “sign him up for adoption”!
LAUGHTER
S – Oh my God! That’s what I thought you were going to say!
P – Naaaw…
S – No. Of course not!
P – Ja… And then when they come, it comes naturally, I think, for most people.
S – To give birth or take care of them?
P – To take care of them, really. Giving birth was, haha, not nice!
LAUGHTER
I – I’m kind of scared of the depressions you’ve heard of, after giving birth.
P – Yeah.
I – Some yeah…that some get.
P – And almost every woman…You…You… Few women get depressions, they thought I
might have it, but I mean, almost every woman get, get, uhm…Baby blues, it’s called, from
when they’re about two months. Because it’s, it’s, it’s such hard work, you won’t get any
sleep…
I – No….
P – Especially if you breast feed.
N – Does that hurt?
P – No, it doesn’t hurt at all, but you will not sleep. And, of course, there are hormones
pumping in your body that make uhm, your hearing becomes very sensitive.
S – The hearing?
P – Yes, your hearing.
I – Hmm…
P – You become…
I – As you want to…
P – Oh, yeah, you want to hear him.
I – Yeah.
P – And that’s just the biology of it. And, you wake up all the time, but of course, you have to
wake up everytime he needs you, you need to wake up. And you get XX emotional, but they
say all this is because you have to be empathic to the baby’s needs also, and it does pass.
S – Mmm.. But look, aren’t there women that don’t feel anything? Like Brooke Shields, she
got like a depression, she wrote a book about it also. That she couldn’t connect to the child.
She was like…
P – That is one of the symptoms of post-natal depression, and that’s one of the clues that I did
not have it, because I’ve never had a problem connecting with O.
S – Mmm…How can you not connect?
P – No, but of course, if you don’t, that’s a chemical imbalance in your brain. So, it’s not like
you’ve made a decision not to feel anything for your child. I feel very sorry for any woman
who maybe feels ten times what I felt when I had the baby blues, because that was no fun. At
all.
I – Hmm
S – He’s so cute.
P – Sigh.
S – But do you… That’s what I’ve been thinking about, having children when… How..
N – (HAHA)
S – I just, ugh, I can’t even imagine myself having a child, that’s why I’m just… But like, uhm, like E talked about before, her friend, she was very young when she just had her child, that we talked about today.
N – Was that the sixteen year old?
S – Yeah. And then you have people who wait until they’re 45, like, what are they waiting for? We talked about that before, it’s like, what are you waiting for?
P – I don’t know. Uhm, and you have to sort of do it before 45 really, because once you hit 35, uhm, your fertility just dips. So, I was on the threshold there myself, getting IVF and…
I- Mmm..
P – Last-minute-baby…
S – Don’t they say that after 20 something, 21, 22…
I – Mmm..
S – …it goes down?
P – It goes down, and, but it’s sort of just a sort of a more steady pace…than after 35, it just plummets.
S – Mmm…
P – But do you have… uhm… Do you guys have an idea, like, I used to have when I was younger, when, I will have a baby, when I have my own house, I’ve done my…
I – Mmm..
P - I’ve finished my education,
I – Mmm..
P - what I’m going to do,
I – Mmm..
P - I’ve built my career for a few years, I own my home, I’m in a steady relationship
I – Mmm…
P – And when I feel like I’ve traveled the world, I’ve seen everything; then! I will try for a baby.
S – And of course, you think that you…I will get it immediately.
P – Yup.
S – When I want it, “I want it now” “Okay”.
P – Yeah, I tried, nothing happened. But that relationship maybe wasn’t the best anyway. And then, now I have a very nice relationship, I haven’t got the house and I haven’t got the car and I haven’t got the business, but I’ve got a nice relationship and I think I’m more mature in myself and then it just happened.
S – Maybe the body, in one way, shuts off, in one way, if you feel very low, very… it’s like if…
P – Yeah like “this is not right”? 
S – Yeah! In one way, I.. Maybe it isn’t that way but, I do…
P – I don’t think it is that way…
I – No…
P - …because then rape victims certainly wouldn’t have babies, would they?
I – Mmm..
N – Mmm..
S – Yeah.
P – I don’t believe in…
S – But it would be a nice thought.
P – I think it may, may be a bit of…luck.
S – Then we wouldn’t need birth control! (SIM)
P - Sheer luck.
S – Luck or, bad luck sometimes.
P – Yeah, luck not getting pregnant would be.
S – Mmm.
N – I can’t even, I can’t even imagine getting… having a baby…
S – No.
P – No but…
N – I… I… (HAHA)…
P – Nine months is a long time to get used to it though, and it is…
I – Mmm…
N – And it is…
P – As a woman, you can start to feel it move, you feel it growing, and all these hormones that start pumping inside of you they make you feel affectionate for the baby, I think.
S – Mmm… But, like, like we talked about before, let’s say you’re pregnant and then after seven months, you’re like; “I don’t want it”. Can I change my mind? You can’t change your mind. That is the thing, I’m afraid that I will change my mind.
I – Hmm…
P – Why couldn’t you change your mind?
S – Because the baby is seven months old.
P – Yeah, well you… you would have to give birth to it, but you can change your mind.
S – Yeah, but then I wouldn’t give it up for adoption. That would be too much. I think I would like to turn back time.
P – Oh, you… you will want to do that during labor.
LAUGHTER
P – It will be like; “No more”, “Okay, I’m go… going home now, we’ll try again next week, okay?”
LAUGHTER
N – I’d rather have a cat.
P – Yeah, cr… you say that, but then you sit, sit around in your flat…
N – All alone…
P – … with your boyfriend, and you get one cat, you get another cat; “should I get another cat?”
N – A lot of cats! (SIM)
LAUGHTER
P – And some more potpourri to hide the smell from the litter box.
PAUSE
S – I would like to try to have one of those, like, plastic babies that scream, you know, ja men, that you see, like, on Ricki Lake, like “Have a child, oh!”
N – Those babies you can throw on the floor and…
S – Yeah, yeah, but you have to like, commit to the exercise, but…
N – (HAHA)
S – Like, having a child like that; feed them, get up at night, it would, it would be really nice to…
N – Oh… oh… (SIM)
S – Oh, now he threw up, you want some paper? (???)
P – Yup, yup, the tissue box…
PAUSE

S – Trying to s… steal the attention here…
P – Mmm…
S – Mmm…
P – Shall we hand you to (TO THE BABY)...oops… to, uhm, what was your name again, sorry?
S – Uhm, Pocahontas!
P – Yes, Pocahontas…
I – (HAHA)
S – Yeah, Pocahontas can take him!
N – Poca… Pocahontas isn’t good with babies. Snow white is much better!
S – You haven’t seen Pocahontas with a child; she doesn’t have a child in the film!
Laughter
N – Snow white has a lot of animals.
LAUGHTER

PAUSE

I – Aww…
P – Aww…
I – Ooop!
N – Oh!
S – Oj! Of course.
LAUGHTER
I – Mmm…
N – Ahh…
S – Aw… It’s okay. (TO THE BABY)
I – Aww…
N – What happened? (HAHA)(TO THE BABY)
I – Ah…
P – Hej…Hallå! (TO THE BABY)
S – You see, Pocahontas is good with children!
N – Wait…Wait for it…
S – Wait… Wait for it… (SIM)
LAUGHTER

PAUSE

S – Well, it is one thing to like, take care of a child, let’s say for a few hours.
N – Yeah, and then have it all the time.
S – And then…(SIM)Yeah. That’s…
I – Are you planning on any siblings…for him or?
P – Don’t think so, not with school and everything…
I – Mmm…
P - …cause I have to, sort of finish…educationwise and start working, so we can… buy a little place and this guy can have his own room, and …. (XX) have a little garden.
S – Too bad that men can’t have children! Then R could have…
P – Yeah…He could have the next one!
BABY CRYING
XX
N – Told you so!
P – Aww…
S – Okay, that guy didn’t fell for me… fall for me. Okay, good.
I – Mmm..
P – Aww…
N – It’s not your fault.
S – Of course it isn’t. It’s never my fault.
P – What did she do to you, huh? (TO THE BABY)
N – She pinched him!
S – Yeah! I was like…
LAUGHER
S – …took his little leg and just…
P – XX (TO THE BABY)
BABY CRYING
S – No, you see, it wasn’t me!
I – Mmm…
S – Hmm…
BABY CRYING
P – You want to sit in your….(TO THE BABY)
BABY CRYING
I – I wonder what he’s thinking… Why he suddenly he just…
S – Yeah…
P – I think that he just felt tired all of a sudden.
S – I would like to do that as well.
I – Yeah
S – As soon as I feel tired I just want to like; “Ah!”
LAUGHTER
N – And everybody would like; “Oh, “S”, go to bed!”
I – Aww, (HAHA)
S – Yeah… Yeah put me down somewhere, and hand me a bottle so I can just nib… nibble on.. (HAHA)! Uhm.. No!
LAUGHTER
P – Isn’t that what happens?
LAUGHTER
S – When I’m, when I’m lucky…
P – It’s what I’ve heard…
S – Yeah… When… It’s seems to happen for everyone else, but okay. I’m going to look that one up. Uh!

PAUSE

S – Knowing me, knowing you.
Pause
S – Happy again… (TO THE BABY)
Pause
N – But I love children…and babies and…. especially my brother’s girls.
S – How old are they?
N – H is three years old and E is ten. And they’re perfect…
S – Mmm..
I – Mmm…
N – They love me…
LAUGHTER
S – “They’re perfect; they love me”! That is the only…
N – And… they’re so nice. And H, she’s crazy!
S – The ten-year-old?
N – No, the three-year-old. She’s really funny. She does the craziest… craziest things all the
time.
S – Like what? Eating candy on a Thursday?
N – No, she’s h… uhm.. uhm… you know the cakes where there’s a lot of…
I – Oreos, no?
N – No, no.
S – Ballerina?
N – No.
S - Cheesecake?
N – Can I code switch?
I – Yeah.
N – Semlor.
S – Ah!
N– Uhm, her mother bought them a couple of semlor, and she hid them, so nobody could eat
them.
S – She was like…
N – No, she…
S – Hit them?
N – Yeah. No, not hit; hid!
S – Jaha! Hid them! I was like; “what?”
LAUGHTER
S – Where did she hide them?
N – Behind the curtains.
I – Hmm…
N – Just for fun…
S – She’s going to be…(SIM)
N – …and then she, and then she woke up one morn… one night and went to their aquarium
and took out the fishes and put them on the floor. And her excuse were; “but I.” she thought
she freed them. But no, she killed them.
S – She’s going to be a girl that’s… when she’s 16, you have to pick her up from like,
Heartbreak or something.
N – And she’s just three years old! Where did she get that idea from?
S – You.
I – Mmm..
N – But it’s nice having a kitty too.
I – I prefer dogs.
S – Mmm.. A pug.
N – I had two turtles once.
I – Yeah?
N – And they, they were in the, in the bath tub, because I was afraid of them, and I knew they
couldn’t get out of that bath tub (HAHA).
S – But what did you do if you needed to take a shower or something?
N – I took them out and put them in their box.
I – Yeah, they had a box?
N – Yeah, (HAHA). And you could hear them like…
S – I would like a seal…
I – A seal?
N – (HAHA)
S – A little… just like a chubby one, like…
N – Aww, a cute one.
S – Yeah, but I don’t have a bath tub.
N – Oh… But they would get out of the bath tub…
P – And you would keep a seal in a bath tub? (SIM)
S – Yeah…
P – Oh… That’s alright.
S – Yeah, I’m like one of those Greenpeace-people.
P – Yes, and they, of course advocate keeping seals in bath tubs, don’t they?
S – Yeah, yeah! Seals and people and… people that are… (SIM)
P – Babies…
S – Yeah, babies, everything, just keep them there!
LAUGHTER
P – Oh, about tortoises, I heard on the radio… I think in the Czech Republic…
N – Mmm…
P – …there was a tortoise born with two heads and five legs and…
S – What? A child?
P – No, a tortoise! (HAHA).
S – Jaha!
P – And he had this problem, because he could only get one head into the shell at a time…
I – Aww…
N – Haha
P – …and it looked like it was competing with itself, like; “No, it’s my turn!”
S – But it…
I – How…(SIM)
S – But it…(SIM)
I – How…(SIM)
S – But it was like one? Did it…(SIM)
P – Yes, one, yes.
S – How did they… did they share a brain or what did they?
P – No, they did not… It seemed like both heads were conscious, and I think that was the, according to the radio.
BABY CRYING
P – Huh huh… Didn’t mommy give you attention? Hallá? (TO THE BABY)
S – Like all the other men, if you don’t give them attention, they go somewhere else…
N – “Well, I cry, so give it to me.”
S – You know, women cry, or men may be crying, I don’t know…
LAUGHTER
S – oh, it was the cat… (CAT MAKING NOISES IN THE LITTER BOX)
P – Oh yes.
S – The turtles, I thought.
LAUGHTER
P – No, no, no of course, I have guests, so he’s going to make an effort to make an impression here.
LAUGHTER
P – I might have to excuse myself in a minute.
S – Haha yeah.

PAUSE

S – But… but… is… is the turtle, it was a turtle right? Yeah. It’s going to survive?
P – Well, of c… it’s bread in a zoo so they’re going to look after it.
S – What if one of them dies, and the other head doesn’t?
N – Hmm… You’d have to carry it around.
P – I really haven’t thought that much about it, Pocahontas… (SIM)
LAUGHTER
S – It’s like the big… the big questions in life; what happens in Japan, Libya and about the turtle in the Czech Republic…
N – XX
LAUGHTER

PAUSE

N – Discovery usually shows programs where… rescue operations when, how they rescue turtles, and you see these little, little tiny turtles trying to get to the water…
I – Mmm…
N – …and then ki… the water flushes them back again and the bad… uhm… uhm… fox?
I – Huh?
LAUGHTER
N – Are there foxes there? (SIM)
P – XX … wild dogs?
S – Are you thinking about like Little Red Riding Hood or something? (SIM)
N – (HAHA) no! Something comes and… uh… takes the turtles and eats them…
P – Yeah, seagulls and albatrosses and all sorts, yeah.
I – Yeah (SIM)
N – They looked like foxes…
S – What do you know…
N – Yeah…

PAUSE

N – My turtles, they had like, really long claws, and you had to cut them… I never did that…
LAUGHTER
S – That’s why they were like rawr! That’s why they could like almost get out of the bath tub, they ba’!
I – Aww…
N – And they liked to sit there on each other, and were just like take their arms out, or whatever…
S – That’s what you thought, when you were little; “They like to sit on each other”.
N – They did it all the time so…
LAUGHTER
P – They had a nice piggy-back ride! In the bath tub. Yes.
LAUGHTER (SIM)
S – Mamma likes to sit on… nej. daddy like… no…
LAUGHTER
N – What have you witnessed?
S – Nothing!
N – Nothing of importance…
S – Nothing of importance, no.
Laughter (SIM)
P – Oh, but uhm… At the nursery, not, not baby nursery, the plant nursery…
I – Ja.
P – Uhm, trädgårdsodlingen…
S – Ja…
P – Eh, Löjtnantsvägen near högskolan, uhm, they have a little pond in there, amongst all the plants and everything and they have little tortoises in there, and uhm, gold fish…
N – Can, can you visit? (SIM)
S – Yeah.
P – Yes, you can walk around.
S – Don’t they have rabbits? (SIM)
P – They have bunnies! (SIM)
I – Yeah, I’ve been there. (SIM)
N – Oh! She ate one! (SIM)
I – Yeah.
S – Yeah, they were really good!
P – I’ve cooked bunny.
N – Where did you find it?
P – That was in London, in Waitrose.
S – In the zoo… (SIM)
S – In the zoo.
I – Hmm..
N – Cause here, I can’t, I can’t imagine where they find it.
P – Yeah… (SIM)
P – But we have…
N – “Oh rabbit, let’s…”
P – Bef… Oh, my neighbour when I was a child, she was XX if I was eight and she was 75 then. She was 75 in 1980, this is a lot, going back. I mean, her generation, going back. She kept rabbits in cages…
I – Mmm…
P – …to eat… She bread them to eat.
S – Is that, is that legal?
N - XX
P – Oh, well, people used to do that. Of course, me and my sister used to say; “Oh can we go feed the rabbits? Can we say hello? What’s this one called?”, She would go; “They’re for eating!”
I – No!
Laughter
P – When you think about it like that, it’s not so tasty XX.
S – Can’t be a lot of…(SIM), I mean, can’t be so much food on…
I – No…
P – They’re built like a cat.
S – Are you talking from experience?
N – (HAHA)
S - Like I would know?
P – I have a friend from the Ukraine, who’s pretty certain she’s eaten cat, because her mother went to the market, and, you know, they’ve got their chickens and rabbits, I’m making citation marks…

LAUGHTER

P - …hanging up, you know, and sometimes there is this XX meat or XX …. when she was a child and her mother came back with this rabbit, and they had cut the paws off at the upper joint, and you just see the rib cage and the legs and everything and the tail being cut off. And O’s, that’s her name, her father said; “I’m pretty sure that’s a cat and not a rabbit.”

I – Hmm…

S – But, but, I, I can see it like, as long as you don’t know what you’re eating, I think anything can taste good. It’s when you know like, “Oh, here you have a dog.”, then I would, but if I say “Oh, this is like a, a nice pork…steak”, I don’t know, then I would eat it.

I – Hmm…

N – But.. we…

S – Everyone’s like…

N – …we ate a rabbit after we already found out that it was a rabbit.

S – Yeah, and it was glazed in like some barbeque-whiskey sauce also.

N – It looked like chicken. (SIM)

I – I wouldn’t eat it again, if I knew.

N – No? But you were brave.

I – Brave?

N – I didn’t think you would eat it!

S – It was like, when my grandmother, when she was alive, she lived at ÖSTER. And there were so many rabbits there digging under her house, so at night, she heard like shooting, so she looked outside, and her neighbours were standing there with like, shotgun, and shooting them and taking them in.

I – Yeah. When I was young, there were a lot of wild rabbits in Gothenburg, in some areas. And I think they had to ……XX

S – I mean, they can carry diseases, who knows?

P – Yeah, and they breed so quickly. Uhm, I had, there was a no man’s land when there was the east and the west in Germany. There was the western Germany and the eastern Germany, and of course there was an East and West Berlin, that town was split in two. And in the no man’s land, there were bunny… bunny rabbits. But, they lived enclosed, of course, there, there was in-breeding and so on… But, but there was just this field of grass with barbed wire and walls and further on, mine fields, but in the middle, there were bunnies.

N – Hmm…

I – Hmm…

N – The word Bunny itself is really….

P – Yeah… Hunny Bunny… Hunny Bunny… (TO THE BABY)