

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the data analysed and also its results. The data analysed was taken from two recordings which lasted about ninety minutes; fifty-five minutes in conversation 1 and thirty-five minutes in conversation 2. The transcriptions were analysed to identify the formal features of language used in an all-Malay female group that brought about co-operative talk. Among the features examined were minimal responses, hedges, simultaneous speech, overlaps, interruptions, questions, the marker 'kan' as tag questions, and the use of personal and inclusive pronouns like 'we' and 'us'. As the conversations were not recorded on video, the non-verbal elements in the conversations will not be discussed in-depth by the researcher.

4.2 CLASSIFICATION OF DATA

The researcher analysed two conversations and managed to gather data based on the transcriptions i.e. transcription 1 and transcription 2. The topics discussed by the participants were mostly ordinary everyday talk which touched on the participants' personal feelings and it is informal in nature.

In the study, the researcher analysed the formal features of women's language found in both transcriptions as a whole, before moving on to the detailed description of each of the features used by the participants.

4.3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.3.1 FORMAL FEATURES OF LANGUAGE

4.3.1.1 MINIMAL RESPONSES

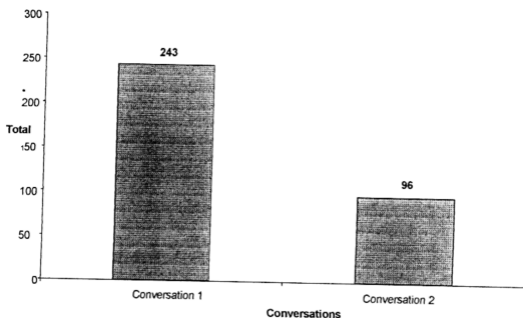


Figure 4.3.1.1

The total number of minimal responses in conversation one and conversation two.

As can be seen in Figure 4.3.1.1, there were 243 minimal responses in the first conversation while there were 96 minimal responses in the second interaction. Conversation 1 has two and a half times more minimal responses because the first conversation was longer than the second conversation. The first conversation had 891 lines (fifty-five minutes) while the second conversation had only 508 lines (thirty-five minutes). In both interactions, speaker A produced the most minimal responses with 151 (62.14%) in the first interaction and 37 (38.14%) in the second interaction. As can be seen in Example 1 and 2, speaker A proved to be a very attentive listener. By producing minimal responses, she in fact was being supportive of the others in the conversation. The other speakers also used minimal responses but contributed less than A. However, this did not mean that they were inactive or not paying attention to the

conversation. Their lack of contribution of minimal responses were compensated by laughter, which is a non-verbal minimal response, and questions.

Example 1 (T.1)

283 B : Tomorrow(.) Today is 7/

284 A : Mm/

In example 1, A produced minimal responses like mm to signal her acceptance of the preceding information by B. Therefore, confirming B's information was important to show B that A agreed with her.

Example 2 (T.2)

172 Z : Early June (.) I rasa { I think } early June/

173 A : [mmm/

174 L : Oh! Great /

Similarly, in Example 2 'mm' here was used to respond to Z's utterance. A's feedback to Z's information on the date of the event is important in this part of the conversation as it worked as a way to elicit response from the rest of the floor. This clearly showed A's firm commitment as an active participant in the conversation as she kept the conversation moving through the production of minimal responses. Therefore, these findings supported Jariah's (1999) work where the use of minimal responses in female speech facilitated the speakers in this study to the discourse. The minimal responses were used to signal A's agreement with Z and an understanding has been reached and accepted by all of the members of the floor.

B, however, only contributed about 6.17% of the talk throughout conversation 1 and about 2.06% in conversation 2, but this did not mean that B was not paying attention or was not interested in the topic discussed. B often asked questions (18

Coates's (1996) study also revealed the same results. Laughter, had projected the same effects as verbal production. It has successfully allowed listeners to give their feedback and, thus, continue the discourse.

Example 5 (T.2)

- 44 Z : The same goes to budu and all that/
45 A : hmm but petai is good for kidney/
46 Y : yes but it's so smelly/

In Example 5, A and Y developed the topic brought up by Z. Both A and Y provided minimal responses such as 'hmm' and 'yes' to agree with what Z had mentioned. A said 'hmm' to agree with Z about Islam's view on eating smelly food like petai, tempoyak and budu, although she felt that petai was good for one's health. Y agreed with A when she inserted the minimal response 'yes' to A's opinion. But she still thought that petai was smelly despite its medicinal effect.

Example 6 (T.1)

- 325 D : and then take a cab from Asia Jaya/
326 B : mmm it's not very far/
327 D : yeah/

Similarly, in Example 6, D suggested the best way to get to Asia Jaya. B agreed with her by saying 'mmm' and further mentioned that Asia Jaya was very near to Mid Valley. B acknowledged D's claims by saying 'yeah'. This clearly showed that B supported D through the production of the minimal response 'yeah'.

Incidentally, laughter can play a significant role in building a collaborative conversation. For instance, in order for speakers to signal their existence in a collaborative floor, even though they are not producing any utterances, they would laugh. Like minimal responses, laughter allowed the speakers in this study to remind others of their presence all the time.

Other than that, laughter was inserted in the conversations to turn the mood of the conversation into an informal and friendly ambience.

Example 7 (T.2)

- 1

A

:

Ask me <laugh> ask me(.) Do you know what is the-
the moral of the story (.) so <laugh>/
- 2

Z

:

<laugh> <laugh>I've got to
wash my hand/
- 3

Y

:

aaahh la /

As can be seen in Example 7, the speakers were laughing at the start of the conversation, which undoubtedly turned the mood of the conversation into something less formal in nature. Consequently, speaker Z's laughter in line 2 was produced simultaneously in response to what speaker A said. This was a good example of a collaborative floor as it gave the impression that the two friends were involved in the conversation the whole time.

Example 8 (T.2)

- 164

A

:

It's Royal Theatre not London Royal Circus/
- 165

L

:

When Azah?/
- 166

A

:

<laugh>
- 167

Z

:

<laugh>
- 168

L

:

Azah

when?
- 169

A

:

Royal/

Example 8 is another excellent model of simultaneous laughter produced by the Malay speakers. In this extract, speaker A and Z jointly constructed laughter instead of taking turns to comment. This gave an impression that other than speaking, laughter showed speakers' amusement and their involvement in contributing to the conversation. Furthermore, laughter again indicated that the speakers were relaxed, happy and friendly. They seemed to be enjoying themselves very much. Undoubtedly, the findings of this study were found to be similar to Jariah (1999).

Example 9 (T.1)

- 888 D : Using YOUR money or your husband's money?=
889 A : = MY
money=
890 D : = then it's not treating yourself=
891 A : =I have his
supplementary gold card/ <laugh>

In Example 9, laughter can also arise at the end of the conversation. Speaker A laughed to signal that the conversation had come to an end. Furthermore, it also showed that she ended it on a friendly and pleasant note.

The researcher found that most of the laughter produced by the conversationalists signalled amusement. They laughed at humorous subjects like Agassi's balding head in Line 665- 669 in conversation 1 (Example 10).

Example 10 (T.1)

- 665 M : He's of mix parentage/
666 D : Oh!/

- 667 M : Balding/ <laugh>
 668 D : Balding like Agassi/
 669 M : <laugh> Yes balding like Agassi/

In this extract, M was telling the other members of the floor that an acquaintance of hers looked exactly like Andre Agassi, the tennis player. This then led to D's assumption that he was probably bald like Agassi. M confirmed D's comparison by laughing as it was funny and further supported it by saying yes.

In this study, the researcher found that speakers also used laughter when they touched on sensitive issues like politics and race. In order to create a non-confrontational atmosphere, laughter was inserted. However, it was unfortunate for the researcher as parts of the conversation relating to issues mentioned, had to be taken out from the transcriptions due to the request made by the conversationalists. As the topics involved talks of politics and race, the participants did not want to create any unpleasant feedback from the readers. Lastly, the researcher agrees with Coates (1996) and Jariah (1999) that minimal response, both verbal and non-verbal, play an important component in the Malay women's talk. They used minimal responses to interact and to inform one another as what Jariah had claimed. Indeed, the speakers in this study had successfully constructed a co-operative talk based on a collaborative effort similar to Coates.

4.3.1.2 HEDGES

Table 4.1
A summary of the various forms of hedges found in transcriptions 1 and transcription 2

Forms of hedges	Transcription 1	Transcription 2
I think	6	3
You know	13	1
Maybe	7	1
I suppose	3	-
I guess	3	1
I mean	-	2
Probably	3	-
Quite	-	1
Total	35	9

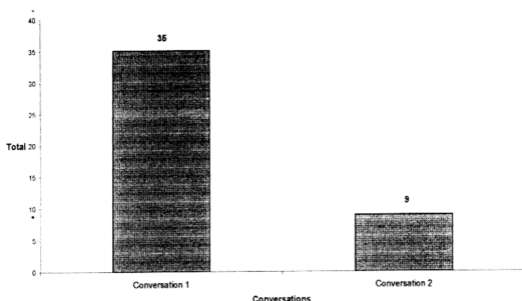


Figure 4.3.1.2
The total number of hedges in conversation 1 and conversation 2

As shown in Figure 4.3.1.2 based on the conversations recorded, the researcher found 35 instances where hedges were used in the first interaction while only 9 hedges were found in the second interaction. From the analysis of both conversations, the researcher found that ‘you know’ is commonly used by many of the conversationalists in conversation 1 as a hedging device, while in conversation 2, the conversationalists prefer to use ‘I think’.

Example 11 (T.1)

- | | | | | |
|----|---|---|--------------------------------|---|
| 22 | A | : | A&W I think can but not(.) not | [in McDonalds/
in McDonalds because you
can bring your own food that(.) you know (.) you'll save
more/ |
| 23 | M | : | | |
| 24 | A | : | mm/ | |

In Example 11, ‘you know’ is used to reduce status difference and emphasize shared knowledge. Money or lack of it is a sensitive topic. In order to protect speaker

A's face needs, M hedged her utterance. A, as can be seen, did not take any offence by it, instead she showed her agreement with M through the minimal response 'mm'.

Example 12 (T.1)

- 140 B : You can call/
 141 D : **You know** if you go at 11.30 you only get (.) 8 bucks la/
 142 M : hah 11.30(.) you mean at other times we don't get that
 discount?/

Other than using you know to protect one's face need, 'you know' in Example 12 was used by D to attribute relevant knowledge to the addressee. This device was used to connect the speaker to the hearer as it produced a discussion on the topic of conversation. Here, it can be concluded that 'you know' was a strong hedging device used to enforce intimacy and solidarity between speakers. 'You know' was commonly used by the Malay speakers to reinforce mutual involvement and assist in producing a joint talk as found in Holmes's (1986) work. According to Holmes, solidarity marker like 'you know' always occur in conversations between friends who have known each other well and the researcher could not agree more.

Example 13 (T.2)

- 67 Y : Never (-) never but I was told that it's not actually haram(.)
 {haram} it's something which is not Islamic (.)religious (-) I
 just forgot about it (.) I tak ingat {don't remember}=
- 68 L : **=I think**
 because we are imitating the – the =
- 69 Y : **= imitating=**

70 L :

= the non-

Muslim =

71 Y :

= Jews **I think**(.)Jews=

In Example 13, hedges were used as a tool to avoid being the expert and to show the speakers' confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of an idea expressed. In this example, the conversationalists were discussing the act of candle blowing which according to Y was not an Islamic thing to do. But she was not sure of the origin of this particular act. The usage of 'I think' in lines 67 and 71 also indicated that Y avoided being the expert in the topic and the use of hedges was absolutely crucial when discussing sensitive topics such as religion and culture.

Example 14(T.1)

611 M : Tapi {but}- but when she pronounces house she wanted to say hauth like orang putih {Westeners}/

612 A : Wow/

613 M : Cat hauth **you know** <laugh> She has that slang to her (.) and the mother says that the teachers are not foreigners- not native English speakers(.) It's **probably** her classmates or **probably** she watches a lot of VCD=

614 A : =sesame=

615 M : =or whatever
kan or VCD (.) **Maybe** she learns from that(.)er(.) but it's effective/

Similarly, in Example 14, it was obvious that by using 'you know', 'probably' and 'maybe', speaker M was trying to show she was not the expert in the topic. M in

the conversation assumed that her niece developed a slang through friends or television. She had no definite proof of her claim. Furthermore, it showed that M was unsure and did not want to be committed to what she had said. Therefore, to remain in a safe position, M opted to using hedges.

Other forms such as ‘I suppose’ and ‘I guess’ are also used as hedging devices as shown in these examples below:

Example 15 (T.1)

- 463 A : <laugh>What is the point of having mass lecture and
tutorial classes?
- 464 D : uh(.) limitation of groups **I suppose**(.) or slots(-) I don't
know/
- 465 A : okay (-) hmm (-) /

‘I suppose’ was used because D was unsure of the reason why they had to have mass lectures and tutorial classes to teach English. Since D was not the person responsible to make such decisions, she therefore could not offer valid reasons to the question posed.

Example 16 (T.2)

- 414 Y : Benjy who?=
415 Z : = Benjy Azean Irdawaty **I guess**/
- 416 Y : lye {really}let me see(.) let me see/

Again, as can be seen in Example 16, ‘I guess’ was used to show a speakers’s uncertainty. Speaker Z assumed that Benjy was the son of the famous actress, Azean Irdawaty. She was not sure and thus was afraid to commit herself to the presupposition.

Although in Examples 15 and 16 hedges were used because the speakers were uncertain and afraid to commit to the truth of their presupposition, speaker A and Y in both of the extracts seemed to be satisfied with the explanation and reasons given by D and Z. Therefore, there were no conflicts or disagreement among them.

4.3.1.3 SIMULTANEOUS SPEECH

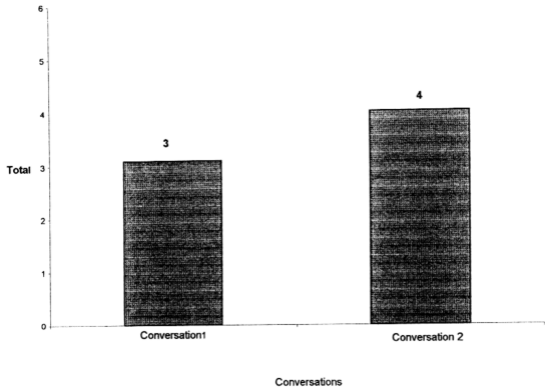


Figure 4.3.1.3
The number of simultaneous speech in conversation 1 and conversation 2

In analyzing the first conversation and second conversation, as illustrated in Figure 4.3.1.3, the researcher found seven occurrences of simultaneous speech.

Simultaneous speech occurs when both speakers say the same words at the same time as in Examples 17 and 18.

Example 17 (T.1)

106	D	:	aah	[Ralph Lauren/
107	B	:]	Ralph Lauren/

Example 18 (T.2)

107	A	:	ah! It is to be associated with the	[celebration/
108	Z	:]	celebration=

In Example 17 and Example 18, B and Z were not interrupting D and A. The word ‘Ralph Lauren’ and ‘celebration’ were produced by the two speakers at the same time. In the examples given, all the speakers produced parts of a speech together. They were not trying to complete each other’s utterances. The occurrence of simultaneous speech clearly revealed that women speakers really worked together to produce a coherent text. Generally, in private conversations between friends, the goal of the interaction is to maintain good relationship. Therefore, the participation of more than one speaker reflects a joint activity.

4.3.1.4 OVERLAPS

Overlaps are also a part of simultaneous speech which illustrates the way the participants work together to produce a collaborative talk. In interaction 1, there were 42 instances of overlaps and 31 in interaction 2, as can be seen in figure 4.3.1.4.

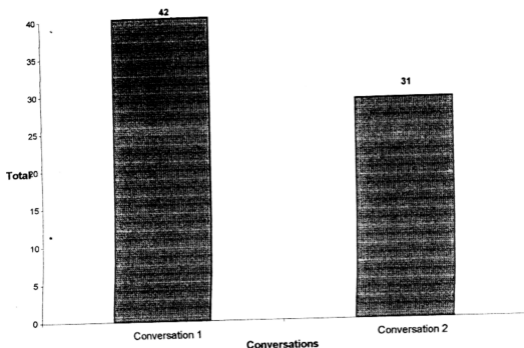


Figure 4.3.1.4
The number of overlaps in conversation 1 and conversation 2

Example 19 (T.1)

525 M : So it won't affect my [you know hormonal you know/
 526 A : [No (.) It is better to((xx)) you are
 more fertile and it will increase your temperature(.) by
 one [

527 M : [Okay but why is it not allowed for pregnant
 women?/

In Example 19, the term interruption is not appropriate. Speaker A in Example 19, was not trying to stop M from talking. In line 525, M expected A to know what she was trying to say and this in turn invited overlap.

Example 20 (T.1)

412 D : [But this is applicable [at
 413 B : [authorized [at all tengok ni {see this} at all

In Example 20, B was guilty of what Tannen called overlap-as-enthusiasm strategy. B overlapped D because of her enthusiasm to participate in the interaction. But she realised her mistake and came in again once D had finished.

Example 21 (T.2)

352 A : So now they are saying it's not her(.)it's another
 woman=
353 Y : =It's not her but they are saying it's her/
354 D : [It is not her/

In Example 21, D was just repeating what Y had said. Both D and Y were trying to explain the matter to A. D's action should not be taken as an interruption but her overlapping Y was to further strengthen a fact, and to support Y.

In short, the researcher agrees with Jariah (1999) and Jamaliah (1995) that overlapping speech in this study was not seen as competitive or vying for the floor. Instead, speakers overlapped to build up information on the topic discussed. Hence, a harmonious and co-operative conversation exists. The researcher also agrees with Jamaliah (1995) that overlaps are something positive because it showed agreement and support to the speaker. Furthermore, it also revealed that the hearer was listening and following the conversations closely.

4.3.1.5 INTERRUPTION

An utterance is taken as interruption when a speaker starts to talk in the middle of a current speaker's turn with the intention of seizing the current speaker's right to speak. As discussed earlier in this study, interruptions can be divided into two: successful and unsuccessful. Figure 4.3.1.5 showed that there were 9 interruptions in

conversation 1: 8 successful and 1 unsuccessful; while in conversation 2, there were 11 interruptions: 9 successful and 2 unsuccessful, as graphically shown in Figure 4.3.1.5.

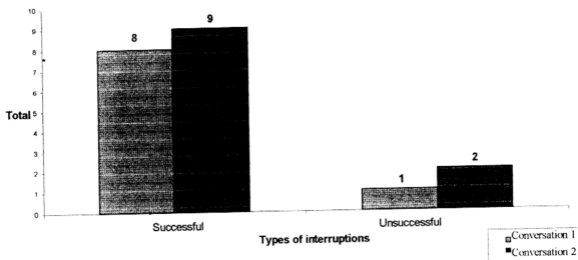


Figure 4.3.1.5
The number of successful and unsuccessful interruptions in conversation 1 and conversation 2

Example 22 (T. 1)

540 A : Just one right everytime you
541 M : no(.) no ovums are=
542 A : =uh=
543 M : =we are
born you know with a predetermined amount of ovums/

In Example 22, A could not finish her turn as she was interrupted by M. At one point A was about to say something but she hesitated and this opportunity was again seized by M. This is an example of a successful interruption.

Example 23 (T.2)

37 Y : When you eat something-unislamic the rest/
38 Z : no when you eat that is not good

39 L : for your blood kan it goes to
 40 A : oh ah
 even though it's halal but
 it's makruh/

Example 23 is another good example of successful interruption. When Y was interrupted by Z, both speakers were vying for the floor. Although Y finished her utterance, Z kept going on, in turn, foiling Y's attempt to again seize the floor. Therefore, Y was successfully interrupted by Z. Z moved on until she was fully stopped by A who later interrupted her.

Sometimes an interruption proves to be unsuccessful when the current speaker's turn is not fully stopped by the interrupter as in Example 24.

Example 24 (T.1)

804 M : Is it really as big or is it just you know a tiny bag=
 805 D : And check the = range
 of colours they're giving you(.) If it's nice/

In Example 24, D tried to interrupt M but speaker M refused to give up her turn by continuing her utterance and refusing to give way to the interruptor. Speaker D only came in again after she was sure that M had completed her turn.

Unsuccessful interruption, as in Example 25, is when the current speaker (B) was interrupted by Z but the current speaker continued the flow of her speech and the interrupter (Z) had to give up her turn.

Example 25 (T.2)

463 B : We need at least a week/

464 Z :

They have

465 D :

only Malaysians celebrate Hari

Raya/

As shown in the examples above, the nature of interruptions can be rather complex. Interruption can be competitive when its function was to take the floor from the current speaker and when worked co-operatively, it functioned as a gesture of support. Nonetheless, the researcher agrees with Jariah (1999) and Jamaliah (1995) that interruptions were significant in women's talk. Speakers showed their attentiveness and sensitiveness to others by contributing to the talk. These behaviour showed support and encouragement in order to help build a communicative discourse.

4.3.1.6 LATCHING

In this study, the researcher found many instances of latching in the Malay women's conversations. In this research the conversationalists used both verbal and non-verbal communication like laughter to complete each other's utterances.

Example 26 (T. 1)

13 A : No(.)one month ago(.)Let's say I choose to do it =

14 D : =at

McDonalds=

Example 27 (T.2)

231 Z : You have got to convince her =

232 D : = that you want to go on

holiday this week =

These two examples (26 and 27), were constructed by 2 speakers. But, they are similar to utterances produced by a single speaker. This is not an interruption as listener D came in at the end of A's utterance in line 13. In this case, 2 speakers combined to create a single utterance; thus producing a single voice. This level of cooperation can only be achieved when speakers pay close attention to one another. For instance, speaker D in Example 27, was able to contribute the last part of the sentence because she had been following the other speaker closely. Her timing was accurate as she came in at the end of Z's utterance in line 232. Part of D's utterance fitted what Z was about to say as though it came from one person.

Example 28 (T. 1)

109	D	:	It smells like =
110	A	:	= glamorous? /
111	D	:	mm/

In Example 28, speaker A latched on to speaker D's utterance by producing the last word of the sentence. As can be seen, A had successfully anticipated what the other speaker had in mind because D agreed with A, thus producing the minimal response mm. It showed how well A had been concentrating because A made the utterance before D had the chance to complete her sentence.

Example 29 (T.1)

83 M : I'm not very interested ape {what} in Estee
Lauder =

84 A : = product ? =

85 M : = perfumes (.) perfumes la (.) I think
it's too strong /

Similarly, speaker A in Example 29, tried to latch on to speaker M's utterance. Although A's anticipation of the last word of M's utterance was inaccurate, that did not mean that A was not a good listener. This was because in the previous utterances, the speakers were discussing products by Estee Lauder and M was being more specific.

Speakers in this study were also found to be using minimal responses like 'mm' and 'aha' to latch on another speaker's utterance. For instance in Examples 30 and 31.

Example 30 (T.1)

184	M	:	It's simple kan (.) It's suitable for semester zero (-) That is one thing (.) We don't have to worry about that (.) Speaking we can use all the activities (.) you know (.) that I'm sure each lecturer has their own =
185	D	:	= mm activities /

D in Example 30 was supplying M with the last word of her utterance. At the same time she was agreeing with speaker M's view, thus the production of the minimal response 'mm'.

Example 31 (T.2)

306	A	:	Tesco produce their own product =
307	Y	:	= aha /

Similarly in Example 31, Y latched on to A's utterance with a simple aha. Again in this example, Y used aha to signify her total agreement with the other party. This further showed that A and Y shared some common knowledge on the types of

products found in Tesco. Therefore, by latching on to A's utterance, Y was expressing her thoughts through A.

As shown in Example 32, an utterance can also be latched with laughter. In sum, speakers have the choice of completing another speaker's sentence both verbally or non-verbally to indicate mutual understanding of the utterance.

Example 32 (T.2)

53 Z : So we need to have a balance of =

54 A : = < laugh> balance of yin
and yang /

In line 54, A latched on to Z's utterance by laughing and then continued to finish the utterance. Laughter was inserted because they were discussing the fusion of *petai* and *jering* and the combination of cool and warm. So, A laughed because it resembled the Chinese concept of yin and yang.

4.3.1.7 PRONOUN WE AND US

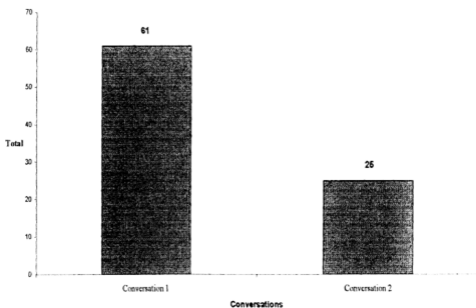


Figure 4.3.1.7 (a)
The number of inclusive pronouns in conversation 1 and conversation 2.

As can be seen in figure 4.3.1.7 (a) in interaction 1, the researcher found 61 instances of we and us and 25 in interaction 2.

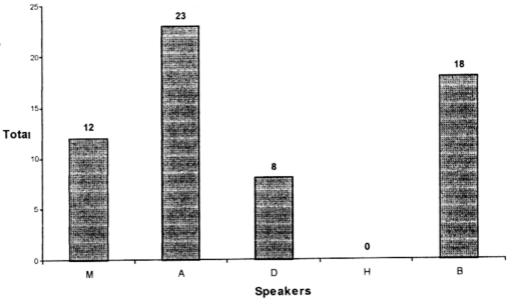


Figure 4.3.1.7(b): The number of inclusive pronouns produced by speakers in conversation 1

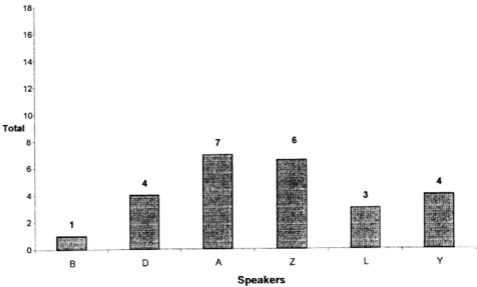


Figure 4.3.1.7 (c): The number of inclusive pronouns produced by speakers in conversation 2

In Figure 4.3.1.7 (b), the inclusive pronouns we and us were used 61 times by the speakers in interaction 1. In this interaction, speaker A produced the most with 23, speaker B produced 18, M 12, D 8 and H produced none. While in Figure 4.3.1.7(c), the frequency of inclusive pronouns we and us used in interaction 2 was small compared to that in interaction 1. A total of 25 inclusive pronouns were found by the researcher. Speaker A and Z produced 7 and 6 respectively, while D and Y produced 4 each. Speaker A mentioned them 3 times and B once. In conversation 2, the inclusive pronouns we and us were used by all the speakers. Speaker A used we and us the most frequently with 28% of the total compared to the others. Similarly in conversation 1, all the participants except H used the inclusive pronouns and it was found that speaker A used them the most frequently with 37.7% of the total.

Speaker A as in Example 33 wanted to buy a perfume set and asked the opinions of her colleagues. Instead of using the pronoun I, she used we to emphasize the cohesion of a group rather than individuality

Example 33 (T.1)

90	A	:	Okay if we, if we buy	any(.) of	this set/
91	B	:		but (-)mm/	
92	A	:	Then we get this one free/		
93	B	:	ooh!		

Example 34 (T.1)

234	A	:	Eh! But here(.) we get 2 perfumes right/
235	D	:	This is intuition (.) You'll get a small one/

Again in Example 34, the pronoun we was used instead of the pronoun I. A did not want the other speakers to feel left out. Therefore, by using we, she was

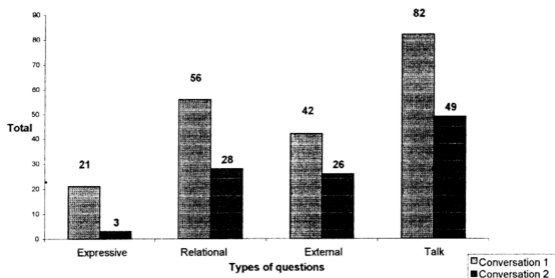


Figure 4.3.1.8
The types of questions in conversation 1 and conversation 2

As can be seen in Figure 4.3.1.8, expressive questions were the least used in conversation 1. It only comprised about 10.45% of the interaction. External questions did occur in the women's talk but played a minor role (20.9%) compared to other types of questions. Talk questions, which provided the speakers with the opportunity to confirm or verify the utterance of another or clarify what the other speaker meant, occurred most frequently in conversation 1. Although only 27.86% were relational questions, this does not mean that the conversation did not have a continuous flow. The five Malay women used more talk questions which solicit information on the current and ongoing conversation. The method of questioning revealed that the participants were actually good and active listeners. They asked questions to make the conversation going. Therefore, the conversationalists were collaborating to produce a co-operative text.

In conversation 2, there were 106 questions. Speaker Z asked 32 questions, A asked 26 questions, L asked 19 questions, Y asked 18 questions, D asked 6 questions,

throughout the conversation suddenly posed a question in line 28. That evidently indicated that she was practically listening to the conversation and wanted to solicit more information on the effects of eating something which is ‘makruh’. Her question was answered by the rest of the participants. This clearly showed that talk questions helped to develop the current topic. The question prompted the participants to join in the discussion.

External questions

Example 37 (T.2)

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|--------------------------|
| 126 | Z | : | Who directed Star Wars?/ |
| 127 | A | : | George Lucas/ |
| 128 | L | : | |
| | | | George Lucas la/ |

Example 37 shows the use of an external question soliciting information about the world. The whole excerpt evolved around the problem of piracy and all the participants were of the consensus that it was a serious issue especially in Malaysia. At the beginning of the excerpt, Z asked for the name of the person directing Star Wars. Both A and L simultaneously answered her. As can be seen, a combination of discussion and narration kept the conversation going. The issue of piracy then moved on to a local scenario where a Malaysian singer sang a song about it. He believed that piracy was a job of an inside person. Therefore, one question could successfully lead the participants into a deeper and more interesting conversation.

Expressive questions

Example 38(T.2)

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|----------------------|
| 425 | Y | : | Next season is Azla/ |
|-----|---|---|----------------------|

- 426 Z : Eh! Next season is Azla the jeanist mom/
 427 B : <laugh>
 428 A : LEVI'S sponsor?/
 429 Z : Ya {yes} lah/

. In this example, the speakers were talking about Levi's jeans sponsoring a few local Malaysian artists. Jokingly, Y said that Z was going to be the next best 'jeanist' in Kuala Lumpur to which she agreed. A, when asking the question in line 428, knew what Z was going to say because the person holding the title of the best jeanist would be sponsored by LEVI'S. So, A relayed what she knew in the form of a question, and Z confirmed with a simple 'yes'.

Relational questions

Example 39 (T.2)

- 144 Y : Can I have some more?/
 145 Z : More? <laugh> Let me act it out.
 146 L : Please mam/
 147 D : This is from Oliver Twist/
 148 Y : mm/
 149 L : Ya {yes}/
 150 Z : More? <laugh>/
 151 D : Okay/

In Example 39, Y was asking whether she could have more of the cake. Z then started to act out a scene from Dicken's famous work Oliver Twist. All the

participants, having read or watched the film, knew what Z was doing. Overall, the speakers were supportive of one another and in the end everyone had a laugh.

4.3.1.9 THE MARKER ‘KAN’ AS TAG QUESTIONS

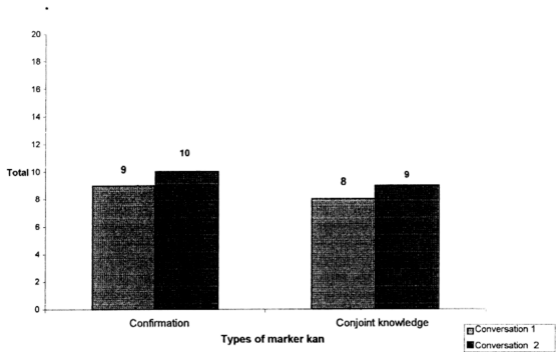


Figure 4.3.1.9
Types of the marker kan in conversation 1 and conversation 2

In this study, the marker ‘kan’ can be divided into two types: to confirm or verify, and a marker for conjoint knowledge. Figure 4.3.1.9 shows the number of ‘kan’ markers used in conversation 1 and conversation 2. This figure illustrates the total of ‘kan’ markers used as confirmation as nine, while eight ‘kan’ markers to show conjoint knowledge totalled among speakers in conversation 1. Therefore, a total of seventeen ‘kan’ markers were found in the first interaction. Meanwhile, in the second interaction, a total of 19 ‘kan’ markers were used by the conversationalists: ten to show confirmation and verification, and nine to refer to conjoint knowledge.

According to Wouk (1998), the marker *kan* is used by many conversationalists in the interactional level to help increase solidarity in a conversation.

Example 40 (T.1)

- 672 D : Agassi is like(.) Iranian *kan*/
(Agassi is like Iranian, isn't he?)
673 M : He is?/
674 D : His father is Iranian/

Most of the examples found in conversation 1 are modal tags. Although they acted as a request for verification or confirmation, these tags facilitated others to make contribution in the development of the topic discussed. These tags increased solidarity by inviting the participation of the speakers as shown in Example 40.

Example 41 (T.1)

- 546 A : But when you are pregnant you're not suppose to take
anything /
547 M : But it has no adverse effect *kan*/
548 A : In fact (-) there is no jamu {herbal medicine} that you can
take when you are pregnant (-) hmm (.) it's either before or
after ((xx)) after or before that/

Like the '*kan*' marker in conversation 1, '*kan*' as shown in Example 41 also functioned as a request for verification or confirmation. A in this example was not only confirming that taking jamu was actually safe for pregnant women but jamu was also taken before pregnancy or right after delivery. Therefore, A was again answering M's query on the effects of jamu and concurrently explaining the best time to

consume it. Thus, A’s speech in line 548 was longer than the rest. When M added the tag ‘kan’ at the end of her utterance, her curiosity was satisfied by speaker A. In short, the tag ‘kan’ not only functioned as a modal tag but it also invited the listener to participate and contribute more to the conversation. Consequently, these tags were addressee oriented as they invited the speakers to join in the talk.

‘Kan’ also worked as a marker of conjoint knowledge as in the examples below. It increased solidarity by drawing the addressees’ attention to the knowledge or information shared by the speaker.

Example 42 (T.1)

- 186

M

:

Like I have that tell me cards kan(.) It says that tell

(Like I have that tell me cards you know) someone bla bla

bla (.) tell someone about- you’re- the person you admire for

instance(.) so (.) in my class I – I made them sit in a circle so

everyone should take one card(.) so (.) if you have tell

someone card you have to read the question and you tell the

person what you know(-) what you have to tell and there’s

another card ask someone =
- 187

A

:

= mm/
- 188

M

:

This one you’re saved because you get to ask somebody

instead of telling/
- 189

D

:

instead of telling (.) it’s easier to make them sit in a circle

(.)it’s easier to talk =
- 190

M

:

= yes/

Speaker M in Example 42 was telling her friends about the speaking activity that she had carried out with her students. Although they had not performed a similar activity with their students, M expected the rest to see the relevance of such activity to encourage students to talk (a common problem faced by all the speakers) and A agreed with M. D also liked this activity as she felt that this activity was suitable as it provided a relaxed environment for students to communicate with one another.

Example 43 (T.2)

478	Z	:	But their-their big day would be Raya Haji kan for them	[
			(But their-their big day would be Raya Haji you know for	
			them)	
479	A	:		oh/
480	Z	:	The Kelantanese are actually practicing the real	[
481	A	:		

Similarly, this example showed that Z had the information that Hari Raya Haji was celebrated more among the Kelantanese people. This information was relatively new to A. Not trying to exclude A from the conversation, Z was actually sharing this piece of information with her and by adding the tag ‘kan’, she was including A in the conversation. Therefore, it can be seen that the tag ‘kan’ was a solidarity marker as it involved the sharing of information although A had no previous knowledge of it.

The conversationalists in this study also used the tag ‘or not’ in their conversations. These interrogative tags also functioned as tag questions because they were placed at the end of an utterance.

Example 44 (T.2)

105	A	:	=light up the candle - you
-----	---	---	----------------------------

light up the candle during blackout and then blow out (.)
can or not?

Example 45 (T.1)

429 A : What about Spider man? (-) Are we watching or not?

4.3.2 TOPICS IN CONVERSATION

The analysis of the two conversations in this study demonstrated a wide range of topics discussed by women. Most of the topics found were about people and the subjects' personal experiences. The topics progressed randomly from one to another. The participants also discussed serious topics, mainly about religion, womanly issues as well as domestic things like recipes, fashion and cosmetics. Work was also discussed but it was not the main focus of the conversations.

It can be said that the Malay women in this study generally talked on diverse subjects. The topics ranged from domestic affairs to serious matters. To the researcher's surprise, they also discussed sports which is usually an unfamiliar territory to women. But they only touched on the superficial aspects of sports as the female speakers' knowledge of the players and the teams' strength and weaknesses, their standing and performance were limited. However, with the use of minimal responses inserted in the conversations, they were sharing the floor and giving support to their conversational partners.

As can be seen, the discussion topics pertaining to the people in the participants lives as well as their personal experience, and also pertaining to the shape of the Malay women's talk, involved lots of sharing and interchanging of stories, even stories of self-disclosure. When the women talked about other people in their lives, in a way, they themselves were actually trying to catch up on the lives of the

others. Another point of strength in the women's conversation was that they were free to talk about anything. Their talk was not associated with rules or taboos. The idea of being supportive of one another and the feeling of acceptance allowed the women in this study to express themselves freely. This is because by sharing experiences, especially topics that involve self disclosure, women in general will feel safe and confident of themselves. Topics of self disclosure like talking about fertility and pregnancy are sensitive and private in nature. But, among women, these things need to be discussed because they need to share their problems and possibly come up with solutions as well. The speakers in this study did not feel shy or inhibited as they said whatever they wanted to and they received support from the other members in the form of similar stories or experiences. For example, speaker M in conversation 1 line 523, was not sure whether the herbal medicine she was taking was safe because she was trying to get pregnant and was afraid that the medicine would have an adverse effect on her pregnancy. But A convinced M that the medicine would instead increase her ovum production and the chance of getting pregnant was higher. This was the reason why A suggested that M took the medicine initially. Therefore, the talk was never one sided as whatever was said would always come back to the speaker. For instance, in lines 523-554 in conversation 1, M initiated the conversation. Although it seemed like A was doing much of the talking, the conversation was never one sided as M was always asking questions and at times expressing her opinions. M also played a role in contributing to the topic by developing it further through questions and latching on to A's utterance. A was also listening to M as she gave minimal responses like 'uhuh', 'ahh', and 'yes' to show agreement. Consequently, the women would improve their understanding of each other and thus elevate the quality of their relationship.

The analysis of the topics gives an idea of how women’s conversations are built on. In short, women’s talk is not confined to any particular rule. They are free to mention sensitive and personal subjects because their talk will be accepted and supported. Another reason is women do not like confrontation instead they look for similarities between each other’s stories.

4.3.3 TOPIC DEVELOPMENT

In this study, it was found that the subjects used various patterns of developing the topics in their conversation. Some topics were developed through stories, some through discussion, and some a combination of both the latter and the former. The patterns of topic development used by the women in this study differ from one topic to another. Therefore, the researcher concludes that there was no exact pattern of topic development used by the women, and this makes the women’s conversation interesting as it was very unpredictable. The following are examples of some of the patterns found in this study:

Pattern 1

Transcription 1,lines 193-206.

193	A	:	I do not understand this promotion /
194	M	:	We should go there and ask /
195	A	:	If we buy any -any of this set and then we get this one free /
196	D	:	Oh! Mother’s Day gift set /
197	B	:	No (.) That one you have to buy RM 200 and above=
198	D	:	=Yes
			any Estee Lauder purchase of RM200 and above /
199	B	:	So you have to buy 2 sets to get that one?/
200	M	:	No(.) This and something else /

201 B : Ya {yes}/
 202 A : So(.)let's say I buy this \$150 and I get a lipstick /
 203 B : A lipstick and you are entitled to get that one /
 204 A : That set /
 205 B : Ya {yes}/
 206 M : Ya {yes}(.) that's a lot /

. The first pattern is a simple pattern. The whole topic involved only a discussion of Mother's Day promotion. This discussion started with a statement and it involved four speakers. The discussion was about a promotion which speaker A did not understand. The others were trying to clarify things for her. Turns in this conversation were short as can be seen from a series of short and simple sentences uttered because it involved many participants.

Pattern 2

Transcription 1, lines 184-192

184 M : It's simple kan (.) It's suitable for semester zero (-) That is
 one thing (.) We don't have to worry about that (.) Speaking
 we can use all the activities (.) you know(.) that I'm sure each
 lecturer has their own=
 185 D : = mm activities /
 186 M : Like I have that 'Tell Me' cards kan (.) It says that tell
 someone bla bla bla (.) Tell someone about- you're - the
 person you admire for instance(.) So(.)in my class I- I made
 them sit in a circle so everyone should take one card(.) So, if
 you have tell someone card you have to read the question and
 you tell the person what you know (-) What you have to tell
 and there's another card Ask someone=
 187 A : = mmm/
 188 M : This one you're saved because you get to ask somebody
 instead of telling/

- 189 D : [instead of telling (.) it's easier to make them sit in a
circle. It's easier to talk=
190 M : =yes/
191 D : Yes (.) kan /
192 M : That will be one activity (.) Speaking activity /

The second pattern found is also a simple pattern as it involved only the narration of stories by one particular speaker. As can be seen in the example, speaker M was doing all the talking as she was the one narrating the stories. The topic was on activities for speaking and listening. Although speaker M was narrating, the rest of the group paid close attention and showed their support for her, as evidently shown by the production of minimal responses, latches, and also overlaps.

Pattern 3

Transcription 1, lines 555-588.

- 555 M : Before this what did you do?(.) What did you use?/
556 A : uh(.) 8 elas{yards}(-)8 yards bengkung {waist
trimmer}(.)that one is so troublesome and I have to like(.)
okay(.) at one end kena{have to} tie up to a pole and
pusung{turn}la(.) I have to do it myself/
557 M : Yelah {that's because}you have a pole(.)But you see where
the pole is situated/
558 A : <laugh>
559 M : If I were to like -I will be like so exposed(.) just to get[
the pole/
560 A : hmm
at that time okay la because it was in my mother's house(.) It's
a big house(.) So I have been using all the three living rooms
just to tie my bengkung{waist trimmer}(.) But uh(.) this time I
am not going back that long(.) I'll be back about 2 weeks and
then I'll be here/

561 M : So you better use the=
562 A : =Yes that one =
563 M : =The one with strap
like tying a shoe lace(.)Easier/
564 A : I kind of like -hmm- I feel like trying that AMWAY
bengkung{waist trimmer}(.).That one is so easy/
565 M : But do you want do you plan on taking the jamu {herbal
medicine} over there?/
566 A : Oh! Jamu{herbal medicine}/
567 M : If you don't want jamu{herbal medicine} I have
bengkung{waist trimmer}(.). I can lend it to you/
568 A : Just the bengkung{waist trimmer}?=
569 M : =hmm(.).No if you
want you can buy la/
570 A : The one like
the shoe lace?/
571 M : hah yes/
572 A : Because jamu{herbal medicine} I'll be using er(-)=
573 M : =your
mother's?/
574 A : My mother's jamu {herbal medicine} and my father's -the
Chinese medicine man will be coming/
575 M : I have- I have that bengkung{waist trimmer} if you like/
576 A : The one like the shoe lace one(.) Okay/
577 M : I can let you see it(.). If you're interested you can borrow
it(.) You don't have to buy/
578 A : No because I like the bengkung{waist trimmer}(.). It comes
in a package/
579 M : Actually mine tak tau{don't know} la whether you know(.).
you can fit(.). I think it's one size fits all(.). However when I
tried mine it was like on top it(.). was too big=
580 A : = Yes yes it's
like that/
581 M : Ah macam {like}- no(.). it should be tighter tau/

582 A : [aha/
583 M : So(.)so that lady asked me to sew it so that it's smaller/
584 A : [ooh/
585 M : so that when I(.)er(.)when I pull it it will be tight(.) But
now when I'm using it it's not tight enough you see because
[it's a bit big for me up here/
586 A : ahh [ohh/
587 M : But it's okay I guess(.) It's not really one size fits all(.) So
you still have to try/
588 A : Maybe I can put all the tapil {herbal paste} and bandage
<cough> excuse me(-)Yohuu! Anak dara! Come here/

The third pattern is a complex pattern where a series of chaining pattern like stories and a discussion, are followed by another set of stories and a discussion. In this pattern, the topic was initiated by a question; then speaker A began to narrate before the discussion started. Shortly after the discussion, A started to narrate again and this was followed by a discussion between her and speaker M.

Pattern 4

Trancription 2, lines 76-125.

76 Y : Bar-mitzbah ke(.)something like that(.)they do that(.)They
blow the candle=
77 A : [.
78 Z : oh/
79 L : oh /
80 A : =oh/
81 Y : Bar-mitzbah is something aaa(.)=
82 D : =baptism=
=aa like ours
khatam Quran {Quranic recital completion} kan/
83 Y : mm/
84 A : Khatam quran {Quranic recital completion} or sunat

{circumcision}?/

85 Y : Baptism(.) baptism/

86 D : Something like khatam Quran jugak {Quranic recital completion } right?/

87 Y : Khatan kan(.) circumcision?/

88 D : They read from the Bible kan?/

89 A : [passages

90 Y : Read aja {read only}(.) Read aaa(.) Ya {yes} passages
certain passages to show that they are off age(.) That's it(.)
Bar-mitzbah tu {is} normally for 10 or 11 years old boys(.) off
age(.) You know, announcing that they are off age/

91 A : Boys only?(.) Not girls?/

92 Y : Boys only(.) kan?/

93 A : Girls they don't have to/

94 Y : I never tau { I never do it } Lin because of that la (.) I still
remember somebody telling us when [we were in UKM
95 L : I didn't know (.) I
didn't know(.) but then/
96 A : what if=
97 Z : =You've got to replace candle with something
else(.) I mean like not blowing but something/
98 Y : Sing la(.) You sing(.) You ask them to sing and cut the cake
la=
99 A : =Ya {yes}/
100 Y : Even my nieces and nephews (.) if I'm around kan they(.)
they won't do it(.) The mothers' won't do it=
101 Z : =Oh! That's
good/
102 Y : I will get upset la kan/
103 A : But just for the sake of fun aaa=
104 Z : =hah =
105 A : =light up the

candle(.)you light up the candle during blackout and then blow out(.) can or not?/

106 Y : But not celebrate(.) It's celebration/

107 A : aah! It is to be associated with the celebration/

108 Z : celebration=

109 Y : =and even blowing candles pun {even}{.} em(.) it's not (.) it's not Islamic (.) but then there is I don't know (-)er(-)er=

110 A : =apa {what}?/

111 Y : Bukan {No}you are not suppose to blow candles something like that(.)It is just=

112 A : =oh/

113 Y : Ini{this} my friend told me when I was in UPM(.) Tapi{but} I don't know(.) Tapi {but}I blow aje {I blow it anyway}/

114 L : We are not suppose to blow [the candle during celebration/

115 Z : [the act of blowing candles =

116 Y : =No no [the act of blowing candles itself /

117 Z : [the act of blowing candles/

118 L : even during blackouts?/

119 Y : You don't blow./

130 L : Then then/

121 Y : You just=

122 L : = how do you snuff it out?=
123 Y : =You snuffed it out with something la but not not blowing=

124 Z : =With the fingers?/

125 Y : Yes/

The fourth pattern is also a complex pattern like the third pattern. But, this pattern started off with a statement followed by a discussion and then only the stories

related to the topics were heard. A series of such patterns were found on the topic of 'blowing candles'.

4.4 CODESWITCHING

The 'or not' tag

In line 429 of transcription 1, the tag "Are we watching or not" is a Malaysian English form of a tag question. The tag 'or not' is added at the end of the utterance. In standard English, this is similar to the interrogative tag "We are watching Spiderman, aren't we?"

The tag 'can or not' in line 105 of transcription 2, is another form of tag question. This tag is a popular form in Malaysian English, whereby a statement is turned into a tag question by adding the 'or not' tag at the end. The tag 'or not' performs a similar role of any interrogative tag question which is to seek confirmation. The 'or not' tag is a common feature in Malaysian English as particles like 'wah', 'lah' and 'ah' as mentioned by Mohd. Fadzeli (1999). These code markers were used by both interlocutors to downplay the sense of formality in the conversations because this is how most Malaysians speak to one another. Therefore, both speakers were trying to establish a shared identity with each other, and thus creating rapport between them.

The use of abbreviated forms of Malay.

The most common expressions found were:

Dah ada? { they already have?} *Pun ade?* {they also have?}

Tak boleh? {cannot?} *Lepas tu?* {after that?}

Bila tu ? {when is that?}

Tak tally? {does not tally?}

All these expressions were a switch from English to Malay. Even when the participants were conversing in Malay, they used colloquial Malay rather than standard Malay. Therefore, the conversation became informal. It showed the degree of closeness and intimacy in friendship among them. Although the expressions were in abbreviated forms, the subjects were able to understand them and worked together to produce a joint talk. Thus, creating unity in conversation.

Switching from English to Arabic

Many Islamic expressions were inserted into the discourse as Islam is the religion of all the subjects. Some of the expressions used were:

Astagfirullah hal azim {May Allah forgive you}

Haram {forbidden}

Halal {permitted}

Ya Allah {Oh my God}

Makruh { Things that you are not encouraged to do but if you do it, it's not a sin and if you don't do it, you get reward from God}

Khatam Quran {Quranic recital completion}

Quran {Muslims' holy book}

Khatan{circumcision}

There was even a sentence uttered in Arabic for example:

"Zahaba illa haidikatul haiwanat fil Aidil Fitri"

{He went to the zoo on Aidil Fitri}

This was produced by Z because she was a graduate of the International Islamic University. Therefore, her background of Arabic led her to the transfer of ideas into Arabic.

All of the examples shown suggested that the speakers were projecting their Muslim identity in their conversations with one another. The use of Islamic expressions indicated the 'in-group' identification proposed by Rekha (1998:71). As all of them are Muslims, these expressions were familiar to them. Therefore, this again showed that the Malay participants were falling into the role of accommodating to the same religious identity shared by all of them. Hence, solidarity in talk was achieved and it seemed that all of the Malay speakers in this study were working towards achieving solidarity by co-operating to make the conversations work.

Switching to English first and second person pronouns

The women in this study frequently used the first and second person pronouns like I, we and you when addressing one another to neutralize seniority. Therefore, the findings for this study strongly supported Rekha's (1998) and Kuang's (1999) views that using English pronouns when codeswitching did neutralize the situation because female speakers seek equality in conversations. When their relationship is of the same par, the conversations brought them closer and they could converse freely as friends and 'sisters'. In addition, code switching on terms of address was also used to signify politeness and to show respect to superiors or elders. Hence, the use of *Kak* (name) which refers to 'elder sister' was used. The Malays are brought up to address their elders appropriately. Some examples found in the study were *Kak Azah*, *Kak Kat*, *Kak Ani*, *Kak Mai*, *Kak Fiza*, and *Kak Yong*.

The use of words for culturally untranslatable concepts (*mots justes*)

MALAY

In this study, the researcher also found instances where the participants switched between codes when discussing food items. When there were no exact

equivalent in English, the subjects used Malay to fill in the lexical gaps. Some examples are shown in the transcriptions below:

Transcription 1

- 565 M : But do want-do you plan on taking the **jamu** {herbal
medicine} over there?/
566 A : Oh! **Jamu**{herbal medicine}/

Jamu here refers to the herbal medicine usually taken by Malay women after giving birth. Hence, M used this term for it described exactly what she meant and it also established solidarity since both speakers belong to the same ethnic group and both are mothers.

Transcription 2

- 41 Y : So everybody denounce(.) You can denounce **belacan**
(.)**petai**/

Belacan means ‘shrimp paste’ an essential ingredient in making a chili paste dish and **petai** is a type of vegetable. Both give out a strong and unpleasant smell, but popular among many Malays. Since there are no equivalents in English, it was best not to translate in order to preserve its authenticity.

Other words or concepts that cannot be translated were *ikan tembakul*, *tempoyak*, *budu*, *batu belah*, *bengkung*, *anak dara*, *kopiah*, *jering*, *sunat*, *rendang serai*, *kunyit*, *majlis tahlil*, *tapil*, *baju kurung*, *Kelab Pensyarah*, *Raya Haji* and *Hari Raya*.

CHINESE

Transcription 1

685 A : <laugh> **Feng Shui** (.) How do we pronounce it?

Transcription 2

54 A : <laugh> balance of **yin and yang**

JEWISH

Transcription 2

76 Y : **Bar-mitzbah** ke(.) something like that (.) they do that (.)

They blow the candle=

In this study, the researcher found that not only Malay was used to retain an original concept. As shown in the examples above, A and Y were well familiar with the registers of other cultures and religions like Chinese and Jewish. This showed that A and Y were more knowledgeable in discussing a topic when they introduced elements from other cultures into the topic. Therefore, code-switching in this study also established one's credentials on specific topics.

Switching to mark quotations or reported speech

Throughout the study there was only one instance where this kind of code switching occurred. In the example below, the subject switched codes to preserve the originality of the message. Perhaps speaker L in transcription 2 felt that if the phrase was in English, it would not have the same impact .

Example (T.2)

140 L : Ha (.) M. Nasir said **kerja orang dalam** {inside job}(.) He sang the song=

Switching to mark a topic shift

Example (T.2)

- 4 A : <cough> After giving (.)aa(.) the suggestion (.)so I said
no(.)aa(.)the core moral of the story is that(.)aa ikan tembakul
is(.)aaa=
5 Z : = rare species?=
6 A : = no haram {forbidden} right?/
7 Y : Oh!Oh! Why?=
8 A : =Because it's two alam {world}<laugh>/

Speaker A switched codes to redefine the situation from serious to humorous. The fact that she ended her utterance with a laughter showed that the situation had turned into an informal one.

Example (T.2)

- 254 A : Odourless garlic hah/
255 Z : Odourless garlic?(.) That's good(.)Tapi{but}I
nak{want}yang{the} odourless and tasteless/
256 D : That's a good one/

Speaker Z switched codes to redefine the situation to something more personal. In this example, she was expressing her thoughts about the topic discussed. The switch was probably used to signify solidarity and closeness between her and other participants. Speaker Z wanted the rest of the group to feel that they were a part of the conversation and coincidentally, speaker D, seemed to express the same feelings as Z. Hence, we could see that Z and D had co-operated in showing the others their support for one another.

concepts as they were able to understand each other especially if it was in Malay. Furthermore, it showed the willingness of the speakers to bridge the lexical gap and work closely with one another to produce unity and cooperativeness in their discourse.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Based on the data collected by the researcher from the two conversations, it was found that the subjects used features of language like minimal responses, hedges, simultaneous speech, overlaps, interruption, inclusive pronouns, questions, and tag questions in their daily conversations.

Table 4.2
The total number of formal features of female language in conversation 1 and conversation 2

Features of language	Conversation 1	Conversation 2
Minimal responses	243	96
Hedges	35	9
Simultaneous speech	3	4
Overlaps	42	31
Interruptions	9	11
Inclusive pronouns	61	25
Questions	201	106
The marker kan	17	19

Based on Table 4.2, the first interaction involves 243 minimal responses, 35 hedges, 3 simultaneous speeches, 42 overlaps, 9 interruptions, 61 inclusive pronouns, 201 questions, and 17 ‘kan’ markers. While in conversation 2, there are 96 minimal responses, 9 hedges, 4 simultaneous speeches, 31 overlaps, 11 interruptions, 25 inclusive pronouns, 106 questions, and 19 ‘kan’ markers. Figure 4.4 shows the number of formal features found in conversation 1 and 2.

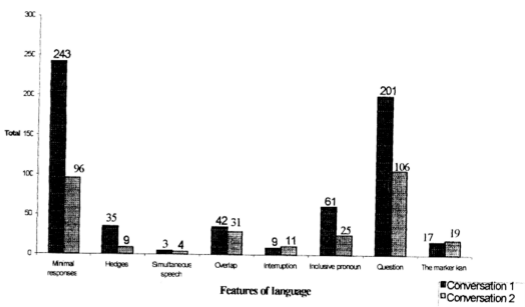


Figure 4.5
The number of features in conversation 1 and conversation 2

As a whole, the verbal interaction of the Malay female group went smoothly. The formal features of language mentioned above had tremendously helped promote the sense of co-operativeness in the Malay ladies’ discourse. The conversationalists were supportive of each other. The Malay women in this study assumed the role of active listeners as shown by the frequent usage of minimal responses, and the questions posed facilitated other speakers to join in the interaction. In showing their reaction to other participants, the Malay women in this study used a lot of verbal and non-verbal minimal responses like laughter. Minimal responses is a good form of feedback as it

shows that the listener is interested in the topic discussed, and that she is paying attention to the speaker. In conversations 1 and 2, minimal responses and questions were found to be the most widely used by all participants. In conversation 1, 243 minimal responses were produced and 201 questions were posed; meanwhile in conversation 2, a number of 106 questions were asked and 96 minimal responses were uttered.

Table 4.3
Relative statistics and percentage per speaker volume (Transcription 1)

Features of language	M	A	D	H	B
Minimal responses	27@ 11.11%	151@ 62.14%	50@ 20.58%	0@ 0%	15@ 6.17%
Hedges	22@ 62.88%	6@ 17.14%	6@ 17.14%	0@ 0%	1@ 2.88%
Simultaneous speech	1@ 16.67%	2@ 33.53%	1@ 16.67%	0@ 0%	2@ 33.33%
Overlaps	27@ 31.4%	29@ 33.72%	22@ 25.58	0@ 0%	8@ 9.3%
Interruptions	5@ 55.56%	2@ 22.22%	2@ 22.22%	0@ 0%	0@ 0%
Inclusive pronouns	12@ 19.67%	23@ 37.7%	8@ 13.11%	0@ 0%	18@ 29.51%
Questions	66@ 32.83%	66@ 32.83%	51@ 25.37%	1@ 0.49%	18@ 8.96%
The marker kan	11@ 64.71%	3@ 17.65%	3@ 17.65%	0@ 0%	0@ 0%

Table 4.4
Relative statistics and percentage per speaker volume
(Transcription 2)

Features of language	B	D	A	Z	L	Y
Minimal responses	2@ 2.06%	6@ 6.19%	37@ 38.14%	16@ 16.67%	13@ 13.4%	22@ 22.68%
Hedges	0@ 0%	0@ 0%	3@ 33.33%	3@ 33.33%	2@ 22.22%	1@ 11.11%
Simultaneous speech	0@ 0%	1@ 12.5%	3@ 37.5%	3@ 37.5%	0@ 0%	1@ 12.5%
Overlaps	1@ 1.57%	4@ 6.25%	20@ 31.25%	14@ 21.87%	9@ 14.06%	16@ 25%
Interruptions	0@ 0%	1@ 9.1%	4@ 36.37%	2@ 18.18%	1@ 9.1%	3@ 27.27%
Inclusive pronouns	1@ 4%	4@ 16%	7@ 28%	6@ 24%	3@ 12%	4@ 16%
Questions	5@ 4.71%	6@ 5.66%	26@ 24.53%	32@ 30.19%	19@ 17.92%	18@ 6.99%
The marker kan	0@ 0%	2@ 10.53%	1@ 5.26%	6@ 31.58%	1@ 5.26%	9@ 47.37%

As can be seen in table 4. 3 and 4.4, out of the 243 minimal responses found in conversation 1, 151 minimal responses came from speaker A and out of 96 minimal responses from conversation 2, 37 was produced by A. In terms of the frequency of questions posed, speakers A and M gave the most i.e. 66 each in conversation 1, while in conversation 2, speaker Z gave the most with 32, and speaker A came in second with

26 questions. Based on the data that has been analysed, it can be concluded that both minimal responses and questions are the two most common features in the conversation of the Malay women group. In addition, speaker A, as the evidence clearly shows, is said to be the most active listener in both conversations based on the number of minimal responses and questions she produced. Speaker A was also an active participant in both conversations judging by the number of simultaneous speeches, overlaps, interruptions and inclusive pronouns we and I that she used. These features of women's language found are all tools used to achieve collaborative or joint talk in female discourse. This evidently shows that speaker A, not only was she an attentive listener and an affective facilitator, but also an active contributor in the talk.

Laughter was said to be a non-verbal aspect of minimal responses. Throughout the conversations, the researcher found many instances where laughter was inserted by the participants. Since the conversations were informal in nature, laughter arose as the participants were more relaxed and friendly. Laughter like other back channel support, was used to indicate support for the speaker. It further showed that the listener was not passive, and it signalled her continued attention the whole time. In conversation 1, speaker H was not actively involved in the conversation. Speaker H happened to be in the same room for about a minute when the recording of the conversations was conducted, since the taping was spontaneous.

In conclusion, the set of women's linguistic features shown are positive in the context of women's talk. In a woman-to-woman interaction, these forms can be used as a powerful sign of mutual support and co-operativeness. Therefore, the strategies used by the Malay women in this study to form co-operative discourse is quite similar to the ones used by women subjects in studies conducted in the west. Hence, it is possible that the idea of co-operation in speech as a communicative norm is common and vital among female speakers.