

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this chapter, the methodology of the present study and data analysis will be presented. Section 3.1 will address the data collection. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 will deal with the procedures of data analysis. Section 3.4 will summarize the main points of this chapter.

#### **3.1 Data Collection**

The corpus data of this study consist of 12 clips of conversational programs from different TV stations, videotaped from August 15<sup>th</sup> to November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003. To make sure that the data can fully represent the male-female speech styles in the TV talk shows, and some criteria were employed to elicit the data. First, the programs must be the most representative of all TV talk shows of male-female interaction. To insure that the data were collected from the most popular, most influential and most representative programs watched by most audience, the programs were chosen according to the television rating survey provided by AC Nielsen Company, which is the world's leading company in marketing information, media measurement and information, business media and directories. Based on such a criterion, the top 12 TV conversational programs broadcast in August provided by AC Nielsen Company are shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 The rating survey<sup>1</sup> of the TV programs broadcast in August  
(Ordered by the rating)**

Provided by AC Nielsen Company

	<b>Name of program</b>	<b>Rating (%)</b>
1	2100 全民開講 2100 quan min kai jiang ‘2100 people talk’	0.77
2	新聞挖挖哇 xin wen wa wa wa ‘News scooping’	0.69
3	于美人放電 yu mei ren fang dian ‘Beauty Yu discharges electricity’	0.66
4	命運好好玩 ming yun hao hao wan ‘Destiny is fun’	0.63
5	開運鑑定團 kai yun jian ding tuan ‘Luck determination’	0.56
6	新聞駭客 xin wen hai ke ‘News hacker’	0.53
7	新聞夜總會 xin wen ye zong hui ‘News night club’	0.5
8	大話新聞 da hua xin wen ‘Boasting about news’	0.43
9	兩代電力公司 liang dai dian li gong si ‘Two-generation power company’	0.3
10	大家來審判 da jia lai shen pan ‘Everybody judges’	0.28
11	九點麻辣燙 jiu dian ma la tang ‘9 p.m. spicy and hot’	0.26
12	黃金七秒半 huang jin qi miao ban ‘Gold seven seconds and a half’	0.25

1. According to the explanation of AC Nielsen Company, the rating number stands for the percentage of people watching the program per minute. Take ‘2100 全民開講 2100 quan min kai jiang’ (‘2100 people talk’), the first program shown in Table 3.1, for example, the rating number is 0.77 %, and therefore the population for watching per minute is 161,700 (21,000,000 × 0.77%=161,700). In the equation, 21,000,000 is the population who are above 4 years old in Taiwan, whom AC Nielsen Company takes as subjects

Second, the programs had to include both male and female interviewees. Thus, the programs with only one subject or with single-gender interviewees were excluded. Consequently, each clip of the data in the present study consisted of both male and female subjects so that the conversational styles of different genders could be compared.

Third, the contents of the programs were classified into two types: socio-political issues and soft issues. According to the professors in Department of Journalism in Fu-jen and Shih-hsin University, the talk shows dealing with political issues are named “political talk shows.” By contrast, the talk shows with soft issues, such as horoscope, health, personal expenditure, career and adult education, are categorized as “soft talk shows.” However, in my data social issues were integrated with “political talk shows” since it was improper to place social issues in “soft talk shows.” Therefore, the name “political talk shows” is changed into “socio-political talk shows.” Among the 12 programs, six of them treated politics and social problems while the other six dealt with soft issues.

Fourth, the length of each program was required to be consistent. The broadcast lengths of all programs were not the same. Among the 12 TV programs, ten of them were 60-minute in length and the other two were 90-minute. To make sure that all clips of data were of equal length, only the first 60 minutes of the 90-minute clips were analyzed. Therefore, the total video-taped length of the programs amounted to 720 minutes, that was, 12 hours. However, the present study did not examine the speech of the hosts of the programs since the program hosts played general roles as asking questions instead of taking parts in the discussions. Besides, their speech was not spontaneous but prepared in advance. As the purpose of the present study is to examine the speech styles of males and females, the speech of the program hosts was not examined. In addition, TV commercials were also

omitted. With the TV commercials and the speech of the program hosts deleted from all the programs, the actual length of each program was different, and the total length of the speech of the interviewees amounted to 386 minutes, as presented in Table 3.2.

As Table 3.2 shows, the taped length of each TV program was 60 minutes. However, after the speech of the program hosts and TV commercials were removed, as shown in the right column of Table 3.2. Besides, the recording dates were presented in the left column of the table.

**Table 3.2. The taped length and the actual length of each program  
(Ordered by date)**

<b>Recording date</b>	<b>Name of program</b>	<b>taped length (min.)</b>	<b>actual length (min.)</b>
2003/8/15	新聞夜總會 xin wen yie zong hui 'News night club'	60'	29'32''
2003/8/19	新聞挖挖哇 xin wen wa wa wa 'News scooping'	60'	35'41''
2003/8/19	黃金七秒半 huang jin qi miao ban 'Gold seven seconds and a half'	60'	30'22''
2003/8/20	大家來審判 da jia lai shen pan 'Everybody judges'	60'	33'45''
2003/8/21	于美人放電 yu mei ren fang dian 'Beauty Yu discharges electricity'	60'	32'40''
2003/8/29	命運好好玩 ming yun hao hao wan 'Destiny is fun'	60'	31'28''
2003/9/6	大話新聞 da hua xin wen 'Boasting about news'	60'	34'54''
2003/9/24	開運鑑定團 kai yun jian ding tuan 'Luck determination'	60'	33'19''
2003/9/24	九點麻辣燙 jiu dian ma la tang '9 p.m. spicy and hot'	60'	32'48''
2003/10/1	2100 全民開講 2100 quan min kai jiang '2100 people talk'	60'	29'30''
2003/10/2	新聞駭客 xin wen hai ke 'News hacker'	60'	30'21''
2003/11/18	兩代電力公司 liang dai dian li gong si 'Two-generation power company'	60'	32'11''
<b>Total</b>		<b>720'</b>	<b>386'31''</b>

In the 12 TV programs, a total of 57 speakers were interviewed, consisting of 28 males and 29 females. The distribution of male and female speakers in the programs was uneven. Besides, the total number of speakers in each program was also different. In addition, the speakers were also different in their occupation, educational background, social status, age, and so on. The detailed information is presented in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3 The types of programs and the distribution of speakers**

(Ordered according to program types)

	<b>Program</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Number of males</b>	<b>Number of females</b>	<b>Total number</b>
1	九點麻辣燙 jiu dian ma la tang '9 p.m. spicy and hot'	soft talk show (health)	2	2	4
2	于美人放電 yu mei ren fang dian 'Beauty Yu discharges electricity'	soft talk show (career)	2	4	6
3	兩代電力公司 liang dai dian li gong si 'Two-generation power company'	soft talk show (personal expense)	3	8	11
4	命運好好玩 ming yun hao hao wan 'Destiny is fun'	soft talk show (horoscope)	1	2	3
5	開運鑑定團 kai yun jian ding tuan 'Luck determination'	soft talk show (horoscope)	3	2	5
6	黃金七秒半 huang jin qi miao ban 'Gold seven seconds and a half'	soft talk show (adult education)	3	3	6
7	大家來審判 da jia lai shen pan 'Everybody judges'	socio-political talk show (politics)	2	1	3
8	大話新聞 da hua xin wen 'Boasting about news'	socio-political talk show (politics)	2	1	3
9	2100 全民開講 2100 quan min kai jiang '2100 people talk'	socio-political talk show (politics)	5	1	6
10	新聞夜總會 xin wen ye zong hui 'News night club'	socio-political talk show (politics)	2	1	3
11	新聞挖挖哇 xin wen wa wa wa 'News scooping'	socio-political talk show (social issue)	2	1	3
12	新聞駭客 xin wen hai ke 'News hacker'	socio-political talk show (politics)	1	3	4
			N=28	N=29	N=57

## 3.2 Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, the analytic categories were from Lakoff's (1975) 'women's language' with some adaptations. Besides, the Chinese equivalents of these analytic categories were counted and calculated to compare men's and women's linguistic patterns.

### 3.2.1 The Adaptation of Analytic Categories

The categories for analysis were mainly drawn from Lakoff's framework of linguistic features. Lakoff (1975) summarizes "women's language" as follows: (1) using weaker expletives like "oh, dear" instead of "shit"; (2) using empty adjectives, such as "charming", "lovely" and "divine"; (3) rising intonation even in declarative statements (e.g. "around 6 o'clock"); (4) using lots of hedges, such as "I guess", "you know", and "kinda"; (5) using more intensifier "so" and "such"; (6) using hypercorrect grammar, so women won't say "ain't" or "goin"; (7) using superpolite forms, so women frequently say expressions such as "Would you please..." and "thank you"; (8) telling few jokes; (9) using more precise color terms like "mauve" and "lavender"; (10) using more tag questions like "John is here, *isn't he?*"

However, not all forms of "women's language" proposed by Lakoff are appropriate to the present study; therefore, some adaptations as follows have been made for the purposes of the study. First, no expletives are found in the collected data, and therefore, expletives were not examined. Second, speakers' grammar in the present study was not studied since Mandarin Chinese grammar is different from English grammar. In Chinese, grammatical morphemes are not overt ones, and therefore it is not easy to find exact English equivalents of Chinese grammatical morphemes. For this reason, the grammatical features investigated by Lakoff were not examined in the present study. Third, intonation was not observed since



Mandarin is a tonal language and people do not raise intonation at the end of a sentence to form a question. Therefore, Mandarin intonation does not cast a great influence on meaning comprehension (Gao, 2000). Fourth, precise color terms were ignored because they rarely occur in the data. Fifth, the term “superpolite form” proposed by Lakoff (1975) was changed into “polite form” in the present study for the reason that the degree of politeness of Chinese counterparts of superpolite forms was not as intense as English ones.

In addition to the adaptations mentioned above, I also added two analytic categories for examination: (a) verbosity and (b) Southern Min. Since some previous studies claimed that men talk more than women in public contexts (Tannen 1990; Holmes 1992b), I would like to explore whether such generalization can apply to our data. In terms of the analysis of Southern Min, although Mandarin is the official language in Taiwan, Southern Min is still spoken by a great number of people as a mother tongue or a second language. Speaking Southern Min nowadays is often regarded as a symbol of “ethnic identity” and “solidarity.” Consequently, people occasionally switch from Mandarin to Southern Min to express their socio-political implication consciously or subconsciously. This phenomenon of code-switching is meaning-loaded and should not be neglected.

Another two points to be noted are as follows. First, although nonverbal signals serve as a major way of communication<sup>2</sup>, due to the limited time and the difficulty of

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2. Holmes (1992a) stated that “non-verbal messages are particularly powerful, but also particularly vulnerable misinterpretation. A hunched posture may be seen as an uncooperative stance, possibly expressing resentment...Avoiding the questioner’s eyes is likely to be interpreted as evasive behavior” (p.304). Tannen (1986) also asserted that “subtle signals like pitch, tone of voice, intonation, and facial expression work, along with the words we say, to frame each utterance as serious, joking, teasing, angry, polite, rude, ironic, and so on” (p.75).

analysis, the present study explores only the verbal parts of males' and females' speech. Therefore, the nonverbal behavior such as eye contact, facial expressions and body language were disregarded. Second, the subjects' prosodic features such as word stress and pitch were also omitted from the analysis since they are not the focus of the present study, and the time is limited.

### 3.2.2 The Chinese Equivalents of Each Analytic Category

After adaptation, the linguistic categories to be analyzed in the present study are as follows.

(1) hedges/fillers: (e.g. *sort of, I think*)

*wojuede* “我覺得”, *worenwei* “我認爲”, *woxiang* “我想”, *nizhidao* “你知道”, *youdian* “有點”, *youyidian* “有一點”

(2) tag questions: (e.g. *John is here, isn't he?*)

*duibudui* “對不對”, *shibushi* “是不是”, *houbuhou* “好不好”, *youmeiyou* “有沒有”, *bushima* “不是嗎”, *keyima* “可以嗎”, *bukeyima* “不可以嗎”, *haoma* “好嗎”, *shima* “是嗎”, *youma* “有嗎”

(3) intensifiers<sup>3</sup>: (e.g. *so; such*)

*ruci* “如此”, *zheme* “這麼”, *name* “那麼”

(4) joke-telling and humorous expressions (the expressions which make other speakers laugh)

(5) polite forms: (e.g. *Will you please...*)

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3. Lakoff (1975) did not compare “very” in men’s and women’s language though in Chinese *feichang* “非常” can express feelings with great intensity. Consequently, the Chinese counterpart of “very” (*feichang* “非常”) is not examined in the present study.

*qing* “請”, *nikebukeyi* “你可不可以”, *ninengbuneng* “你能不能”, *nijiebujiyei* “你介不介意”

(6) empty adjectives: (e.g. *adorable*, *charming*, *sweet*, *lovely*, *divine*)

*keaide* “可愛的”, *xiyinrende* “吸引人的”, *mirende* “迷人的”, *youmeilide* “有魅力的”, *tianmeide* “甜美的”, *lingrenyukuaide* “令人愉快的”, *jibandde* “極棒的”, *feifande* “非凡的”

(7) the amount of talk (total Chinese characters<sup>4</sup>);

(8) Southern Min Dialect (Taiwanese).

### 3.3 Procedures of Analysis

All the utterances in the collected data were transcribed. After the transcription was completed, the occurrences of hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, humorous expressions, polite forms and empty adjectives were identified and counted to compare men’s and women’s linguistic patterns. After the number of occurrences was counted, the number was divided by the number of speakers to obtain the average number. The frequency was discussed in terms of the average number instead of the real number of occurrences because of the different number of male and female speakers in the present study (28 males and 29 females).

However the amounts of talk and Southern Min Dialect were compared in a different way. They were compared by total characters. As many people may have

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4. In Chinese language, people may have different definitions about “word.” For example, 觀察 *guan cha* ‘observe/observation’ can be a word (observation) or two separate words (to look and to examine). Therefore, to avoid confusion and to be clear, in the present study “the amount of talk” will be calculated by “characters” instead of words which were spoken by each speaker.

different definitions about what a sentence or a Chinese word, to avoid confusion and to be clear, in the present study the amounts of talk and Southern Min Dialect were compared by calculating “total Chinese characters” which were spoken by each speaker. When the speakers switched to English, the English utterances were counted by words. After the number of characters was counted, the total number was divided by the number of speakers to gain the average number. The amounts of talk and Southern Min were compared by the average number. Hence, there are two types of counting units: (1) number of occurrences; (2) Chinese and Southern Min characters.

### **3.4 Summary of Chapter Three**

In this chapter, the methodology of the present study was stated. First, data collection was specified. The corpus data were collected from TV talk shows based on several criteria. Second, the data analysis was spelled out. The analytic categories were adapted from Lakoff’s (1975) categorization of “women’s language” and the definition of each analytic category was presented. Third, the procedures of analysis were stated. The utterances in the collected data were transcribed and the occurrences of the analytic categories were counted. Due to the fact that the numbers of male and female speakers were not the same in the study, the occurrences will be discussed according to the average number rather than the real number of occurrences.