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ROZDÍLY V KOMUNIKACI NA ZÁKLADĚ GENDERU

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Undergraduate Thesis
GENDER DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION

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Martin Chýlek

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this thesis is to describe differences in communication between men and women. First part of this thesis is concerned with a complicated process of communication; it introduces its vital parts such as verbal and non-verbal communication and direct and indirect communication. There are also implicated social and biological factors, which influences the development of communication. Second part of this thesis is focused on specific differences in men's and women's communicational styles, their description, research of their origin and their effect on the other gender. These differences are mostly connected with variant focus of men and women and also with different encoding and decoding of the content. An important part of the thesis is research. The goal of this section was to verify or disprove hypothesis, which were created on the background of the theoretical part. Mostly they are clichés connected with different communicational styles of men and women.

Keywords: communication, gender, difference, men, women

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Gender and sex.....	2
Communication	2
Gender differences in communication	8
Research	18
Conclusion	24
References:	25
Summary in Czech	27

Introduction

Gender differences in communication are part of our everyday lives, men's and women's different communicational styles interact with each other and sometimes create misunderstandings or misinterpretation. This undergraduate thesis should focus on these differences, try to explain them and furthermore try to examine their origin.

Communication in everyday use is created not only by spoken words; our expression is accompanied by non-verbal communicational signs such as gestures and facial expressions. It is an integral part of every face-to-face communication, which can give us very important information. These differences in non-verbal communication are as important as those in verbal communication; therefore a large part of thesis is concerned with these signs. Other significant parts of communication, such as tone and pitch of voice will be also included and dealt with.

Gender and sex

The term *gender* is used very frequently nowadays, but many people understand the term as the basic distinction between male and female sex. Apart from legal documents, this definition is quite incorrect. Oakley (2000) states that the term gender and the importance of distinction between gender and sex comes from 17th century: “Studies from 17th century *Hic Mulier* and *Haec Vir* and titles *The Feminised Male* and *The Female Eunuch* from 20th century emphasize the importance of distinction between sex and gender.” (p. 20) Sex can be mostly determined by biological aspects, such as general appearance, but most frequently by the presence of male or female genitalia. Gender is connected with social differences between men and women, which are developed, they change over time and can be different within various cultures. (Gender mainstreaming, 2002). Šiklová (1999) states that: “In English the term gender includes especially social and socially determined cultural differences, expectations, prejudice and specifics in status of men and women. Gender is at the same time a constructive element of modern and post-modern organization of society.” (p. 10) To illustrate the difference there is an interesting example: it is biologically determined, that only women can give birth to children, but from biological point of view it is not decided who will raise the child. That is considered to be gender behavior. In some cultures it is possible for men to take care of children (Gender mainstreaming, 2002). As mentioned above, *Gender* and *Sex* are two different terms. Sex is the same in every nation, but gender classification is determined by culture and it can change during some time period (Oakley, 2000).

Communication

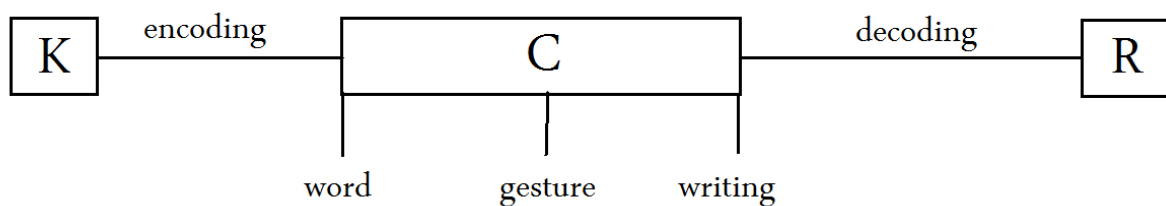
Anthony Robbins (2008) states in his motto: “To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.” (p. 237)

The term *communication* comes from the Latin word *communicare* (to share, consult). Vymětal (2008) states, that there is no generally true definition of this term and many authors describe communication with respect to their research. Holeček (2007) tried

to offer a general explanation: “Communication can be defined as an interaction among individuals of the same species, where information is being sent and received.” (p.254)

Communicational scheme

A communicational scheme can help explain the basic way of encoding and decoding every message. Within the scheme 1.1 we can identify a *Communicator* (the one, who is sending certain information), a *Recipient* (the one, who is receiving the information), a *Communiqué* (content of the message) and a *communicational channel* (track on which the communication proceeds).



Scheme 1.1

K – Communicator

C – Communiqué

R- Recipient

(Holeček, 2007, p. 255)

Holeček (2007) adds that even in this simple communicational scheme it can be observed that the communicator has to encode the message and recipient has to decode it, understand its meaning and make sense of it. There is space for a phenomenon called communicational channel malfunction, which causes incorrect understanding of the message. Incorrect understanding of message can be caused either by bad encoding, or wrong decoding.

Communication can be divided into several fields, the most important of which are direct and indirect communication and verbal and non-verbal communication.

Verbal system

DeVito (2001) states that verbal system is mainly represented by verbal signals transferred through air and received by hearing. This definition is quite incorrect. Verbal system is a type of communication, which is based on words including written texts, and also sign language of the deaf, Brailles writing system and other word-based means of communication (Musil, 2010). The *Verbal system* can be furthermore divided into spoken or written words, but the spoken form is more valuable for the purpose of this thesis,

because within the spoken form there can be observed non-verbal parts of communication and furthermore *paralinguistic communication*.

Paralinguistic communication is a part of *Verbal system* and focuses mainly on speech power, quality, neatness, pitch of the voice, intonation and prosody (Vymětal, 2008). Paralinguistic is sometimes considered to be part of the non-verbal system, but it is very strongly connected to the spoken words, therefore it is rather part of the verbal system.

Non-verbal system

The non-verbal system is represented by all the other means of communication, which are mostly connected with body language (DeVito, 2001). These are mimicry, haptics, gesticulation, proxemics and kinesics (Křivohlavý, 1988).

Linhartová (2007) states that non-verbal system creates up to 55 percent of communication.

Mimicry consists of the content of face muscle and facial expressions. It is said that facial muscles allow a person to use more than 1000 different facial expressions (Křivohlavý, 1988). These expressions are so important that in modern communication over the internet, or via text messages, people started to use graphic representations of emotions. These are symbols which represent basic emotions (DeVito, 2001).

Proxemics is a study of the distance between interlocutors (Gruber, 2005). There are four groups of distance between people, which allows a person to estimate the relationship between them.

Intimate distance represents distance up to 45 centimeters. Intimate distance is used during fight, sex or for protection. This distance is so small, that many people consider it to be inappropriate in public. Personal distance represents distance from 45 to 120 centimeters. This distance represents a personal “bubble”, which people are very protective of. People do not let many other people in and when someone breaks their personal space, they feel insecure and upset. Social distance represents distance from 1.2 to 3.7 meters and is used for business and social communication. For example high-ranking officials have their desk placed in order to keep this distance between them and the clients. Public distance represents distance bigger than 3.7 meter. This distance is a base for personal protection. One example – in public transportation people will keep this distance between themselves and a drunk person (DeVito, 2001). This distance gives a person a chance to adequately react on various situations.

Haptics study a content of interpersonal contact, mostly touch with other people, which can be direct, contact of the skins, or indirect, for example clap on the back. It can express for example positive emotions or it can control one's behavior. Touch has several meanings, which differs in various cultures and therefore it is important for person visiting a foreign country with different culture to be careful in contact with other people (DeVito, 2001).

Gesticulation is focused on arm movements and their position. Gestures are signs, which interpret words or phrases. For example upright thumb means "Good" (DeVito, 2001). This part of non-verbal communication, as well as haptics is dependent on the culture.

In the study of verbal and non-verbal part of communication, it is important to be aware of the fact that both verbal and non-verbal signals are included and that they cooperate in every face-to-face communication. Each of the two systems has its advantages and disadvantages. The non-verbal system is for example understandable in most countries with similar culture: even if a person does not understand the language of other people, he can estimate someone's mood or state of mind by non-verbal signs. These signs are mostly consistent in Western Europe, but they can differ in Asia or South-Eastern Europe.

Feature	Verbal communication	Non-verbal communication
Exactness	High	Low
International clarity	Very low	High
Emotional appeal	Low	High
Potential subliminal effect	Low	High

Pic. 1

(Musil, 2010, p. 21)

In the picture (Pic. 1) there is a table of features of verbal and non-verbal communication and their level of exactness, international clarity, emotional appeal and potential subliminal effect. The level of exactness is very high in verbal communication, but the predisposition is to master the language. Non-verbal communication is not as exact as verbal system, but its international clarity is very high and it can be easily used even by children, for example the symbols of thumb up or thumb down. Emotional appeal is high within non-verbal communication, it is provided mostly by facial expressions and haptics.

Another division of communication is into direct and indirect communication.

Direct communication is created by a communicational chain with only two members: a communicator (speaker) and communicant (listener). It is irrelevant, whether

there are individuals or groups of people, nothing else than human individuals is required in this type of communication (Musil, 2010). This type of communication allows examination of non-verbal and also paralinguistic part of communication.

Within indirect communication there is a technical device required, which is generally called *communicational medium*. This *medium* can be for example a paper with words on it, telephone, television, painting or statue (Musil, 2010). In indirect communication, non-verbal and paralinguistic part of communication can also be found, but in a reduced form. For example in a telephone conversation, the paralinguistic part of communication can be described, but it is impossible to say whether the person was standing or sitting, or state their facial expressions or body movement, in other words non-verbal part of communication.

Communication has several rules and three of them were described by Knötigová (2012):

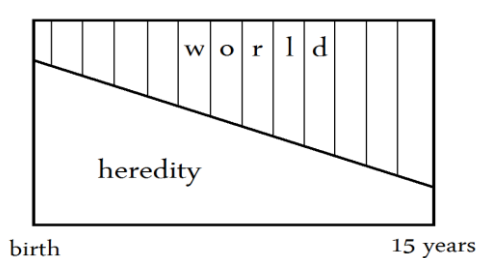
It is impossible not to communicate; it is possible just not to talk. Each person during each contact with another person communicates.

Style of communication can be digital (accurate) or analog (indicative). Digital communication is mostly verbal. It can be written down without changing its delivered content. Analog communication is mostly non-verbal. It is expressed by posture or act. It is very individual and cannot be unambiguously interpreted. Each communication underlies interpretation. Each person adjusts the reality according to their character, temperament and other factors, such as experience, expectation, relationship with the communicational partner or momentary temper. (p. 10)

The first rule of communication implicates that even if a person is not talking he or she is still sending a message to their surroundings. For example, when a man is sitting at his desk and is tapping with his fingers, he does not communicate verbally, but he communicates, therefore it can be presumed he is angry or nervous. Each of person's movements, actions and reactions can be considered as communication. The second rule of communication says that verbal communication can be recorded for example in form of written words and it does not change the content of the sentence. It can be said that it omits the paralinguistic part of utterance, but the information inscribed in words is persistent. The second rule also says that non-verbal communication can be interpreted with slight

differences by different people. DeVito (2001) attributes these differences in interpretation to uneven temperaments or states of mind, which is also the third rule of communication given by Knötigová (2012), who adds also experiences and expectations.

A person's life is influenced by many factors during his whole life and communication also underlies to this influence. In the study of differences in communication between men and women it is important to emphasize some variance in heredity and social influence. Psychologists say that each person is determined both by biological and social incidence. (Holeček, 2007) This incidence changes during one's lifetime.



Pic. 2

World – social influence

Heredity – biological incidence

(Holeček, 2007, p. 40)

In the picture (Pic. 2) there is the rate of influence of world and heredity during first fifteen years of life. At birth the influence of heredity is significant, but not total. During time the influence of the world (social environment) increases.

In communication the rate is similar. Girls start to talk sooner than boys, because their brain is evolved in a different way, which is determined hereditarily. During childhood it is very important for the social environment to have an impact on the child, so it can adopt behavioral and communicational patterns. The importance of social stimulation can be demonstrated on “wolf children”, Amala and Kamala. These human children were found at the age of 18 months and 8 years: previously they had lived with wolves and adopted their behavior. People then tried to nurture them without significant success, the most problematic areas were intellect and speaking (Holeček, 2007). This example illustrates how important social interaction with children is. With insufficient stimulation it is very unlikely our communicational skills will improve.

In the study of gender differences in communication there is another very important aspect, which is biologically determined. The differences in communication can be considered a result of education or imitating the style of an adult of one's own gender. This theory is partially correct, but there is another point of view, and it is biologically determined qualities. In the past, men were considered to be smarter than women, because

they have a bigger brain. This theory was proven wrong: research of American doctor David Wechsler revealed that women's intelligence quotient is three percent higher (Pease, 2002). The important thing is how effectively the brain can work and how many tasks it is able to process.

The main difference is that during communication, women use both of their hemispheres, but men use just one. In each hemisphere there are certain areas, responsible for certain tasks. Because of this difference, women are able to do more things at once, when they need to use another center of brain, it is possible. On the other hand, when men are focused on speaking, no other task can be done in the same hemisphere, or it can be done in a very reduced way (Vyskočil, 2006).

Another factor are hormones in the human body, predominantly the female hormone – estrogen. This helps the brain to create more synapses, which reflects in more effective use of the brain (Vymětal, 2008). Women also have more developed *corpus callosum*, which connects both hemispheres, therefore both of the hemispheres communicate more effectively (Karsten, 2006). This difference in brain structure causes vital distinction in communicational styles, which will be dealt with later.

These biological qualities developed in time, in the past men were hunters, focused on one task. When they were waiting for some prey, they had to be quiet and focused. According to Vyskočil (2006), women were *protectress of the settlement*, they had a lot of tasks and their brain evolved accordingly to these tasks.

It is important to say that communicational patterns and styles are affected by this biological limitations and also by social incidence.

Gender differences in communication

At the beginning it is important to declare, that following gender differences in communication cannot be considered as something that is the same with every member of a group of men or women. These are the most marked differences that appear with the majority of men or women.

In this chapter there are sources from academic and popular literature. The main difference between academic research and popular books is that popular books are rather more oriented on communicational situations, where on the other hand academic research is more oriented on separate description of men's and women's capabilities and habits.

Both these approaches offer important facts about gender differences in communication and to create a more extensive description of these differences it is important to include both sources.

Men and women communicate in different ways. This distinction starts to form when a child is very young and starts to recognize its own gender, but also the gender of other children.

Curran (2003) states that:

Children as young as eighteen months old show preferences for gender-stereotyped toys. By the age of two, they are aware of their own and others' gender, and between two and three years of age, they begin to identify specific traits and behaviors in gender-stereotyped ways. (p. 73)

When children are able to do this, they start to play together within a group of the same sex. In this group it is possible to examine some behavioral patterns, which are vital for understanding the gender differences in communication.

Within the group of male-children it is possible to observe that the group is relatively big and it is hierarchically organized. In this group boys are trying to reach higher positions by giving orders or outbidding each other (Tannen, 1995). In their games there are very often clear winners and losers, which help to build the hierarchy. This group is relatively open for any newcomers, but they are most likely to be at the bottom of the hierarchy (Pease, 2002).

Female groups are different, they are small, and sometimes there are even only two members. The relationship between them is equivalent, they are on the same level. While in the male group the core is the most admired person, in the female group it is mostly the best friend. There is also the importance of a high level of intimacy in their relationship. Within the group of female-children there is also an important issue of emotional attachment to each other. This group is easily penetrable by a new person, but with the first indication of a problem the person can be excluded (DeVito, 2001).

These behavioral patterns are raised in a person's whole childhood and are vital for its further development. The time when one starts to notice some differences is around puberty, when the two groups of male and female gender start to interact with each other more.

It is a common belief that women like to talk and they talk a lot more than men.

Vymětal (2008) focused on this statement:

Woman can, in conversation in one day, express 6 – 8 thousand words; moreover they use up to 2 thousand sounds, 8 – 10 thousand gestures, mimic expressions, head movements and other body signals – altogether around 20 thousand ‘words’. By contrast men, though they have bigger vocabulary, use only 2 – 4 thousand words, 1 – 2 thousand sounds and just 2 – 3 thousand signals. Altogether that is seven thousand ‘words’, which is only one third compared to women. (p. 42)

This research clearly shows that women do talk more and men talk less. DeVito (2001) adds to this matter that this difference is not caused by bigger vocabulary of women, in fact men’s lexicon is more extensive.

Conversation between the same gender has certain rules, or more preferably habits. These habits originate in childhood plays, within the group of men there is still the need of hierarchy. A man in communication with a partner of the same gender tries to achieve a higher position in an imaginary hierarchy. Therefore he tries to reply with a high level of knowledge, or at least with a more aggressive style, which can help him build dominion over the second participant in conversation (Kalnická, 2009).

Deborah Tannen, American academic and professor, author of the popular book *You just don’t understand*, tried to explain these habits of men on examples from everyday life. The problem between men starts when one of them is clearly in a lower position, whether it is in employment or has significantly lower social status. This state is pleasant for the person in the higher position, because he is aware of his rank and therefore he has some power over his subordinate. This role is usually unpleasant for the person who is lower in the hierarchy, but usually he has to accept the situation (Tannen, 1995).

Another situation where this hierarchy is well displayed is decision making. Vymětal (2008) states, that men make decisions based on their experience and will, even when the decision should be a group opinion, the strongest member (highest on the hierarchy) can change it and carry his point. On the other side of this decision making, women like to cooperate and agree on the best possible decision.

Robin Lakoff, American linguist and professor, dealt in her book *Language and Woman’s Place* with gender differences in communication, this book was released in 1975, shortly after the first strike of feminism. Lakoff (1975) states, that women’s communicational style differs in lexicon. Women and men use different words based on

their interest or focus, for example women know more expressions for colors, men for technical terms. In her research can be also found differences in speech: women's speech is less powerful than men's, women also tend to speak more politely, swear less and use more tag questions and intensifiers. The communicational style of women differs also in its consistency, Lakoff (1975) labeled women's opinions as uncertain, they more often try to recede when they are not completely sure of their opinion. There is another interesting phenomenon of women and those are indirect orders. It is very common to hear from women "Isn't it cold in here?", which is in fact an indirect order to close a window or turn up the heat. Men on the other hand are more likely to give direct orders.

As mentioned above, men use only one third of the signals of women in one day, but their communication is more effective, men try to focus on the problem and find the right solution in a shortest possible time. This causes differences in creating an utterance between men and women. Vyskočil (2006) stated in his motto: "Women remain silent to punish men. But men love silence".

It is important to emphasize that each conversation is produced by at least two members, who interact with each other – speaker and listener. Women are considered to be both better speakers and listeners, but only by another woman. It is natural that they can communicate with each other better. Men mostly consider women as better listeners, because they do not try to affect their status. On the other hand, women are considered by men as "bad" speakers, because their style of speaking differs too much. Men consider woman's utterances long and boring, with too many unimportant details (Karsten, 2006). The differences in speaking and receiving can be best shown by taking each gender and each role separately.

Women as a speaker is considered very enthusiastic, women tend to accompany their stories with large amount of gestures, facial expressions and also sounds. Women also tend to dramatize their stories, which is reflected in changing voices and expressive gesticulation. Women are also considered to be more emotional when speaking; Musil (2010) explains it with the tone of voice – women use approximately five tones when speaking, but men just three. It is important to add that men usually do not perceive these slight differences, because their sense of hearing is not as evolved as women's (Lakoff, 1975; DeVito, 2001). Pelt (2001) states, that: "Woman's brain is programmed more intuitively and emotionally." (p. 23) This might be the reason why women share a lot of details, which would be considered by men as unimportant.

It is an important issue for the speaker to be assured by the listener that he or she is

involved in the conversation and actually listens. Women are considered to be good listeners, because they actively react to important changes in the story, they are very good at facial expressions and they tend to maintain eye-contact. In their facial expressions they are very emphatic (Lakoff, 1975; DeVito, 2001; Gilligan, 1982). There is one more typical issue of women and these are *emphatic notes*. Phrases like “I understand...”, “That must be hard for you...”, “I’ve been there too...” or “I feel the same” are common in women’s conversation and they help to assure the speaker that he is being listened to. These emphatic notes are even more important in indirect communication, where no non-verbal signs can be observed (Kalnická, 2009).

A man’s brain is programmed analytically, in extension that means it is focused on solving problems. When a man is speaking, his utterance is based on facts without any unimportant details. A man’s utterance is shorter and more factual, but it mostly lacks emotions (Pelt, 2001). The lack of emotions is mostly signaled by *paralinguistic* signs: that means men usually do not change the tone of their voice or the speech power.

The speech power was observed by DeVito (2001) with interesting conclusion, that a men’s voice has a lower register which is well received by the audience, it creates an impression of importance and truthfulness of the information. Also men when are angry or trying to defend themselves, the vocal register lowers even more. Women on the other hand have commonly higher vocal register and when they are nervous or trying to assert them, it gets even higher. The interesting conclusion is that women should try to lower their voices, which would be well received by audience and it would draw an attention to the speaker.

A man’s approach to listening is completely different from a woman’s, most of the time a man is silent and looks disinterested. He does not maintain eye-contact; he rather looks out of a window. In fact DeVito (2001) states that men tend to eliminate eye-contact: furthermore, their facial expression hardly display any emotions (Pelt, 2001). Pease (2003) connects these feeble facial-expressions again with evolution; men had to hide their emotions for example in a fight or negotiation, not to give the enemy essential information about their weaknesses.

Academic research (Lakoff, 1975; Gilligan, 1982) connected this behavior to the biologically determined qualities; evolution of the senses. Men do not maintain eye-contact, because their vision is directed on orientation at a distance. It is harder for men during conversation to focus on the near target (communicational partner). Women’s sight is evolved to work on shorter distance and with better evolved peripheral vision, which gives them advantage in conversation.

Misinterpretation of signals is a very common problem, connected with different understanding of the same situation by men and women. One example: woman is talking and man is reading a newspaper. After a while, the woman accuses the man of not listening to her. There are two possible explanations for this problem. From the biological point of view, a man's brain is focused on reading newspapers and he actually does not listen, or cannot process the signals (Vyskočil, 2006). Another theory is given by Vymětal (2008): "The woman expects the man to listen to her, nod and express interest in her problems". (p. 43) But the brain of men is set differently; he tries to come up with a solution to her problem. Therefore he remains silent until the correct answer is found. Tannen (1995) also adds, that once the solution is found, a man says it straightaway and interrupts woman, which can naturally cause more problems.

Both these different conversational styles are hard for the other gender to understand: woman was only looking for someone to talk to: she did not need help with finding a solution. The man on the other hand is not used to talking without the prospect of finding some solution (Vymětal, 2008). Tannen (1995) shows this problem on a different example, which is a phone call. A typical phone call made by a man is short and factual. Women like more just to talk and listen to their conversational partners.

According to these two examples Naumann (2008) states that target of conversation for women is to create opinions and develop relationships, for men the target is to gain information and find solutions.

From Naumann's (2008) research it can also be determined that women are more oriented on feelings, emotions and personal likeability. Naumann (2008) took into consideration a situation when men and women were criticized and wanted them to describe what feelings they had towards the person, who criticized them. Women were more oriented on their personal feelings and answered that the person didn't like them. Men on the other hand connected this behavior to their skills: they thought that the person was questioning their competency. It was also reflected in a situation when they had to react to problems of other people. Women demonstrated high level of empathy and shared their own experiences with similar problems. The reaction of men was completely different, they started to give advice.

Communication is sometimes a problem with married couples, which do not communicate as much as the wife would like. And furthermore when they have company, a man starts to entertain the whole group, but when they are alone, he barely speaks. A

woman then can conceive a suspicion, that he has nothing to tell her. According to Vymětal (2008), that does not have to be true. Men like to talk in public and in his employment, where women do not speak that much, but they do not like to talk in the family circle. Therefore, when a bigger group is present, men start to entertain them, but with carefully chosen topics that interest them. Curran (2003) adds that it is very common that men try to change the topic of conversation to something that is interesting for them.

Another situation where misinterpreting signals by the opposite gender is present is driving a car in an unfamiliar city. Men are trying to find the right way and they do not listen to anyone else. When a wife decides to ask someone for direction, he does not want to and continues driving.

This situation shows that by accepting the possibility that he does not know the right way is frustrating for a man, because in this case he would lose some of his social status. Naumann (2008) labels this behavior as *Mentality of lonely warrior*. A woman in the same case is willing to ask for help, because she is not afraid that this situation would cause any harm to her.

It is important to say that these communicational styles interact with each other during communication between man and woman, which is very often a cause of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Pelt (2001) states that neither men nor women change their styles when they communicate with the other gender and therefore: "The real key is mutual understanding." (p. 22)

Vyskočil (2006) also focuses on the behavioral problem of communication and non-verbal signs. What is normal for men, is sometimes not normal for women. As an example he names silence: while men are usually silent when a woman is talking to them, the silence in woman's behavior should be carefully evaluated, because it can suggest social conflict. Tannen (1995) concurs and adds, that silence of woman longer than ten minutes can mark social conflict. Of course it is important to evaluate the situation accordingly, for example with insight of previous behavior. Vymětal (2008) added one situation, where men are more like to open to other people and that is with metabolic oxidation of ethylalcohol in organism. According to Pelt (2001), women understand better the body language and non-verbal signals, which help them to sense the state of mind of other people (Pelt, 2001). Baron-Cohen (2003) agrees and adds:

Women's perceptual skills are oriented to quick people reading. Females are gifted at detecting the feelings and thoughts of others, inferring intentions, absorbing

contextual clues and responding in emotionally appropriate ways. They empathize. Tuned to others, they more readily see alternate sides of an argument. Such empathy fosters communications and primes females for attachment. Men focus first on minute detail, and operate most easily with certain detachment. They construct rule-based analyses of the natural world, inanimate objects and events. They systemize (p. 40).

Communication is always present in our behavior, it is impossible not to communicate. There are differences in one's communication based on the place and situation. There is a main part of our everyday life where communication is necessary, which is workplace.

Carol Kinsey Goman, an American professor, focused on the problem of gender differences in communication on workplace and created a list of three communication strengths and weaknesses at a workplace for each gender.

Top three communication strengths for females:

- 1) Ability to read body language and pick up nonverbal cues
- 2) Good listening skills
- 3) Effective display of empathy

Top three weaknesses for females:

- 1) Overly emotional
- 2) Meandering – won't get to the point
- 3) Not authoritative

Top three communication strengths for males:

- 1) Physical presence
- 2) Direct and to-the-point interactions
- 3) Body language signals of power

Top three communication weaknesses for males:

- 1) Overly blunt and direct
- 2) Insensitive to audience reactions
- 3) Too confident in own opinion

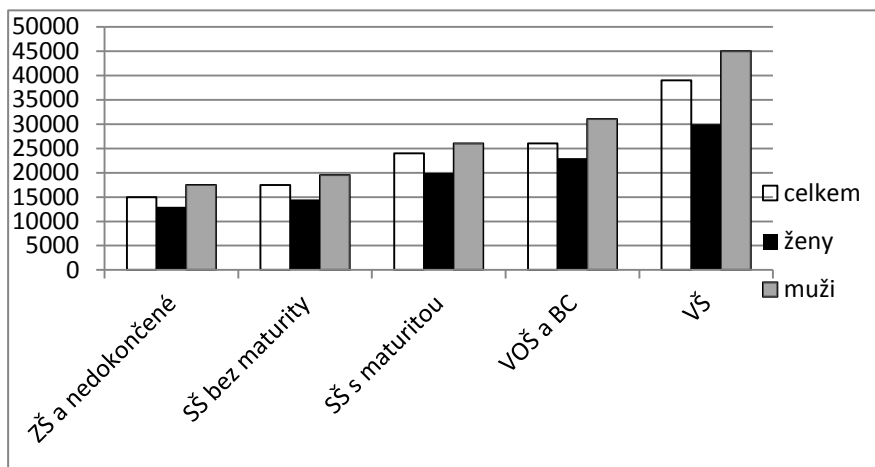
(Goman, 2009)

These strengths and weaknesses can be put in the context of Pease's conclusion, that men like to give a speech in front of audience, but women prefer to work in smaller groups (Pease, 2002). When giving a speech, men can apply their strengths of physical presence and direct communicational style, which is formidable for the audience and it hides the weaknesses such as insensitiveness to audience reactions, because they usually feel in power and it is easier for them to suppress individual objections. Therefore men like to work in their *social* and *public distance*.

Women prefer to work in smaller groups, where they can maintain eye-contact and read the non-verbal signs of other people. It is harder to read the signs in a group of twenty people than it is with five people sitting close to each other. Women also like to work in their *social distance* but it is also common that they let someone in their *personal distance* under a condition they know each other well (Pease, 2002). It is also common in groups of women that they like to have physical contact with their conversational partner; haptics is more present in the communication of women than of men. Pease (2002) connects this behavior with biological predispositions; women have thinner skin and more sensitive nerve endings, so they perceive touch in a different way than men. It is also connected with their more emotional behavior: a touch can assure them of someone's support or the same state of mind. Communication at the workplace to a certain extent depends on a gender structure of company. Novák (2002) implies that it is easier for men to communicate from a position of power, because men are more commonly in higher positions within the company. He attributes this to the masculine company structure, subconscious preference of men for leading positions and unwillingness of companies to conform to eventual family obligations.

At this point it is important to explore the background of women and men on the labor market. In Europe and also in other states all around the world we can see, that in the past women were oppressed at the expense of men. This fact reflected in labour market, where most of the leading positions were occupied by men. As Křížková (2011) says in

The Czech Republic there was another factor in that leading positions were conditioned by membership in Communist Party, from which women were mostly freed (Křížková, 2011). Nevertheless, in 1970, 45.5% of working people were women (Historická statistická ročenka ČSSR, 1986). Further research revealed that women were also oppressed in salary. At the beginning of 1960's, women were paid only two thirds of a man's salary for doing a similar job. Křížková (2011) says that this discrimination in salary was mostly influenced by persistent form of division of labor in a household, and ideology of men as a breadwinners (Křížková, 2011). A change to this model came after 1989, when transformation of the labor market attracted attention to educational attainment, and salary was strongly connected with prestige of employment and education (Křížková, 2011). But as can be compared now, the differences in salary are persistent; in Graph 1 can be seen that with higher education the difference in salary is larger and also that women with higher university education are paid less than men with lower university education. According to Křížková (2011), this difference can be caused by interrupted work careers of women, who are very likely to go to maternal leave, but men with the same education can work without this interruption and can become more valuable for the company.



Graph 1: Hrubý měsíční příjem podle vzdělání v roce 2006 / Full income dependent on education in 2006

Czech titles of education and their similar levels in english
 Celkem – total
 Muži – men
 Ženy - women

ZŠ a nedokončené – primary school education
 SŠ bez maturity – apprentice training centre education
 SŠ s maturitou – comprehensive school
 VOŠ a BC – university education, Bachelors degree
 VŠ – university education, Masters degree

(Jarkovská, 2010, p. 21)

Research

An important role in this thesis belongs to research. In the research I have created several hypotheses based on the theoretical part of the thesis and the objective of the practical part is to find people's opinions on them and to some extent to verify them.

The questionnaire was published on the networking site and the address was spread on Facebook site among friends without any additional information. The questionnaire was available for 30 days and it obtained 70 respondents. I have expected this number to be higher, but even this number can be considered as sufficient. The aim of the research was to discover people's opinions on gender-based questions and stereotypes. The survey consists of six compulsory questions. The questions were simple yes/no questions and in question number six there was a series of statements that the respondents could check off if they believed the statement was true. The respondents were between 18 and 26 years old; 42 women and 28 men.

The questions were as follows:

1. What is your age? (number)

2. What is your gender?

Male

Female

3. Do you think that men and women communicate in different styles?

Yes

No

When you have a problem, do you rather share it with person of the same gender?

Yes

No

I do not like to share my problems at all

4. Is the non-verbal part of communication (posture, gestures...) important for you?

Yes

No

5. Review the following list of statements and check those that you believe to be true.

Women are more emphatic than men

Women talk more than men

Women like to talk about their feelings more than men

Women can multi-task better than men

Women are better story-tellers

Women like to think out loud

Women tend to touch other people more than men

Men communicate more factually

Men are more impulsive

Men are better public speakers (f.e. in front of audience)

Men appear disinterested when listening

Men are more likely to give advice

Men are more ingrown

Men ask fewer questions

Women can read emotions better

Women include more details in their stories

Questions number one and two were simple questions to determine the age of the respondent and his gender. The aim of question number three was to determine whether the person believes, that men and women have different communicational styles. This question was answered "Yes" by one hundred percent of men and ninety percent of women. Four

women answered this question as “No”.

Question number four served to obtain information about sharing problems with opposite gender. Thirty-six percent of men answered that they prefer to share the problem with person of the same gender and sixty-four percent would rather share the problem with opposite gender. No male respondent answered, that he does not like to share the problem. Fifty-seven percent of women like to share the problem with the same gender, twenty-nine with opposite gender and fourteen percent does not like to share the problems at all. From the research can be determined that both men and women give priority to share problems with a person of female gender. That is probably caused by the fact that women are better listeners and in contrast to men they actually like to talk about problems of others. An interesting finding is that no men answered that he does not like to talk about his problems and on the contrary, six women did. Maybe this finding can be awarded to the age of the respondents and their current position of students. As was explained in theoretical part, men tend to be more open in specific conditions of metabolic oxidation of ethylalcohol in organism and the group of university students is often awarded with the inclination to alcohol and pub visiting.

The aim of question number five was to determine whether the person realizes the non-verbal part of communicational partner and if it is important for him or not. For fifty-seven percent of men the non-verbal part of communication was important and for forty-three it was not. On the contrary all the women agreed that the non-verbal communication is important for them. This difference clearly indicates that women tend to observe their communicational partner and are better in perceiving the differences in non-verbal system. Men on the other hand are biologically predetermined to do one task at the time and maybe this is the reason why almost half of them answered that the non-verbal communication is not important for them. This is rather speculative statement, not to perceive the non-verbal signs is almost impossible in face-to-face communication, but as men are more factual in communication they probably tend to focus on the facts and they do not consider any body language important.

Question number six consisted of list of statements and the respondent could check as many as he considered being true.

Statement 1: Women are more emphatic than men

Sixty-four percent of men and sixty-two percent of women agreed with this statement. Generally, it can be said, that also men consider women to be more emphatic

Statement 2: Women talk more than men

This statement was considered correct by eighty-six percent of men and sixty-seven percent of women. It is proven by Vymětal's research, that men use only one third of women's count of words.

Statement 3: Women like to talk about their feelings more than men

Answers to this statement were the biggest surprise of the questionnaire, only fifty-seven percent of men and fifty-two percent of women agreed with this statement. It is probably

Statement 4: Women can mutli-task better than men

Forty-three percent of men and seventy-eight percent of women agreed with this statement. It is biologically determined, that women can do more tasks at once, their *corpus callosum*, which connects brain hemispheres is more evolved and can transfer information more effectively. From the low percentage of men, agreeing with this problem, can be deduced that men do not perceive this to be true about them.

Statement 5: Women are better story-tellers

This question was answered only by two men (seven percent) and two women (five percent) as correct. It can be traced back to the environments where people like to talk – men do like to entertain big groups of people, where some interesting stories can be told. Only two women agreeing with this statement was an unexpected outcome, it might be interpreted by women that men speaking to the group of people can be perceived as powerful and good speaker, which can impose women. The answers of just two men agreeing with this statement is not surprising at all, because men generally do not like women's style, which is rich on details. It can lead to their cessation of interest in the story.

Statement 6: Women like to think out loud

Forty-three percent of men and thirty-eight percent of women agreed with this statement. This matter is rather subjective and it probably depends on other aspects than communicational styles. From psychology it can be connected to types of notion, if a person is an auditive type, he or she probably prefers to think out loud.

Statement 7: Women tend to touch other people more than men

The more frequent use of haptics by women was concurred by fifty-seven percent of women and only by thirty-six percent of men.

Statement 8: Men communicate more factually

Sixty-four percent of men and seventy-one percent of women found this statement correct. Women's speech is rather rich on details on the contrary of men, which is rich on facts.

Statement 9: Men are more impulsive

This rather not communication related question was added to prove or disprove the theory that men like to think about the problem without making a rush decisions. On the other hand when the solution is found, men tend to interrupt other person's speech and say the solution. Forty-three percent of men and twenty-four percent of women agreed, that men are more impulsive than women.

Statement 10: Men are better public speakers (e.g. in front of audience)

Seventy-two percent of men and sixty-eight percent of women agreed with this statement. It is common that men like to talk in their public distance, for example in front of audience, but surely this to some extent depends on traits of character.

Statement 11: Men appear disinterested when listening

This statement was proven mostly wrong, only twenty-one percent of men and thirty-three percent of women agreed with it. It could be tributary to the young age of the respondents.

Statement 12: Men are more likely to give advice

Fifty-seven percent of men and sixty-seven percent of women considered this statement correct.

Statement 13: Men are more ingrown

Fifty percent of men and fifty-two percent of women agreed with this statement.

Statement 14: Men ask fewer questions

This statement was the most demonstrable, ninety-three percent of men and ninety percent of women concurred with this statement. It is connected to more analytical function of men's brain.

Statement 15: Women can read emotions better

This statement was almost as demonstrative as statement no. 14, eighty-two percent

of men and eighty-eight percent of women agreed. It is connected with their sight better evolved to short distances.

Statement 16: Women include more details in their stories

The last statement was the most contradictory. Only fifty percent of men, but eighty-one percent of women agreed. It can be deduced that men may have considered this question as attempt on their self-esteem, they might have thought that less detailed story would make their story less attractive and worse.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to describe differences in communication between men and women. The differences were studied on the background of academic research and also popular literature.

Various differences in communication were described and examined. These distinctions are commonly caused by biological factors such as brain structure and quality of brain synapses and furthermore by social influence such as education and interaction with other people. Different communicational styles of men and women are a cause of some misinterpretations, which are also connected with variance in focus of men and women and by different encoding and decoding of the content.

It is possible to describe and study the differences to improve our understanding of the opposite gender and to avoid misinterpretation and a needless stress in solving interpersonal conflicts.

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Summary in Czech

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá komunikací a rozdíly v komunikaci mezi muži a ženami.

V první části práce se nachází popis složitého procesu komunikace a jeho základních částí. Dále zde najdeme popis biologických a sociálních faktorů, které na člověka působí a ovlivňují možnosti jeho komunikace a percepce.

Druhá část práce se zabývá popisem jednotlivých rozdílů v komunikaci mezi mužem a ženou na pozadí odborné a populární literatury a snaží se poukázat na původ jednotlivých rozdílů. Na konci této kapitoly se nachází krátký popis vývoje ženské role na trhu práce.

Třetí část práce je praktická a je zaměřena na ověřování hypotéz, stanovených na základě teoretické části.