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The Reduced Forms *gonna, wanna, gotta* in The Television Series *Friends:* A Gender Perspective

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Abstract: Sociolinguists have found that women use nonstandard and informal forms less frequently than men do. The present study has examined whether these gender-related differences are reflected in the dialogue in the TV series *Friends* and to what extent linguistic features in this TV series differ from corresponding features in natural conversation. The 36 episodes of TV series *Friends* were examined for the use of the reduced forms *gonna, wanna* and *gotta* by the main characters, and a gender-related comparison was derived from the results of this examination. The corpus linguistic approach was the main method used in the present study. As the results show, the hypothesis was corroborated only in the case of *gotta:* female characters use this particular reduced form less. The use of the reduced forms *gonna*, *gotta*, and *wanna* in *Friends* have a tendency to increase over time which corresponds with the results of research into natural conversation. A significantly greater frequency of reduced forms was reported for the TV series *Friends*' conversation than for the natural spoken component. In general, the dialogue in *Friends* demonstrates the same tendency that characterizes the use of reduced forms in natural conversation, though some differences are apparent.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, formal and informal English, gender-related linguistic differences, reduced forms, television dialogue and natural conversation.

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1.Introduction

Popular television series have become an essential part of our everyday lives nowadays. Many people of different ages, mostly the young, are fond of, or even identify themselves with, a particular character in their favorite series: the characters and actors can even turn into models to be emulated. Consequently, the themes and problems highlighted in a popular series can influence or even create a certain opinion in its audience (e.g. Silverblatt 2001, Singer 1998). Among the various themes discussed in TV programs, the gender issue is one of the most popular. Yet, it is known that ideas can be transferred not only through the action in the series but also to a great extent through the characters' language. Against this background, the way in which the language in TV series reflects gender issues is the main focus of this study.

The gender aspect of language is widely discussed in sociolinguistic studies (e.g. Chambers 2003, Lakoff 1975, Trudgill 1972, and others). One of the most debated issue concerning gender-related linguistic varieties is that women speak in a more standard and formal way than men do. According to some, there seems to be a tendency for women to be more sensitive than men to the status norms of the language and some researchers (e.g. Labov 1966, Holmes 1995, and Cheshire 1981, 1982) demonstrate that women use more formal language in their everyday conversation.

In order to examine linguistic tendencies regarding formality in conversation, this study focuses on the use of reduced forms *gonna*, *wanna*, *gotta*, in the dialogue of the one of the most popular TV series of the last two decades *Friends*. The aforementioned reduced forms are chosen because some linguists (e.g. Berglund 2005, Krug 2000, and Quaglio 2009) define them as indicators of the informal style of conversation. To implement such a research project, a corpus-based approach is used as the main method in this study. The linguistic corpus of the series *Friends* has been studied by some linguists (e.g. Quaglio 2009, Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005) with a view to investigate the linguistic features of the language used in the series and to test the viability of media-based data as a surrogate to "real-world" data in the corpora. However, those studies have different scopes than the present one and focus on other linguistic variables (see section 3, Previous Research, below).

2. Aim

2.1. Aim and Scope

The aim of the study is to examine the use of the reduced forms *gonna, wanna,* and *gotta* in the conversation of the six main characters of the television series *Friends*, and how these linguistic differences correlate with gender. In addition, whether data from the TV series *Friends* corresponds to the findings in the previous gender-related linguistic studies concerning real life conversation is also explored. The hypothesis tested in the present study is that women use informal forms less than men in conversation in the TV series *Friends*.

2.2. Research Questions

Based on the above mentioned aim and scope of the study, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. To what extent are such linguistic variables as the reduced forms *gonna, wanna, gotta* (compared to their non-reduced equivalents) presented in the conversation of characters in TV series?
2. How do occurrences of different variants of these linguistic variables correlate with gender?

3. Previous Research

3.1 Gender-Related Linguistic Research

Since the mid-1970s, much research concerning gender-related linguistic differences has been conducted. It is now recognized that the pattern of men's and women's speech differs in many contemporary societies.

In 1973 Lakoff (1975) published her ground-breaking book *Language and Woman's Place* which became the starting point of a new epoch of gender-related linguistic research. Though her work was questioned by some sociolinguists (e.g. Holmes 1986, Speer 2005), it is still one of the most complete contributions to the research into the differences between how men and women speak. In short, Lakoff's main claims are: that women speak more Standard English than men; that women use more polite forms than men; that women produce more tag questions than men; that women produce more hedges than men.

The investigations by, for example, Labov (1969), Trudgill (1972) and Cheshire (1982) demonstrate that women do use fewer stigmatized and non-standard forms both in grammar and phonology.

Linguists have responded in various ways to the question of why women use more standard and formal language than men do. Lakoff (1975) proposes a power-based explanation that focuses on the social inequality of men and women in society, where women need to maintain their status through their use of language. Trudgill, as well, suggests that women's usage of standard language correlates with their subordinate position in society. He, in particular, argues: "Since they (women) are not rated by their occupational success, other signals of status, including speech, are correspondingly more important" (Trudgill 1972: 182). Deuchar (1988) asserts that the adoption of standard forms of speech by a woman saves her own "face" by adhering to prestigious norms and, at the same time, paying attention to the man's "face", trying implicitly to protect it. Chambers (2009), alternatively, emphasizes the fact that women are much more able performers in the whole spectrum of sociolinguistic situations, and says that the reason for this could be the innate sociolinguistic advantage of women. According to Chambers (2009:151),

> The neuropsychological verbal advantage of females results in sociolinguistic discrepancies such that women use a larger repertoire of variants and command a wider range of styles than men of the same social groups even though gender roles are similar or identical.

It is noteworthy, however, that not all gender-related linguistic studies demonstrate the same consensus. For instance, Milroy (1980) found that a particular non-standard phonological feature was used more frequently by women than by men in an inner area in Belfast. This fact could be explained by Social Network Theory, according to which people living in communities with tight networks tend to speak more non-standard English than people in communities with loose social networks.

So, according to previous research, it is possible to conclude that there are certain differences between the way men and women speak. Yet, those differences are a matter of degree only and the conversation of both sexes can have the same linguistic features. Female speakers use more standard and formal forms, but some sociolinguistic research demonstrates the opposite. Moreover, women are often the innovators and use a higher frequency of new forms than men (Labov, 1990:206). As for the situation today, according to Holmes (2006) it is rather possible to speak about two different interactional styles, a "masculine" and a "feminine" one, used in various conversational contexts, than about two different gender-related ways to speak. The presence of these gender-related linguistic differences could be explained by other social factors as, for example, the density of speakers' network, their level of education, position in society, mobility, etc.

3.2 Linguistic Research of the *Friends'* Corpus

As the object of linguistic research, television conversation has become interesting to linguists during the last twenty years or so from several different perspectives. Firstly, because of the reflection of different social issues in the language of television programs (e.g. Lembo 2000; Rey 2001); secondly, because of the possible influence of a TV shows' language on the audience and its way of speaking and even thinking (e.g. Stuart-Smith 2007; Fitzmaurice 2000); and also with the object of examining some special linguistic features of television conversation (e.g. Mattsson 2009; Trotta 2003, 2011).

One of the most popular television series of the last two decades, *Friends*, came to the attention of linguists not so long ago, and at once gave rise to an interesting discussion about the correlation between natural and TV series conversations. Thus, Quaglio (2009) "reports on a linguistic study comparing the language of a popular American television situation comedy, *Friends*, to natural conversation" (2009:1). Quaglio (2009) found that *Friends* shares the core linguistic features of conversation that characterize involved versus informational product. Some differences, such as, for example, a higher frequency of the majority of linguistic features marking emotional language (e.g. intensifiers, stance markers, expletives) and informality (e.g. slang terms, vocatives, semi-modals), were explored.

Tagliamonte and Roberts (2005) study linguistic innovation and test the viability of media-based data as a surrogate for "real-world" data in sociolinguistic research. By investigating the use of intensifiers in the series between 1994 and 2002 the authors reveal that "these findings support the claim that media language does reflect what is going on in language and may even pave the way for innovation" (Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005: 280). Considering gender-related linguistic differences Tagliamonte and Roberts (2005: 296) found that

> Consistent with an incoming linguistic feature that is not part of the standard language, the female *Friends* characters use *so* more often than males. This result is entirely consistent with earlier observations that *so* is a "female" intensifier.

3.3 Research on Reduced Forms and Grammaticalization

Interest in the study of the reduced forms *gonna, wanna, gotta* is determined by their increasingly frequent use, predominantly in spoken American and British English, and in the speech of TV characters in recent years. Many linguists are inclined to believe that the presence of these reduced

forms in speech is the result of the new processes of grammaticalization (Tagliamonte 2004, Krug 2000, and Trotta 2011).

Hooper and Traugott (1993) define grammaticalization as the dynamic, unidirectional historical process whereby lexical items in the course of time acquire a new status as grammatical, morphosyntactic forms, and in the process come to code relations that either were not coded before or were coded differently.

Krug (2000) investigates the grammaticalization of *want to, have to*, and *have got to* from main verbs to the phonologically reduced auxiliaries *wanna, hafta* and *gotta*. He uses a variety of American and British corpora for studying and comparison data. Krug compares British and American English in drama and fiction, showing that British use lags behind American use of both *have to* and *have got to*. One of the ways a change in progress is shown is by means of the use of *got* and *gotta* in the BNC (Krug 2000:87). In the research it is also reported that speakers aged 24 or younger use *gotta* and *wanna* a lot more than *got to* or *want to*. For speakers aged over 45, the result is the exact opposite (Krug 2000:161). Examining the change from *want to* to *wanna*, Krug concludes that this verb expresses volition and is prone to modalization. *Wanna* is also more frequent in American than in British English. One of the chapters provides comparisons among the 'emerging modals' including *going to/gonna* and showing that *gonna* is more often contracted, then *gotta* and *wanna* (Krug 2000:175). Looking at sex as at one of the parameters in distribution of full and contracted form, Krug (2000:192, Table5.2) surprises the reader with the fact that "women use consistently higher proportions of contracted forms". The reason for it, according to Krug (2000:193), is that *gonna, wanna* and *gotta* are instances of linguistic change, but not cases of stable variation.

Another linguist who has thoroughly studied one of the reduced forms tested in this paper is Berglund (2000, 2005) who examines how the expressions of future are used in present-day American and British English and explores how corpora can be used for linguistic studies. The thesis (Berglund 2005) focuses on five auxiliary and semi-auxiliary verb phrases referring to the future in English: *will/'ll, shall, going to* and *gonna*. Analyzing linguistic and non-linguistic factors with which the aforementioned expressions are associated, Berglund finds prominent differences between the spoken and written languages, and variation between groups of speakers is also attested. Her main findings about *gonna* are: g*oing to* and *gonna* are indeed variant forms of one expression for the future; *gonna* is frequent in the spoken language and very rare in written texts, and primarily found in quotes or speech-like contexts; *gonna* is used more in the informal spoken component of British National Corpus, where it is used even more frequently than *going to* (Berglund 2005:162-166). Her sociolinguistic investigations reveal that *gonna* is preferred by

younger people and people from certain social groups; there is also an indication that male speakers use *gonna* more than females (Berglund 2005:166). Berglund also noticed that both *going to* and *gonna* are used with the auxiliary *to be* in the vast majority of all instances (2005:159). It was also found that *gonna* more often occurs in a double negation and with slang words than *going to*.

Tagliamonte (2004) focuses on the grammaticalization, variation and specialization of English deontic modality. She analyses the use of such forms of obligation as *have to, have got to, got to/gotta* and *must* in northern British English and comes to the following conclusions*: must* is decreasing across generations; *got to/gotta* is used very little (about 3 %) and only by the middle and younger age groups of speakers*; have to* and *have got to* demonstrate stable variability between each other (Tagliamonte 2004:42). The data also shows that *gotta* is a late development within this area of grammar (Tagliamonte 2004:52). No gender-related differences were found within the study.

4. Material

4.1 *Friends:* Sitcom and Corpus

Friends (1994-2004) is an American situation comedy produced by Bright/Kauffman/Crane Productions, in association with Warner Bros. Television. The first episode was in September 1994, and the last one was produced in May 2004. The series revolves around a group of six friends, three young men: Ross, Joey, and Chandler, and three young women: Monica, Phoebe, Rachel. All these characters live in Manhattan New York. They share the same common environment, try to put in order their lives and talk all the time.

Since its first season in 1994, *Friends* has been an influential cultural phenomenon (Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005:281). The series received positive reviews throughout its run, becoming one of the most popular sitcoms of all time. The series won numerous awards and was nominated for 63 Emmy Awards. Many critics regard it as one of the best shows in television history (Ginzburg 2004, online). Thus, it might be asserted that the language in *Friends* has a potential to have an impact on the viewers' way of speaking. Moreover, a series with so wide an audience and airing for so long a period of time can itself create a linguistic trend among its followers: some popular phrases repeated by the series' characters (for example, That is so not true!) have become a regular feature of American English (Quaglio 2009:12). Needless to say,

language plays an essential role in determining how people think, especially if the series deals with actual problems that are encountered in everyday life.

Friends' scripts were written by many screenwriters over its 10-year history. However, what is ultimately said by the actors "in the aired version of the shows is the product of numerous rewrites, involving not only the original writer, who is credited with the first draft, but all the other writers, and, critically, the actors" (Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005: 282).

Naturally enough, such a linguistic phenomenon as the language in *Friends* is as interesting to study in itself as any other language produced by people in real life. Moreover, by studying linguistic features in the *Friends'* corpus and comparing the results with the studies of natural conversational corpora, it is possible to answer the question how the television series relates to real life conversational situations and how the language in *Friends* can influence the viewers' way of speaking and thinking.

4.2 Type of Interactions in the *Friends*' Corpus

In the *Friends'* corpus the conversational topics for the six main characters are primarily the relationships and private life of the characters. Most scenes in the TV series are played out in Monica's or Joey's and Chandler's apartments and in the café *Central Perk*; in two of chosen episodes events take place during journeys. A small number of scenes involve Chandler's office or the workplaces of other characters where the characters often discuss the same topics. With this in mind, it is possible to claim that the interactions in the *Friends'* corpus are mostly casual and occur in informal situations.

4.3 Why *gonna, wanna, gotta?*

In examining the definition of the words *gonna, wanna* and *gotta* in *The Oxford Dictionaries* (2013, online) one can readily see that these words are 'informal contractions' (reduced forms) for the words: *going to; want to, want a; have got a, have got to*. In the *English Vocabulary and Grammar* blog (2013, online) they advise readers to treat, *wanna*, *gonna*, *gotta* as "not correct" English and not to use these words in a written exam, for example, except in appropriate situations. So, these reduced forms are "unwelcome citizens" in the country of Standard English.

However, over the last three or four decades *gonna, wanna* and *gotta* have become an essential part of spoken English in both American (to a greater extent) and British English (Berglund 2005; Krug 2000). Since those informal contractions are presented mostly in the spoken

American language and could be a sign of informality, the *Friends'* corpus is a good base to analyze both their linguistic and non-linguistic features.

5. Method

For the successful implementation of this case-study, a corpus-based approach is used as the main method for collecting and analyzing data. According to Biber and Conrad, the main features of this method are "the empirical character of research; using a large amount of collected texts known as a "corpus"; extensive use of computers for analysis; both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques" (1998: 4).

The *Friends*' corpus used in this study originates from two sources. The first one is the *Friends*' transcripts homepage (*Friends*: The Transcripts 2009, online). The transcripts contain descriptions of the scenes and actors' performances, which is important for the contextual analysis of dialogues. For the frequency counts, scripts from the TV subtitles page (TV subtitles 2013, online) are used as a second version of *Friends'* corpus.

The thirty six episodes selected had to meet some requirements: the conversation of the main characters should be presented in approximately equal proportions and the events must occur in the natural order (no flashbacks; no focusing on a particular character/guest actor; et cetera). In order to trace language change over time (if it occurred) the episodes considered belonged to several different seasons: season 1, episodes 2,3,12,13,23,24; season 2, episodes 1,2,12,13,23,24; season 5, episodes 1,2,11,12,23,24; season 6, episodes 1,2,11,12,24,25; season 9, episodes 1,2,11,12,21,22; season 10, episodes 1,2,9,10,17,18. The *Friends*' corpus (scripts without other characters) under study totaled roughly 79 300 words.

The occurrence of three reduced forms *gonna, wanna, gotta* and their formal equivalents in the corpus of the series were analyzed with the help of a freeware concordance program *AntConc (Anthony 2012).* So, all cases of the aforementioned forms were identified, recorded and its linguistic (occurrence with auxiliaries) and sociolinguistic features (context, gender, other social differences, changes over time) were examined. A gender-comparison was derived from the results.

It is important, if the results are to be reliable and valid, to take into account the number of words said by main characters of both genders in the episodes. Such statistical observations were made for the three episodes, chosen from different seasons, and the proportional average was used as a basis for the counts for the whole study.

Even though the speech in the series is fictional, it is supposed to reflect the real life linguistic situation. To see how real speech differs from the fictional, the data from the *Friends*' corpus was presented as incidences per 1,000 words and compared with other linguistic findings concerning reduced forms *gonna*, *wanna*, *gotta* and gender-related differences of natural conversation in the spoken component of British and American English corpora.

6. Results

6.1. Distribution of the Number of Words Uttered by Each Gender

It turned out that in episode 3 season 1 and in episode 2 season 5, the three female characters, Monica, Rachel and Phoebe, uttered 56% and 53% respectively of all the words said by the six main characters. For the episode 2 season 10 this number is 47 %. The average for all three episodes is 52 %. Since the distribution of words between both genders in the chosen episodes is almost equal, on average, it was decided not to consider these data in further statistical observations.

6.2 Reduced Forms in the *Friends'* Corpus: A Gender Perspective

6.2.1 *Gonna*

The reduced form *gonna* is highly represented in the *Friends'* corpus (Table 1). The data from different seasons demonstrates that *gonna* (442 cases) occurs in the speech of the six main characters much more frequently than its full form *going to* (92 cases). According to Berglund (2000), *gonna*/*going to* as well as will/*'ll* are forms for the expression of the future tense which can have very close meaning. In other words, the speaker can have a choice not only between the reduced form *gonna* and its non-reduced form *going to*, but also between *gonna* and *will/'ll*. So, in order to make the results more valid and comparable to relevant linguistic research (e.g. Berglund 2000, 2005) the use of *will/'ll* was also considered in this study. The data for *will/'ll* reveals the same gender-related proportions as *going to:* male speakers use both these forms more frequently than females. Though *will/'ll* is much more frequent than *going to*, the instances of *gonna* are essentially more frequent than *will/'ll* (442 cases of *gonna* against 301 cases of *will/'ll*).

Table 1: Distribution of *gonna* and *going to* in the *Friends'* Corpus: A Gender Perspective

	Seasons 1,2			Seasons 5,6			Seasons 9,10			Total		
	females	males	total	females	males	total	females	males	total	females	males	total
gonna	54	52	106	83	88	171	89	86	175	226	216	442
going to	7	10	17	18	28	46	9	20	29	34	58	92
will/'ll	46	58	104	37	50	87	59	51	110	142	159	301

The distribution of the reduced form *gonna* in Friends' corpus demonstrates that in the first two seasons *gonna* occurs 106 times, which is considerably less than in seasons 5-6 and in seasons 9-10; respectively 171 and 175 times (Table 1).

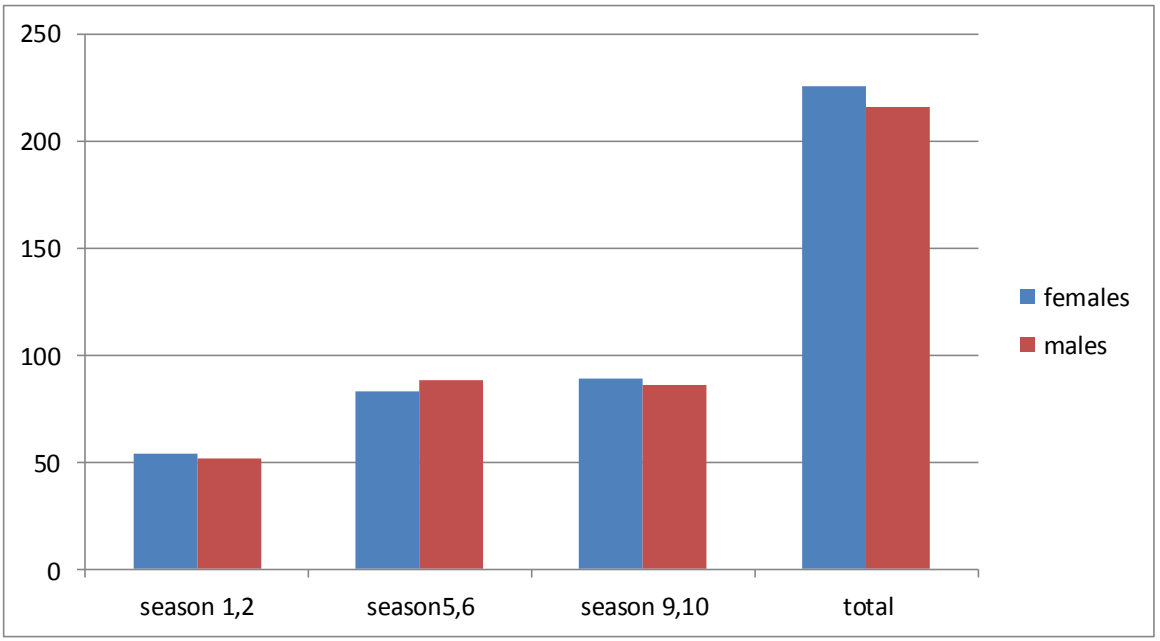

Figure1 - Distribution of *gonna* in the *Friends*' Corpus.

No significant gender-related differences considering *gonna* were found (Figure 1). In all seasons both women and men use *gonna* reasonably often, reasonably equally (women 226 vs. men 218 cases).

1) a. Chandler: *Ross had a ring? And he was gonna propose?* (Season 9, episode 1)
   b. Ross: *I think she's gonna be the hit of the office, huh?* (Season 9, episode 11)

c. Joey: *So, what, you think I'm just gonna sleep with her and never call her again and things are gonna get uncomfortable*? (Season 9, episode 12)
d. Rachel: *Well, did you know he was gonna ask me?* (Season 9, episode 11)
e. Phoebe: *Oh, my God, I'm gonna be on TV!* (Season 9, episode 11)
f. Monica: *Oh, my God! We're really gonna adopt!* (Season 9, episode 22)

However, the non-reduced form *going to* occurs more frequently in the speech of male speakers (men: 58 vs. women: 34 cases).

2) Ross: Oh, well, yeah, actually I was going to talk to her when you guys all come in the room. (Season 9 episode 1)

It was also noticed that one female character, Rachel (actress Jenifer Aniston), produces more reduced forms *gonna* than any other character: 94 cases of 226 female cases (42%) and of 442 total cases (21 %).

3) a. Rachel: *And you're gonna want him to eat his heart out, so you're gonna have to look fabulous*. (Season 9 episode 11)
b. Rachel: *Umm, okay, I think I'm-I'm just gonna - just gonna say it. Uh, (pause) I'm still in love with you, Ross.*(Season 5 episode 2)

Interestingly enough, the "informal contraction" or reduced form *gonna* is almost never used without an auxiliary verb *to be.* Only three cases of non-standard usage were found in the *Friends'* corpus.

4) a. Rachel: *Not gonna find any clothes in there!* (Season 9 episode 22)
b. Chandler. *You gonna buy a new one?* (Season 10 episode 17)
c. Monica: *So, do you guys gonna come over tomorrow?* (Season 6 episode 11)

6.2.2 *Wanna*

The uses of the reduced form *wanna* is fairly common in conversations in the TV series *Friends*. In the two last seasons, the occurrence of *wanna* increases significantly both in the conversations of men and women (Table 2). In the conversations in seasons 5 and 6 both male- and female speakers turn more often to the full form *want to* than to its reduced form, otherwise it is vice versa. Generally, *wanna* (121 cases) is more frequently used as a linguistic form than *want to* (96 cases).

Table 2: Distribution of *wanna* and *want to* in the *Friends'* Corpus: A Gender Perspective

	Season 1,2			Season 5,6			Season 9,10			Total		
	females	males	total	females	males	total	females	males	total	females	males	total
wanna	19	16	35	16	13	29	30	27	57	65	56	121
want to	8	14	22	24	17	41	19	14	33	51	45	96

Both men and women produce this linguistic variable often, though, as the data demonstrates (Figure 2), female speakers use *wanna* a little more frequently than males (men 56 cases versus women 65 cases) .

5) a. Ross: *I wanna go talk to Rachel*. (Season 9 episode 1)
c. Chandler: *Hah. May not wanna mention this.* (Season 10 episode 17)
d. Joey: *Oh, hey, how about this? Wanna be an extra in my show?* (Season 9 episode 11)
e. Rachel*: I wanna eat, I wanna sleep, I wanna take a shower, I mean before she wakes up and we gotta do this all over again.* (Season 9 episode 2)
f. Monica: *I don't even wanna see the musical Oklahoma!* (Season 9 episode 2)
g. Phoebe: *She is just so cute! I just wanna bite her ear off and use it as a sucking candy.* (Season 9 episode 2)

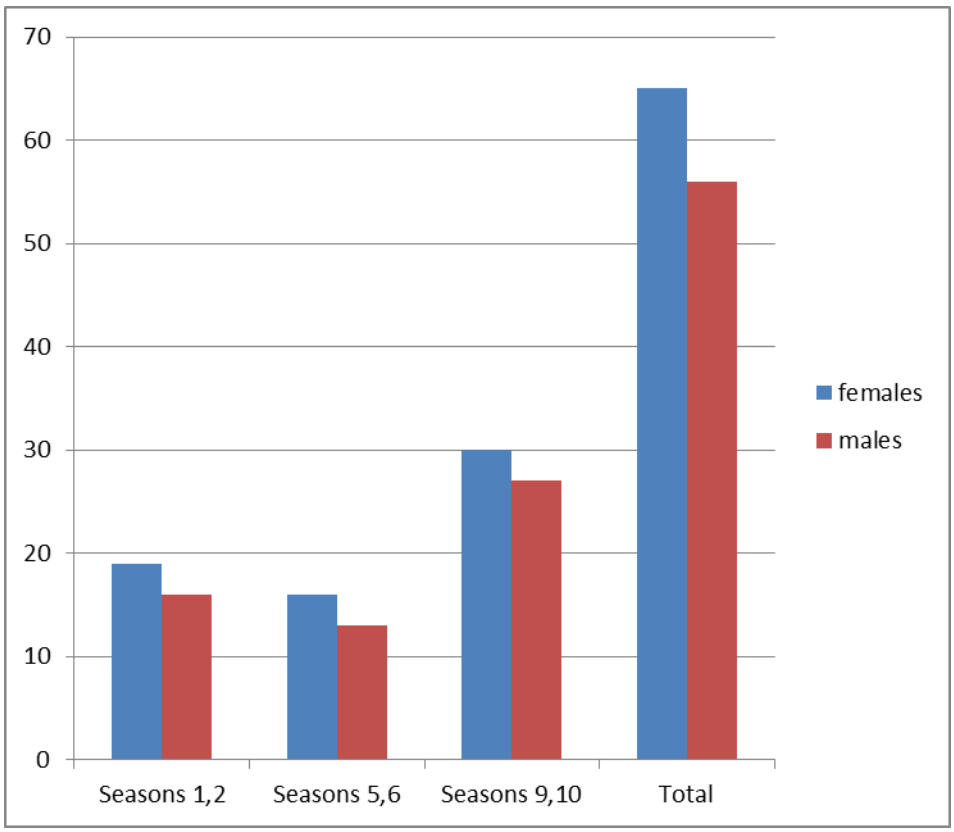

Figure2 - Distribution of *wanna* in the *Friends*' Corpus.

6.2.3 *Gotta*

The reduced form *gotta* is presented in the conversations of all seasons and episodes (Table 3). However, the frequency of this particular reduced form is not as high as *gonna* and *wanna*. The non-reduced form *got to* has informal features and that is why, for the results to be more valid, the two full forms of *gotta – got to* and *have/has got to* are counted separately. Moreover, *have to/ has to* and *must* are linguistic forms which also express obligation and are very close in meaning to the *gotta/ got to/ have got to* (Krug 2005, Tagliamonte 2004) and should also be considered as a possible alternative for the reduced form *gotta*. That is why, all these forms were taken into account in the statistical observation.

Table 3: Distribution of *gotta/got to, have got to, have to* and *must* in the TV Series *Friends*: A Gender Perspective

	Season 1,2			Season 5,6			Season 9,10			Total		
	females	males	total	females	males	total	Females	males	total	females	males	total
gotta	6	18	24	11	15	26	12	16	28	29	49	78
got to	1	-	1	2	1	3	1	1	2	4	2	6
have got to	2	1	3	1	3	4	3	-	3	6	4	10
have to, must	32	27	59	29	26	55	19	43	62	80	96	176

Gender-related differences in the usage of *gotta* are found in all seasons of the series. Female characters use less *gotta* in their conversations than male characters do (Figure 3). In total, women uttered 29 of 78 times the reduced form *gotta*, which corresponds to 37% of the total number.

6) a. Rachel: *Ok, great, because I gotta get out of here, the smell of beets is killing me!* (Season 9 episode 22)
b. Phoebe: *Ok,ok, you start preparing the formula and I start changing the box, and then we gotta put them straight to bed*. (Season 9 episode 12)
c. Chandler*: No,no, Ross and Rachel will be back soon and then I gotta go to the office.* (Season 9 episode 2)
d. Ross: *Well, we gotta do something, ok? Nannies like her don't grow on trees.* (Season 9 episode 12)
e. Joey: *Okay, now. I gotta tell you, being on TV isn't as glamorous and exciting as you think.* (Season 9 episode 11)
f. Joey: *Yeah look Rach, there's something I gotta tell ya.* (Season 9 episode 1)

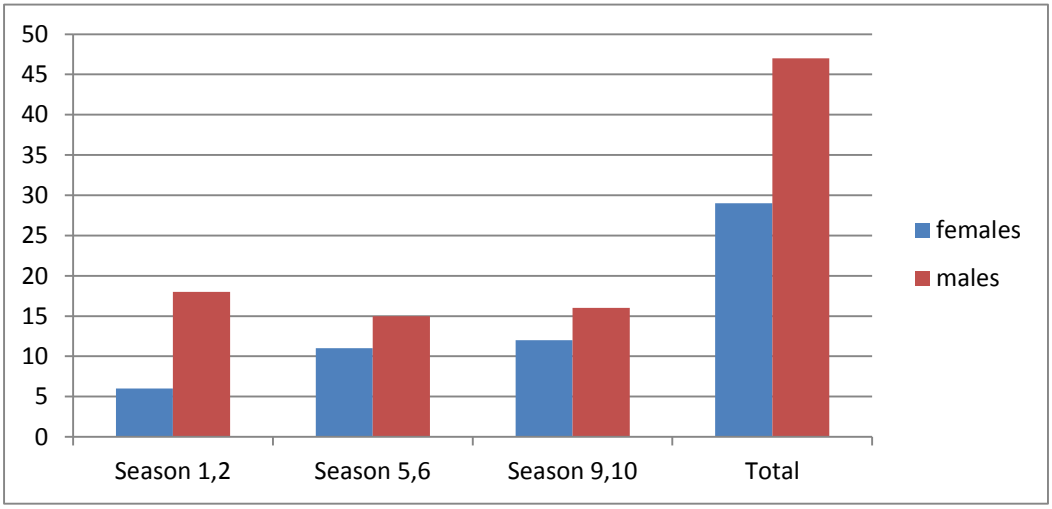

Figure 3 - Distribution of *gotta* in the *Friends*' Corpus.

The character Joey (actor Matt Leblanc) uses *gotta* 24 times during all six seasons, which is considerably more than any other character does. It corresponds to 51% of the total number of uses by males and 31% of all uses of *gotta* in the present *Friends*' corpus.

The non-reduced form *have/has got to* is also used by all characters, though more seldom: only 10 cases (10%) of *have/has got to* by 78 (84 %) cases of *gotta* and 6 cases of *got to* (6%). Gender related differences in the distribution of *have/has got to* are also noticed: women use more often (6 cases) this particular form than men do (4 cases).

Other non-reduced forms expressing obligation are common in the conversation of six main characters (176 instances of *have/has to* and *must*). The frequency in the use of *have/has to* and *must* is slightly higher for females in the seasons 1, 2, 5, 6 and essentially lower in the two last seasons.

6.4 Summary of Results

During the investigation of the *Friends'* corpus, substantial linguistic gender-related differences in the use of reduced forms *gonna, wanna, gotta* were found in the use of *gotta.* Women less frequently use the reduced form *gotta*, and turn to the form *have got to* more often than men. The frequency in the use of other forms of obligation does not demonstrate any common gender-related pattern.

The differences in the use of *wanna* are, in contrast, not so striking as in case of *gotta*, and reveal another tendency: a slightly higher frequency of *wanna* and lower frequency of *want to* are reported for women. Both men and women often use the reduced form *gonna* and there are considerably fewer instances of *going to.*

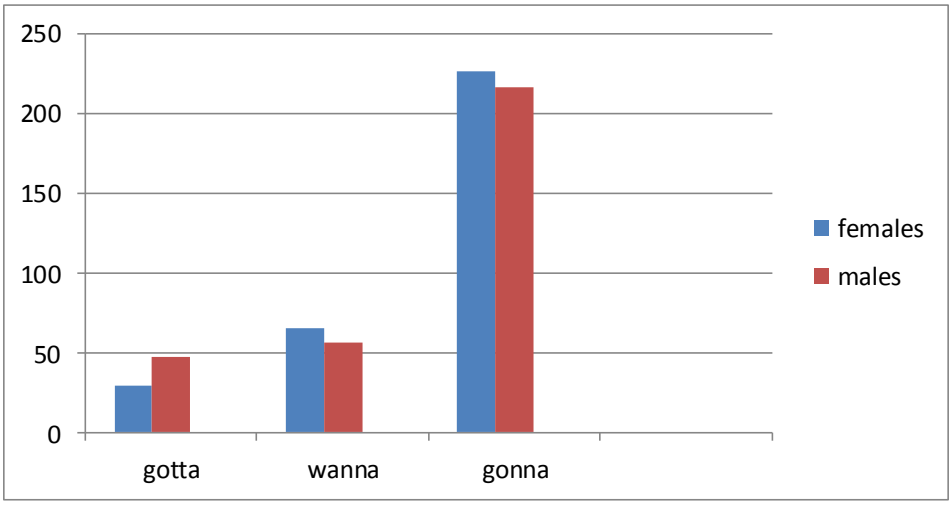

Figure 4 - Overview on the Frequency of Reduced Forms in the *Friends'* Corpus.

Furthermore, there are two characters whose use of reduced forms dominates in the *Friends* corpus: the frequency of *gonna* for Rachel is 94 of all 442 instances (21%); and the frequency of *gotta* for Joey is 24 of all 78 instances (30%).

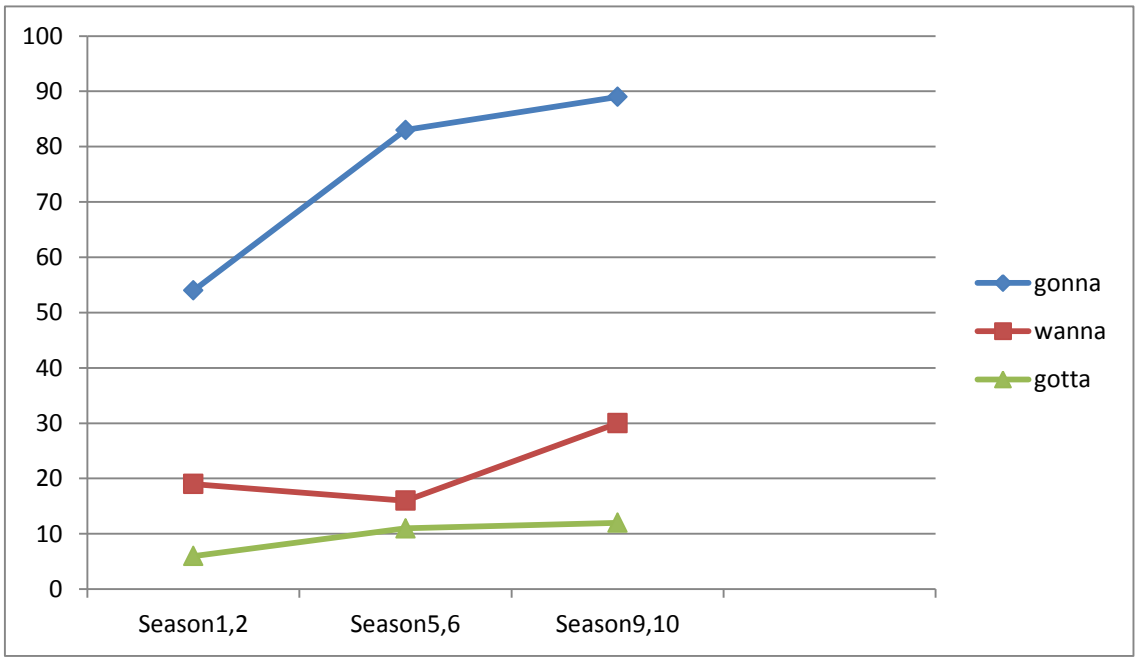

Figure 5 - Female Speakers: The Distribution of Reduced Forms in Different Seasons.

A final observation demonstrates that the frequency of reduced forms, on average, increases over time. This tendency characterizes the conversation of both genders, except for the case of the use of *gotta* by male characters which remains relatively stable during all seasons (Figure 5 and 6).

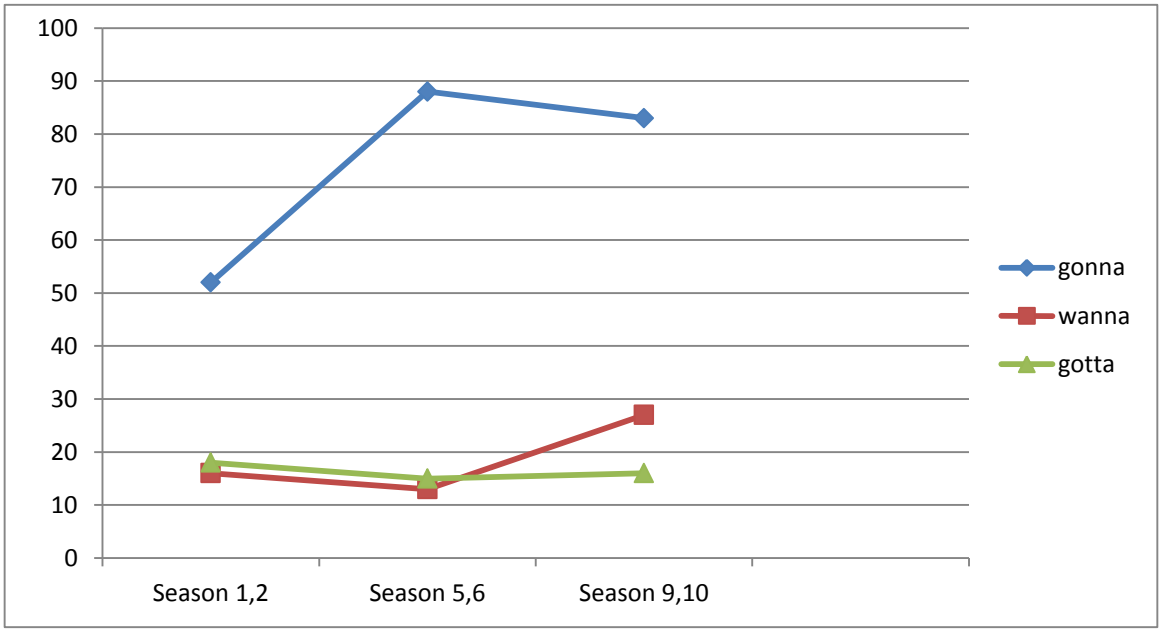

Figure 6 - Male Speakers: The Distribution of Reduced Forms in Different Seasons.

In order to simplify the comparison of the data from this study with the data from the gender-related linguistic studies of natural conversation, the findings are presented in incidences per 1,000 words (Table 4).

Table 4: Occurrences of Reduced Forms in the *Friends'* Corpus (frequencies per thousand words)

Sex/reduced form	*gonna*	*wanna*	*gotta*
females	2.85	0.81	0.36
males	2.70	0.70	0.56
total	5.57	1.52	0.95

7. Discussion

This paper has analyzed the use of reduced forms in the *Friends* corpus linguistic in order to identify any gender-related differences that may occur. A number of previous gender-related linguistic research projects have demonstrated that women speak in a more standard way than men and use more formal language in their everyday conversation (e.g. Lakoff 1975; Labov 1966; Trudgill; Cheshire 1982; Holmes1995). The hypothesis tested in the present study is that women use informal forms less than men in conversation in the TV series *Friends*.

7.1 Gender-Related Differences

During the investigation of the use of the reduced forms *gonna, wanna, gotta* in the conversation of three male and three female characters, it has been found that the data confirms the original hypothesis only in the case of *gotta/ got to*. The lower frequency of this particular reduced form in the females conversation in *Friends* (29 females- versus 47 males instances), was supported by the slightly higher frequency of its non-contracted forms *got to /have got to* (4/6 females versus 2/4 males instances). These results support the linguists' claim that women use formal language to a greater extent than men. However, both *gotta* and *got to/have got to* are more frequent in informal conversational contexts (Krug 2005:174). It is possible to assert that *have got to* is a more formal form of obligation than *gotta* and *got to*, but it is a matter of degree only. In order to find a more valid demonstration for the claim, the other forms of obligation were taken into the statistical observation. On average, the use of the reduced form *gotta* and the non-reduced forms of obligation confirm (with few exceptions) the hypothesis that women speak more formal language.

It is noteworthy that the frequency of *gotta* in the *Friends'* corpus is lowest of all tested reduced forms, which correlates with the results Krug (2000) received for various American and British English corpora and Tagliamonte (2004) for northern British English. As Krug (2000: 296) and Tagliamonte (2004:41) state, *gotta* is a late product of grammaticalization. Thus it is reasonable to assume that *gotta* has a long way to go to become a 'formal' or 'standard' linguistic form. This argument can support the idea about the division of reduced forms into more and less informal forms, where *gotta* is the most informal of three tested ones, which is why the use of only this reduced form supports the hypothesis tested in the study.

The two other reduced forms *gonna* and *wanna* demonstrate another result regarding gender-related differences in conversation in the series: female characters use a slightly higher number (51% and 54%) of *gonna* and *wanna* than men. This result is also supported by frequency of the non-reduced formal equivalents of *gonna* and *wanna* frequency: males use them more often than

women do. Such a discrepancy with much linguistic research considering gender-related differences demonstrates that the hypothesis 'women use more formal language in their conversation' does not work in this case. There are some probable explanations for this contradiction.

Firstly, it is known that some linguistic findings (e.g. Milroy 1980) show the higher frequency of particular non-standard features in females' speech. This fact could be explained by Social Network Theory, according to which people living in communities with tight networks tend to speak more non-standard English than people in communities with loose social networks. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that the higher frequency of the reduced forms *gonna* and *wanna* in the females' conversation in *Friends* have the same explanation. Probably, the male characters have a less dense social network because of their more successful careers: Ross has a permanent employment during the whole period of the series; Chandler's work issue is widely discussed in the series, and he seems to be sufficiently successful in it; Joey as an actor has a very wide range of social contacts. The female characters in the series are not as successful in their professional careers as the male ones. Thus, the wider social network of the three main male characters in the TV series *Friends* may be one possible explanation for the lower frequency of the reduced forms *gonna* and *wanna* in their conversation.

Secondly, the differences between natural conversation and a TV dialogue could influence the gender-related linguistic study results. Quaglio, who has explored linguistic features both in the TV series *Friends* and in natural conversation, asserts though *Friends* shares its core linguistic features with natural conversation, "*Friends* presents higher frequencies of linguistic features marking informality"(Quaglio 2009:139). So, the attempt of screenwriters to make the dialogue in *Friends* more informal can result in a higher frequency of reduced forms in total, and can overshadow possible gender-related linguistic features.

The third, and may be the most plausible, explanation rests on the linguistic features of *wanna* and, especially, *gonna*, which are possibly not as informal as, for example, *gotta* in contemporary English. Studying the process of grammaticalization among 'emerging modals' Manfred Krug (2000:252) suggests, "*Wanna, gonna* and *gotta* have assumed various features that are typical of modal verbs in general…" Further, he asserts that the grammaticalization of these 'innovative forms' is an ongoing process. Gender-related linguistic differences concerning *gonna* and *wanna* detected in the *Friends*' corpus correlate with the gender-related linguistic features found by Krug (2000:192): women use a higher proportion of reduced forms than men.

The data from *Friends* demonstrates that the reduced form *gonna* occurs most frequently and actually almost replaces its non-reduced equivalent *going to*. This correlates with Berglund's

study (2000:38, Table 2): *gonna* is more frequent in the informal spoken component of the BNC than *going to*. It might be assumed that *gonna* and *wanna* have become more formal in casual spoken language and are closer to Standard English. The fact that within the *Friends'* corpus, *gonna* is very seldom (3 cases of 442) used without a copula, and, consequently, cannot be considered as a non-standard form supports the idea that *gonna* has more formal character. The same results are demonstrated by Berglund (2005:159-160) in her research into the spoken component of British National Corpus: *gonna* rarely occurs without copula. Thus, *gonna* and *wanna* may not be sufficiently reliable markers of informality under these circumstances.

Fourthly, a conceivable reason for the discrepancy in the distribution of *gonna*, *wanna* and *gotta* between the genders might be some social features of particular characters. Rachel (actress Jennifer Aniston) uttered *gonna* most frequently compared with other characters in the sampled episodes. The character of Rachel has no obvious social reasons to speak more informal English than her friends. Considering this, it is possible to speculate that the personal features of Jennifer Aniston could influence her way of speaking. Meanwhile, the character of Joey (actor Matt LeBlanc) uttered the reduced forms *gotta* more than any other character which corresponds to the hypothesis about the males' less formal way of speaking. Moreover, he is the least educated character in the series and it is reasonable enough that his speech should contain most reduced forms.

7.2. Reduced Forms in the *Friends*' Corpus and in Natural Conversation

Linguists who have studied the change of the use of reduced forms in natural conversation over time have observed that the frequency of *gonna, wanna, gotta* has increased steadily from the early 90-s (e.g. Krug 2005:161, Berglund 2005:138, Tagliamonte 2004:52) The data in the *Friends'* corpus (Figure 5,6) reveals the same tendency for *gonna* and *wanna*. The frequency of *gotta* seems to remain relatively low and stable in all six sampled seasons.

Studying the informal spoken component of the British National corpus, Berglund (2000: 38) found 1,908 instances of *gonna* per 1,000,000 (which corresponds to 1.9 instances per 1000 words). The present study yields a much higher frequency: 5.57 instances of gonna per thousand words in the *Friends*' corpus. Tagliamonte (2004:41) noticed that *got to/gotta* account for only 3% of all forms of obligations used in southern varieties of British English. For the *Friends'* corpus this number is 42%. Though Tagliamonte (2004) provides no information about conversational context, it is obvious enough that the difference between the data is striking. Concerning *wanna* in the spoken English, Krug (2005:162) reports that in the BNC spoken component the 'contracted

form' occurs five times less frequently than its 'non-contracted' equivalent and for speakers aged 25-34 the frequency is 494 instances per million words (correspondingly 0.5 instances per 1,000 words). In the TV series *Friends* the frequency of *wanna* is higher than the frequency of *want to* and accounts for 1.52 instances per thousand words.

Such a high frequency of informal markers in general, and the reduced forms ('semi-modals') in particular regarding the TV series *Friends* was already reported by Tagliamonte and Roberts (2005:296) and Quaglio (2009:118): "Semi-modals are very common in both *Friends* and conversation but are significantly more frequent in *Friends*, occurring 8445 times/million words; in conversation, they occur 7527 times/million words."

The overuse of linguistic features associated with informal language, Quaglio (2009:120) explains by "at least three factors: the attempt to make the language of *Friends* credible and authentic, the extremely close relationship shared by characters and the creation of humor". In addition, the characters' age and the fact that they speak American English, that seems to be leading in this area of grammar, could partly influence the discrepancy in data.

8. Concluding Remarks

The results of the present case study support the hypothesis that women use reduced forms to a lower degree only in case of the reduced form *gotta*. However, the distribution of the two other reduced forms *wanna* and *gonna* between genders could be the confirmation of the assertion about females more innovative language and that reduced forms are a part of innovation rather than stable non-standard variety.

This study has also shown that the reduced forms *gonna, wanna, gotta* are used to a varying extent in different seasons of the TV series *Friends.* Changes in the distribution of reduced forms over time found both in the present study and in previous research allow us to maintain that the reduced forms *gonna, wanna* and *gotta* are an integral part of contemporary spoken English and that this area of grammar is undergoing change.

When comparing results of the present gender-related study with other linguistic studies concerning reduced forms, a significant discrepancy between the proportions of reduced forms in *Friends* and in natural conversation was revealed: a significantly greater frequency of reduced forms was reported for the TV series *Friends*' conversation than for the natural spoken component. This correlates with the previous research on the language in *Friends* and may be a sign that this is a type of TV show with an explicit informal nature.

Though the hypothesis tested in this study was partly confirmed, various and sometimes contradictory results received for gender may demonstrate that women and men have no gender-specific forms of speech and the pattern of conversation depends on a complex of divergent sociolinguistic (and not only sociolinguistic) factors. Some of those factors such as age, density of network, personal features of the characters and type of interaction are partly considered, though many other sociolinguistic factors such as, for example, the gender of the writers, the personal qualities of actors and actresses are beyond the scope of this study.

It would be interesting to see if the results of a gender-related study would change if to take into account those sociolinguistic factors that are outside the scope of the present study. Another study interesting to compare with this might be a gender-related research into reduced forms in a TV series sharing the main features of *Friends*.

In conclusion, language in media reflects current change and can say a lot about the ongoing process of this change. In spite of some differences from natural conversation, it shares its core features and can be an interesting object of research as a variant of natural English and as a media language in its own right. Moreover, studying the differences between the dialogue in TV series and real conversation makes it possible to learn how linguistic innovations could be transferred through the media language.

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