



Rethinking Education in Small Island
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Methods for raising Awareness of Linguistic Gender Stereotyping using Virtual Simulation

Applications for the Seychelles Context ?

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Two projects on awareness-raising activities

RAVE – Raising Awareness through Virtual Experiencing

C-RAVE – A Cross-cultural perspective on Raising Awareness through Virtual Experiencing

Both projects primarily address issues relating to language and stereotyping.



What are (social) stereotypes?

- A **reductive** cognitive phenomenon in the categorization of groups of people.
- **Reductive** because certain characteristics, whether real or not, are given too much weight and are applied to a whole category of people.
- **Power** is an important factor in the formation of stereotypes.
Directed at subordinate groups
- **Good** stereotypes: sth to aim for
- **Bad** stereotypes: despicable examples.

Instances of social stereotypes

"Once I didn't talk to my wife for six months"



"I didn't want to interrupt"





Social stereotypes and language

- As a signal of identity and a tool for conceptualization – language is at the heart of social stereotyping.
- Collins and Clement suggest that “language can be conceptualised as a lens that directs and distorts cognition”. (2012:377)
- Folklinguistic beliefs about women’s language: talkative, verbose, gossipy.
- Early sociolinguistic research (Lakoff 1975): women’s language as weak and uncertain:
 - Use of tag questions (*isn’t it?*), questions, hedges (*kind of, like*), empty adjectives (*lovely, pretty, charming*), the intensifier *so*.
- Problematized in later research.



Two gendered conversational styles

Collaborative

Sympathy

Rapport

Listening

Private

Intimacy

Connection

Supportive

Competitive

Problem-solving

Report

Lecturing

Public

Independence

Status

Oppositional



Gendered language – a binary distinction?

Collaborative style
Feminine

Competitive style
Masculine

A social-constructivist view: Gender is performed





Stereotyping and language in learning situations

- Language is a tool for learning
- Gendered expectations in the classroom.
 - Boys are allowed to speak more
 - Boys take more of the teacher's attention
- **But:**
 - Girls perform better
 - There is a difference between quantity and quality of attention and output
- **AND:** How homogeneous are these groups, anyway?



The problem addressed in the RAVE project

- The Outcomes section of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance specifies that teachers at all levels shall:
“demonstrate the capacity to respect, communicate and instil a gender equal and equal rights perspective in educational processes”
- Most students know what is politically correct and have little awareness of their own preconceptions and prejudice
 - “I will have no stereotypical assumptions about my future students”
- The theoretical knowledge from courses remains just that – factual knowledge (if remembered ...)

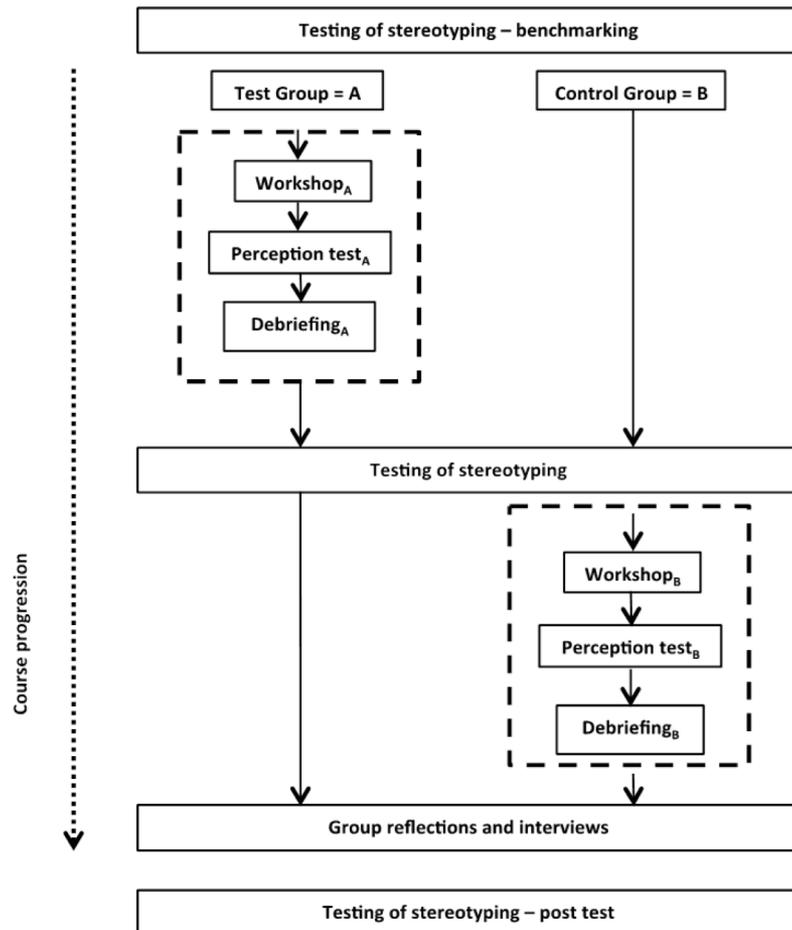


What we want to achieve

- Raising students' awareness of **their own** linguistic stereotyping, biases and prejudice, and
- In doing so, develop their factual knowledge into metacognitive knowledge (cf. the revised Bloom's taxonomy)

Tools and method

- **New digital media** facilitate *match-guise experiments*.



Pre- and post-testing for recording of stereotypes

Voice-morphing followed by test and debriefing

Group reflections – for mature and higher level thinking



Pilot manipulation: Telephone discussion between two “researchers”: Robin Simpson and Terry Walker

Robin and Terry on Gender



Robin Simpson



Terry Walker



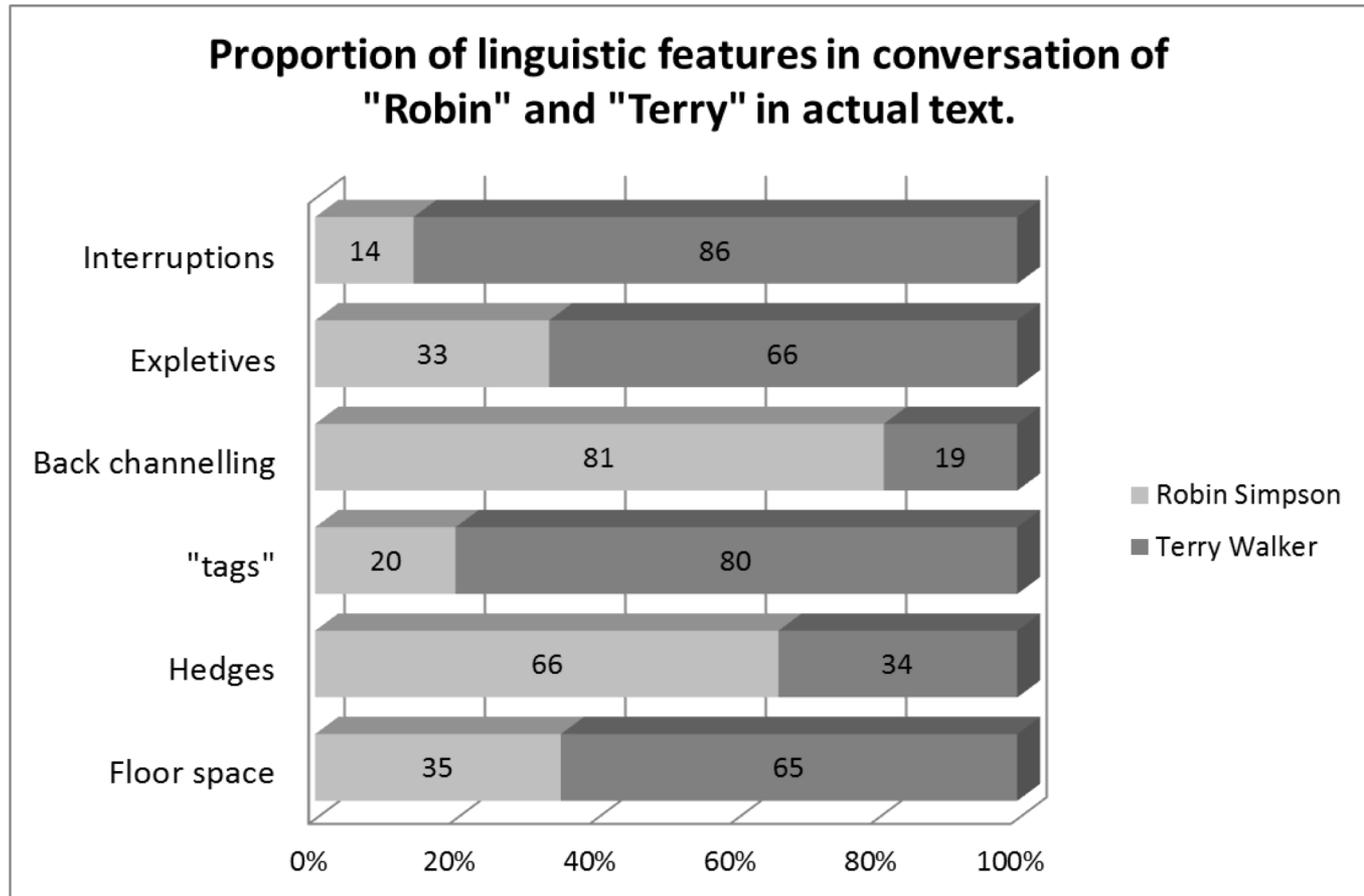
The manipulation set-up

Discussant	Robin	Terry
Perceived gender for group A	Male	Female
Perceived gender for group B	Female	Male



Real data

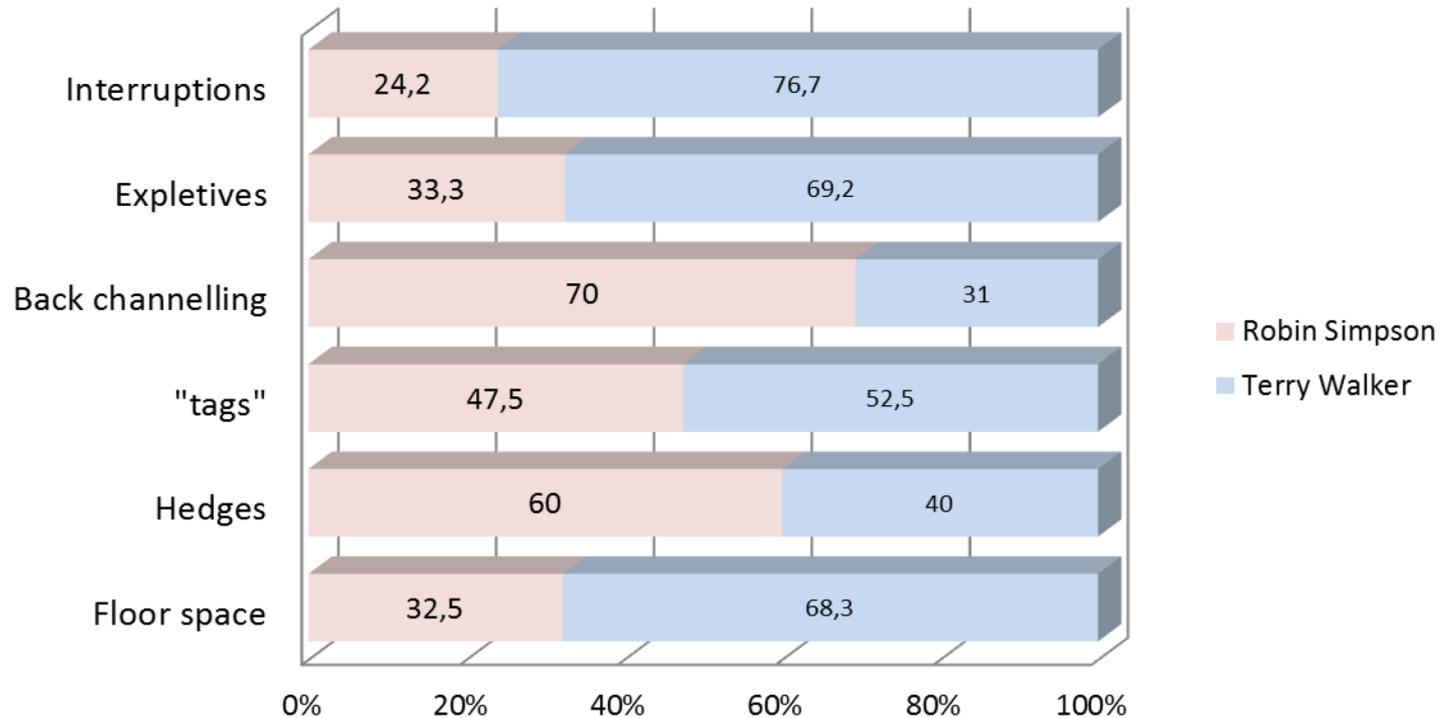
**Robin employed a more collaborative style
Terry a more competitive style**





Group A (Gender not correlating with expected conversational strategy)

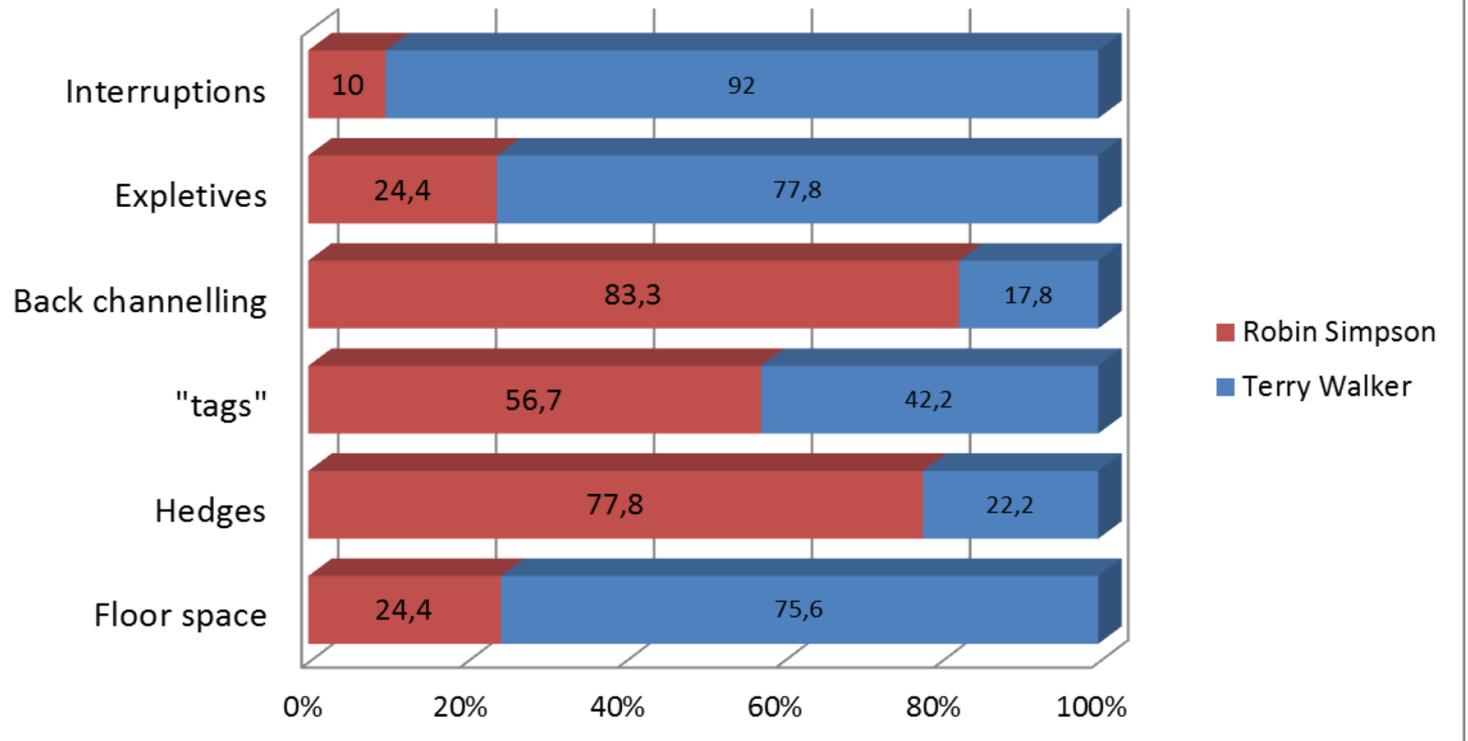
Group A's impressions of proportion of linguistic features in conversation of "Robin" and "Terry".





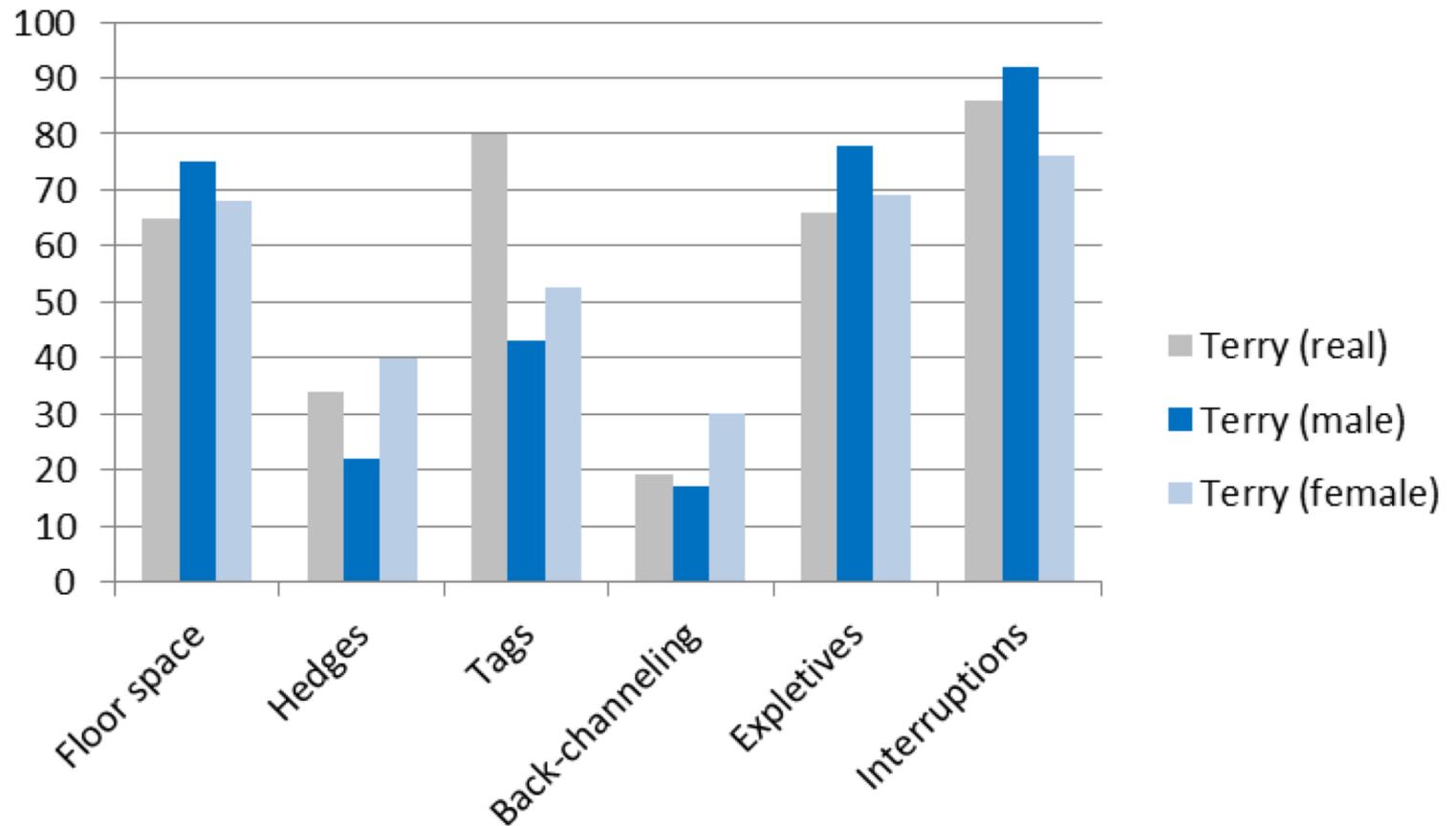
Group B (Gender correlating with expected conversational strategy)

Group B's impressions of proportion of linguistic features in conversation of "Robin" and "Terry".



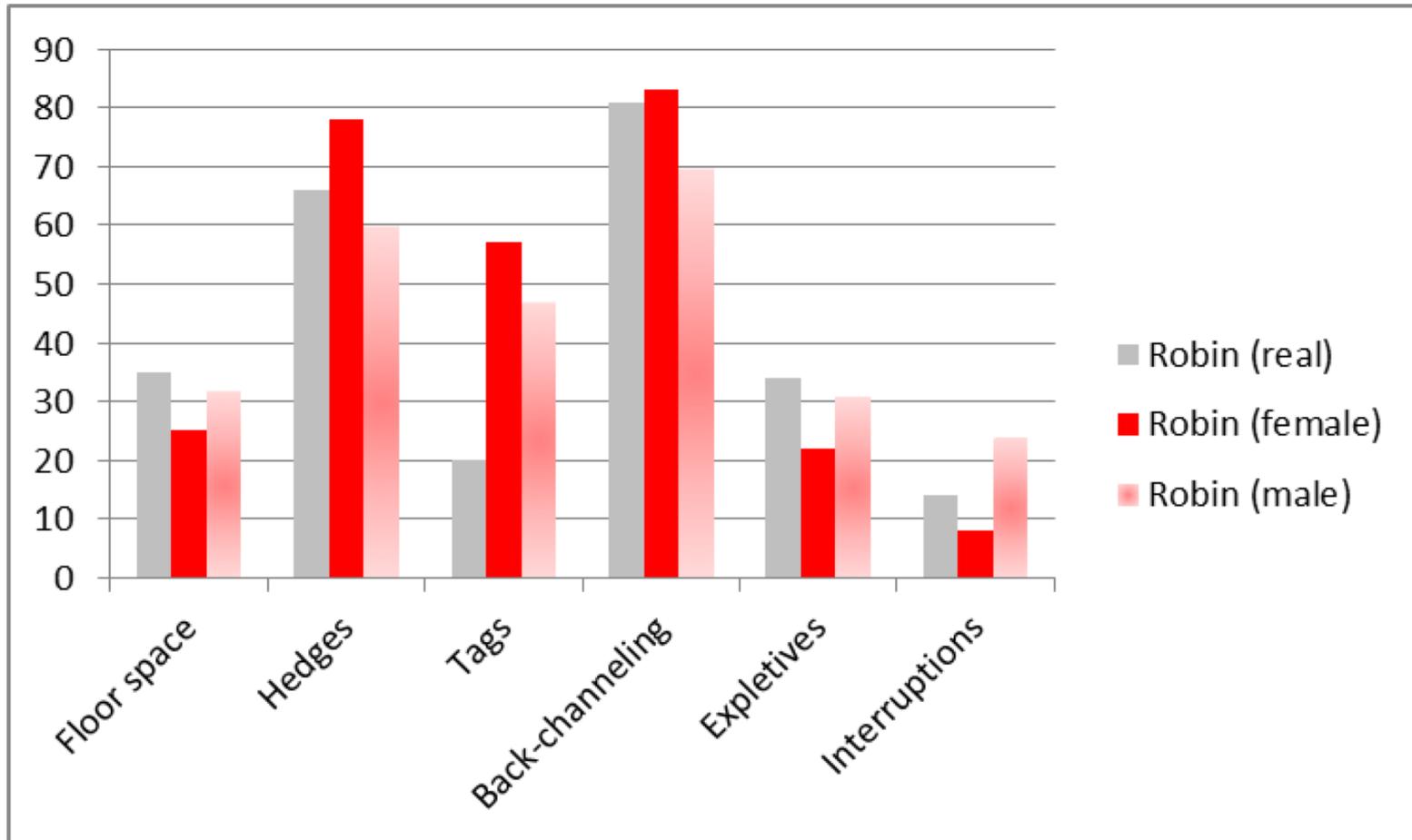


Comparing "Terry" data (competitive strategy)



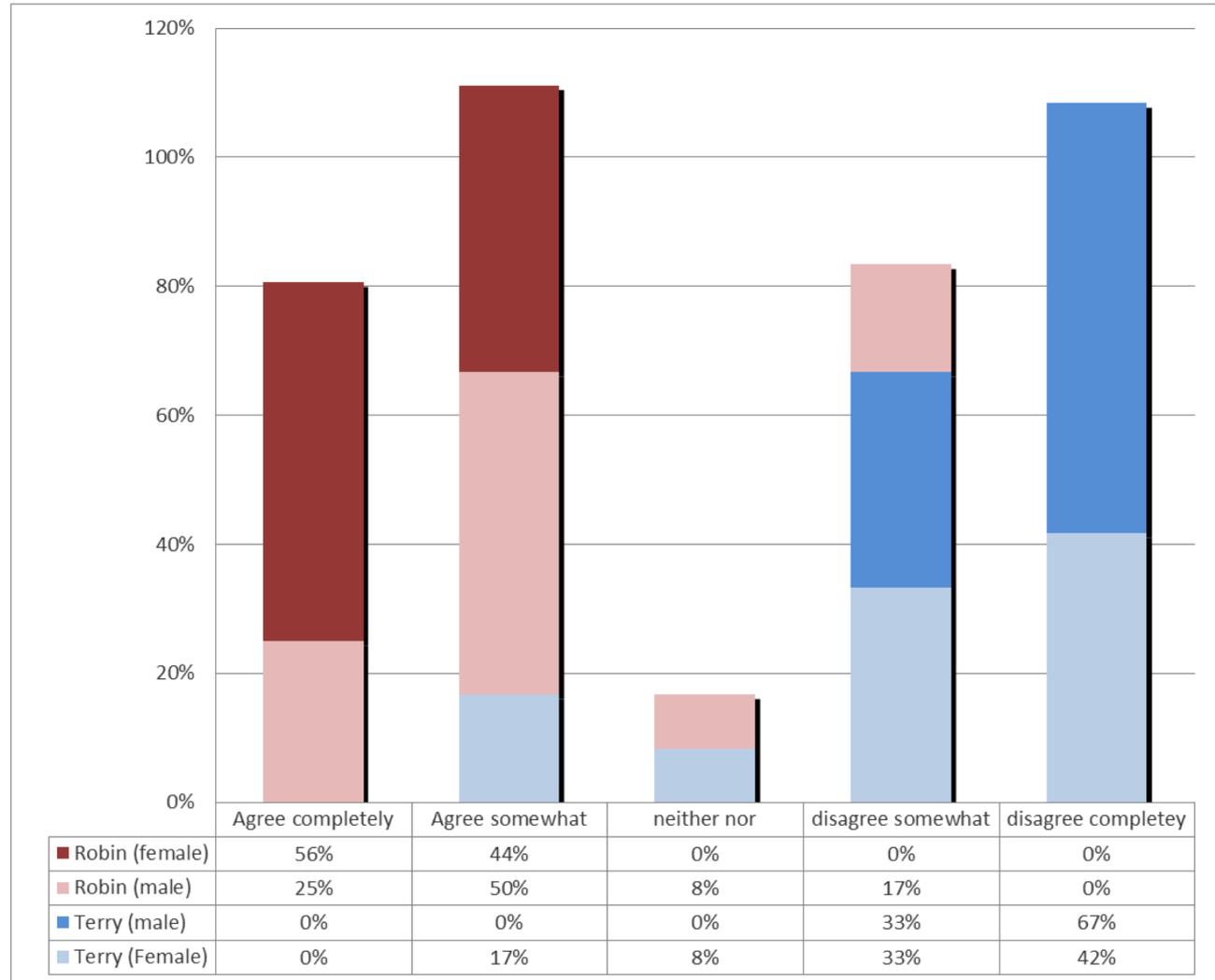


Comparing "Robin" data (collaborative strategy)



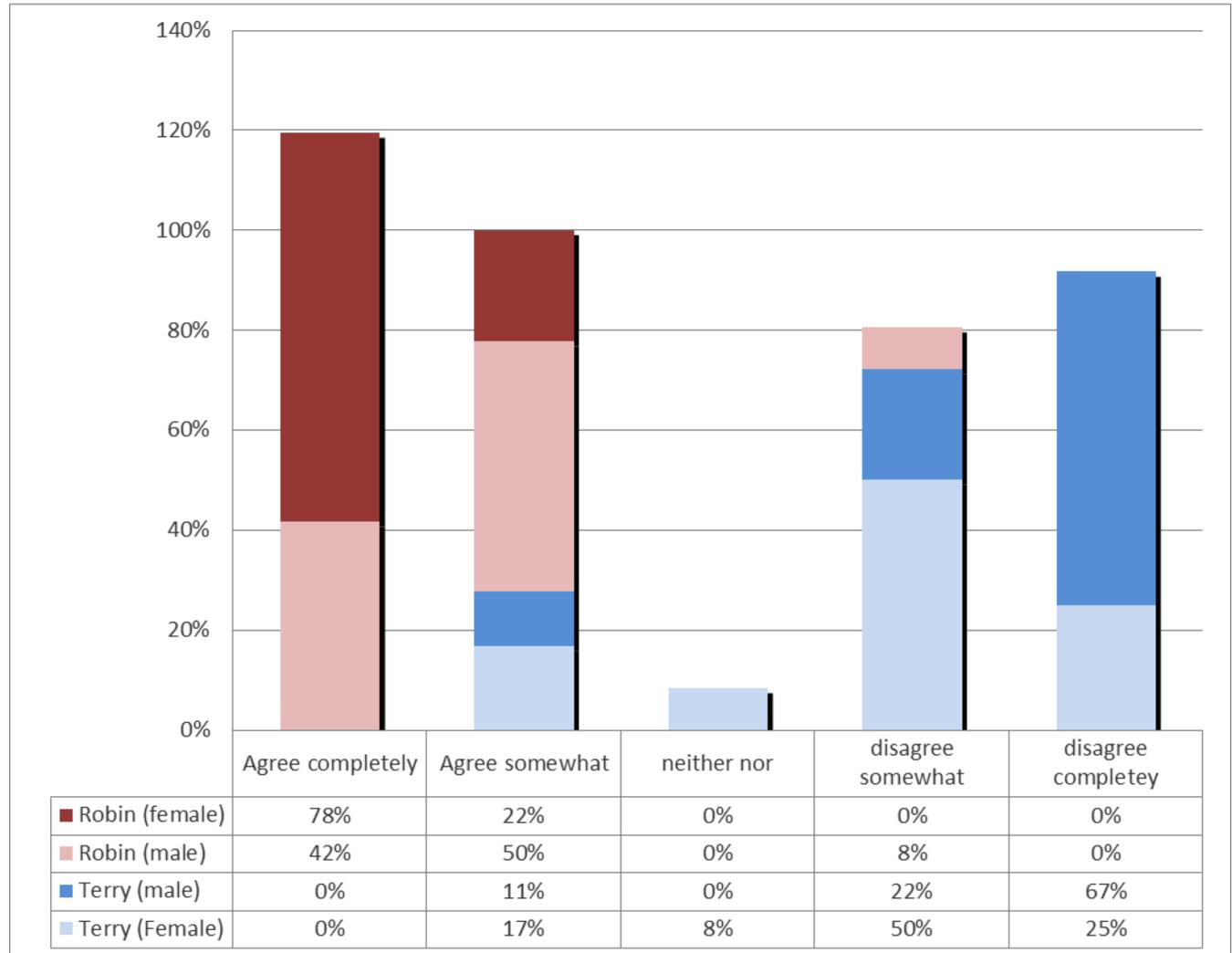


Students' reactions to evaluative statements (I): The speaker's conversational style is very collaborative



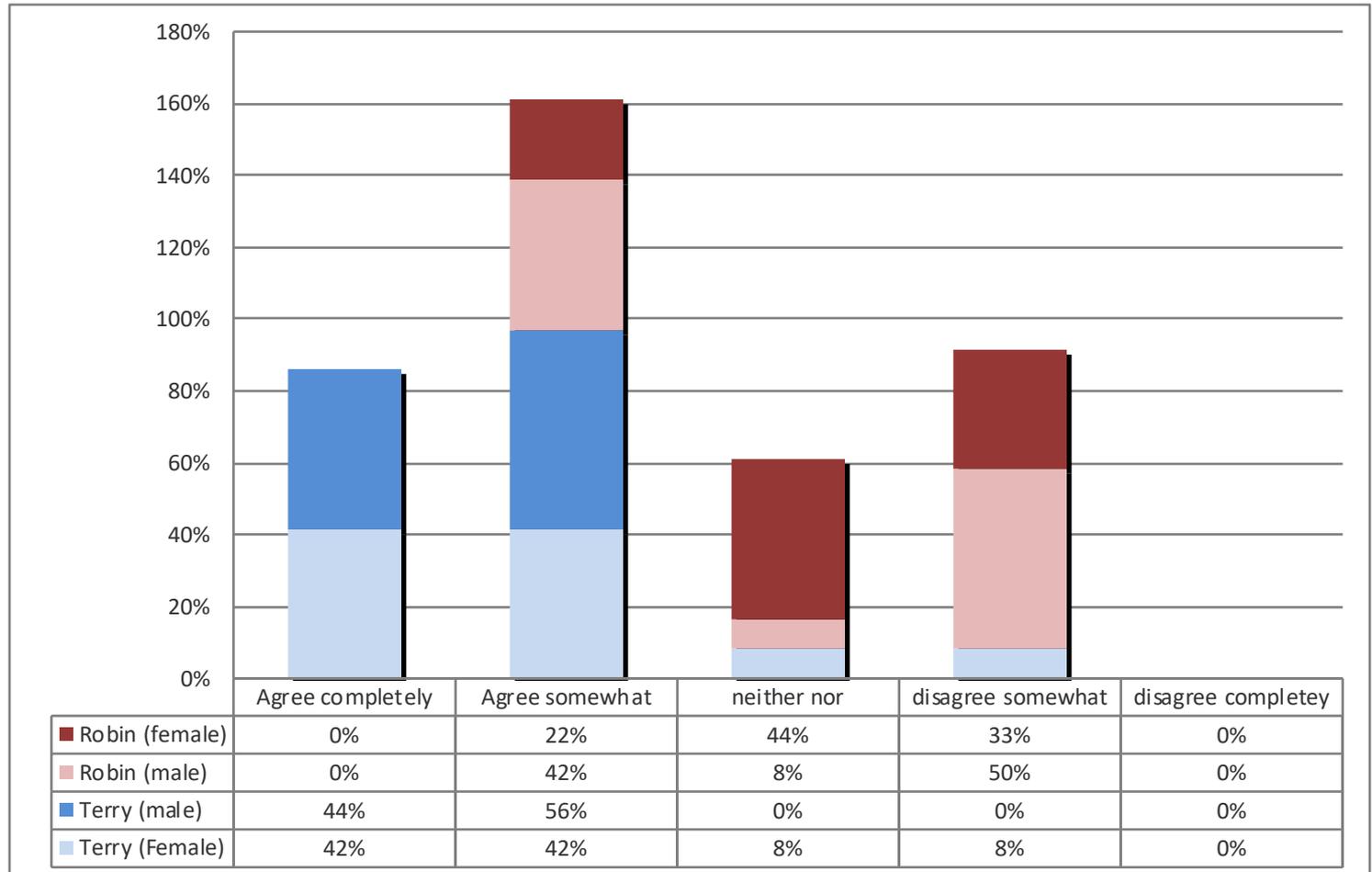


Students' reactions to evaluative statements (II): The person in question is a good listener



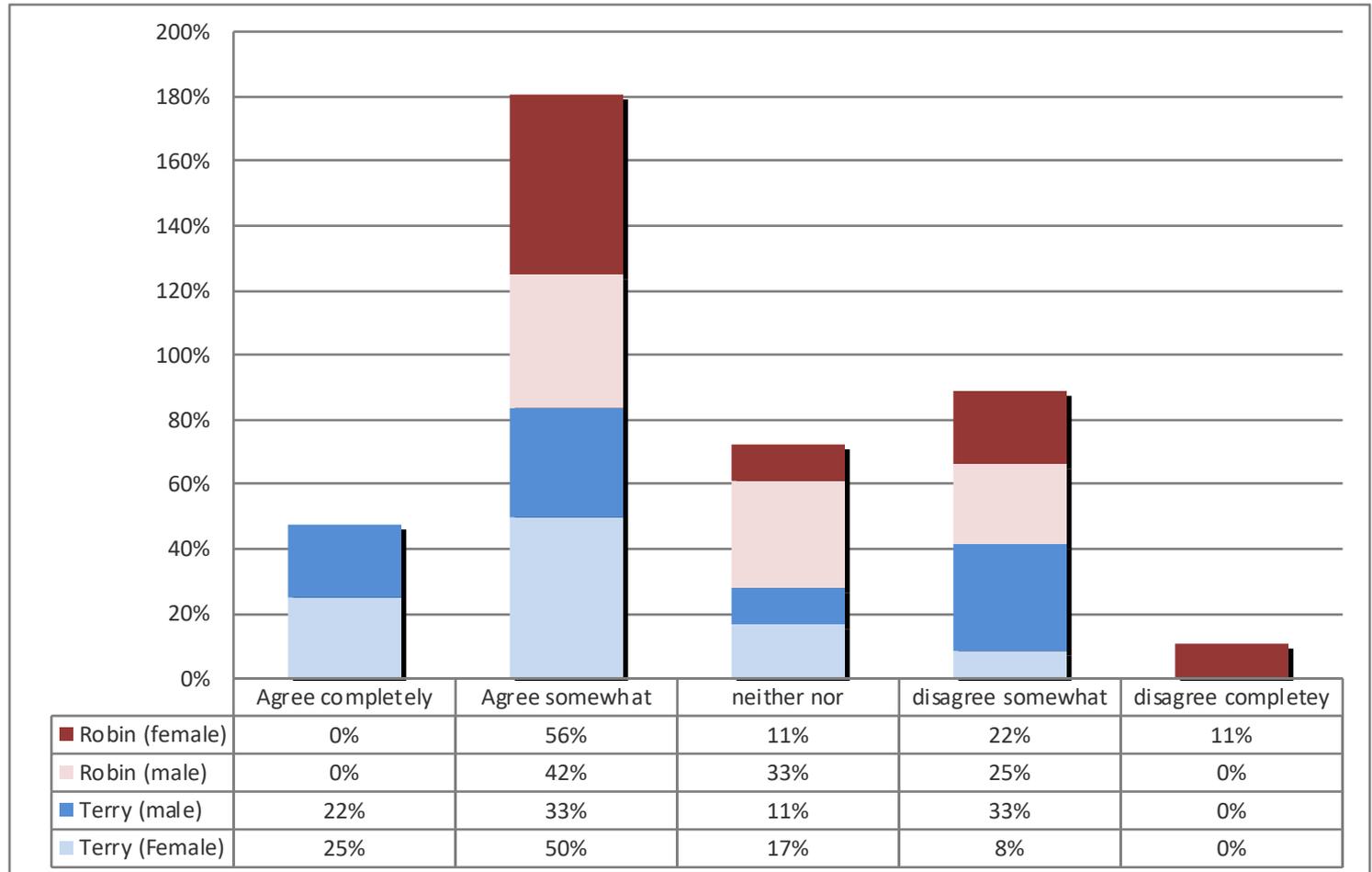


Students' reactions to evaluative statements (III): The person in question is good at arguing his/her case





Students' reactions to evaluative statements (IV): The person in question gives a very intelligent impression





Some students' comments after the debriefing session

- “This made me so much more aware about it and the whole issue. Not only the experiment but the whole course and even though I do generalize and I have clear stereotypes I am now more aware of them and can use that knowledge in the classroom and even in life in general!”
- “I feel like I learned more when I was actively participating in the tests during the course.”
- “Good and interesting! I have gotten a deeper understanding of how I look at stereotypes and how that will affect me in my future work!”



Conclusion from RAVE pilot

- Students' impressions of the conversations
- Students were more inclined to agree with statements that fit stereotypes (i.e. when Robin was female and Terry male).
- The debriefing session appears to have stimulated students into meta-cognitive reflection, raising self-awareness.



C-RAVE: Applications to the Seychelles context

A relevant expansion because

- Conspicuous lack of studies from non-Western countries
 - Need for identification of conversational strategies
 - Identification of beliefs about conversations
- A more complex gender picture: mix of traditional roles and progressive/matriarchal tendencies
- A lens for exploring similarities and differences compared to a North-European situation



The Seychelles context

What adjustments or rethinking is needed given cultural differences, difference in size etc?

We are very happy for input from the expert audience.



Thank you!