

***Gender and Topic: Two Variables in the  
Study of Supportive and Disruptive  
Interruption in Television Programs***

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## **1. Introduction**

**One main component of a conversation is turn-taking which is rule-governed so as to give speakers the chance to achieve conversational goals. But a speaker may be prevented from accomplishing his/her goals when interrupted by another speaker. Therefore, interruption is considered a violation of turn-taking rules and an attempt to exercise power to take over the floor or control the topic of conversation. However, interruption is not always a negative behavior as it can have positive functions in conversation.**

## **2. Aims of the Study**

**Interest in the study of gender and interruption was sparked by the groundbreaking work of Zimmerman and West (1975). Since this classic study, gender differences in interruption received much attention as linguists carried out research and reached different conclusions. For example, Smith-Lovin & Brody (1989) and West (1979) prove that men interrupt more than women. However, Murray & Covelli (1988) indicate that women interrupt more than men. Dindia (1987) shows that there are no gender differences in interruption. Moreover, whereas Zimmerman and**

West's 1975 study along with other studies including Drass (1986), Eakins and Eakins (1978) and West (1984) consider interruption a manifestation of dominance and link it to power and status, other studies have found that interruption can show support and enhance solidarity and thus two main types of interruption were identified: supportive and disruptive (Holmes, 1999: 336).

In light of the above, the present study aims at analyzing males' and females' speech to examine the role of gender and topic in the occurrence of interruption in television programs. It attempts to determine if the instances of interruption found in the data are supportive or disruptive. Moreover, the focus in this study is on males and females both as interrupters and interruptees. Therefore, it examines gender differences in terms of whether males or females interrupt and/ or are interrupted more. The study also seeks to investigate the relation between the gender of the interrupter and interruptee on the one hand and the type of interruption on the other hand. In addition, males and females have different areas of expertise and preferred issues so they consider themselves knowledgeable and experienced in these issues and feel

justified to interrupt (James & Clarke, 1993: 263). Thus, because the topic of conversation, whether social, political, economic, etc., is of paramount importance in determining gender differences in the use of interruption, the study seeks to examine whether it-the topic of conversation- affects gender differences in relation to supportive and disruptive interruption.

### 3. Methodology of the Study

It has been observed that interruption occurs a lot in television programs. Therefore, to carry out the present research, data was tape-recorded from various television programs. These are *Hard Talk* and *Dateline London* shown on BBC World, *Piers Morgan Tonight*, *Fareed Zakaria*, and *International Desk* shown on CNN, and *The Doctors* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show* shown on MBC4. The total number of hours of the recorded television programs is nineteen. The topics tackled in these programs cover various social, political, economic, and medical issues. Equal amount of time has been allotted to each type of topic. The gender of the participants in the recorded data has also been taken into consideration so that the number of male and female participants is the same and the duration is

equally divided between males and females. Moreover, tables indicating the frequency count of supportive and disruptive interruption with regard to the two variables under study are given.

In the recorded data, instances of interruption were identified if a second speaker stops the current speaker and starts to speak when the latter has not reached a completion point. Accordingly, overlaps and minimal responses have not been counted as interruptions.

#### **4. Theoretical Background**

Conversation is an interactional activity organized into turns. According to Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson (1974: 700), turn-taking is "*a basic form of organization for conversation.*" Accordingly, they developed a model of turn-taking based on the assumption that in an ideal conversation, only one person talks at a time and no interruption occurs. Indeed, according to Sacks et al. (1974:706) "*overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time...The system allocates single turns to single speakers: any speaker gets, with the turn, exclusive rights to talk to the first possible completion of an initial instance of a unit type.*" Thus, participants in conversation speak in turns which are constructed using

units known as *Turn Constructional Units* (TCUs). During any TCU, only the current speaker has the right to speak and transitions between speakers occur at the end of a unit-type such as sentences, clauses, phrases or words. So, TCUs have endings or boundaries which constitute a *Transition Relevance Place* (TRP). When the speaker's turn reaches a TRP such as the end of a sentence, a turn change becomes legitimate (Ten Have, 1999: 86). The rules governing turn-taking as proposed by Sacks et al. are as follows:

**1- For any turn, at the initial transition-relevance place of an initial turn-constructional unit:**

**A-The current speaker selects the next speaker and transfer occurs at that place.**

**B-The next speaker self-selects, the first starter acquires rights to a turn, and transfer occurs at that place.**

**C-If neither (a) the current speaker selects the next speaker nor (b) another party has self-selected, then the current speaker may, but need not, continue, thereby claiming rights to another turn-taking constructional unit.**

2- If, at the initial transition-relevance place of an initial constructional unit, neither (1a) nor (1b) has operated, and, following the provision of (1c), the current speaker has continued, then the rule-set a-c reapplies at the next transition-relevance place, and recursively at each next transition-relevance place, until transfer is effected (Sacks et al., 1974: 704).

However, sometimes these rules of turn-taking are violated, as indicated by West and Zimmerman (1983:105): "*Incursions have the potential to disrupt turns at talk, disorganize the ongoing construction of conversational topics, and violate the current speaker's right to be engaged in speaking.*" These incursions refer to instances of interruption that take place when one speaker self-selects and disrupts the turn of the current speaker before the latter constructs a TCU or reaches a TRP. Thus, interruption is considered "*violations of speakers' turns at talk*" (West & Zimmerman, 1983: 103).

Proximity to a possible TRP differentiates two main types of simultaneous speech proposed by Zimmerman and West (1975): an interruption and an overlap which means "*two voices talking at once*" (Tannen, 1990: 192).

An interruption is when a second speaker begins to speak at a point in the current speaker's turn which is not a TRP and in the absence of any evidence that the current speaker intends to relinquish the turn, thereby usurping the current speaker's right to continue speaking. An overlap, on the other hand, is when a second speaker begins speaking at a TRP. In this case, a second speaker starts to speak upon wrong headedly anticipating that the current speaker reached a TRP and finished his/her turn (Tannen, 1994: 57). In other words, in an overlap, the timing is off and so it results from "*a speaker transition error*" (Okamoto, Rashotte, & Smith-Lovin, 2002: 40).

An overlap occurs when a speaker uses minimal responses as backchannels like "*yeah*" and "*mm-hmm*" which occur simultaneously with the current speaker's talk, and when two speakers show agreement by saying the same thing at the same time (Okamoto, Rashotte, & Smith-Lovin, 2002: 40). For an interruption to occur, two speakers must act: One must begin speaking and another must stop (Tannen, 1994: 59). Thus, whereas an overlap is facilitative, does not disrupt a speaker's turn, and leaves his/her utterance intact, an interruption is seen as "*a device for exercising power and control in*



*conversation*" (West & Zimmerman, 1983: 103) as it prevents a speaker from finishing the turn by violating his/her right to the floor.

In terms of classification, interruptions are divided into successful and unsuccessful. Successful interruptions take place when the second speaker cuts off the first speaker and prevents him/her from completing an utterance. In this case, the first speaker stops talking and the second speaker takes the floor by continuing to talk until he/she finishes an utterance. In unsuccessful interruptions, the second speaker starts talking while the first speaker is still speaking but the former fails to take the floor because either the two speakers continue talking until both finish their utterances or the second speaker stops talking before finishing the intruding utterance, thereby allowing the first speaker to continue talking and holding the floor (Li, 2001: 268).

Successful interruptions are further subdivided into disruptive and supportive. The former is associated with the traditional view that interruption is an "*exhibition of dominance and control in face-to-face interaction*" (Okamoto, Rashotte, & Smith-Lovin, 2002:

40) because it is a violation of the speaker's right to the turn. Disruptive interruptions are an attempt to control the conversation as disruptive speakers *"interject negative comments or put-downs, or completely ignore the speaker by introducing an unrelated topic"* (Smith-Lovin & Brody, 1989: 426). However, it was found that interruptions are not always dominance-related as they can be *"supportive rather than obstructive, evidence not of domination but of participation, not power, but the paradoxically related dimension, solidarity"* (Tannen, 1994: 62). Thus, supportive interruptions promote solidarity, show agreement, indicate interest in conversation, help the current speaker finish his/her thought and *"either facilitate the carrying on of the present topic, or indicate rapid return of the floor to the interrupted party"* (Zhao & Gantz, 2003: 350).

Whether an interruption is supportive or disruptive, there are some discourse devices that function as interrupters. These are alerts and metacomments. Alerts include words like *"hey"*, *"listen"*, and *"look"* and they serve to attract the current speaker's attention and force him/her to stop speaking although he/she has not finished and has more to say. Metacomments, on the other hand, are so-called as they are employed by the

second speaker to comment on the talk of the current speaker. They are common in formal contexts such as business meetings and serious discussions, and include phrases like "*Can I just tell...*", "*Can I say something about this?*", "*Could I halt you there?*", "*May I halt you?*" and "*Let me just...*" Such phrases are polite devices that have a face-saving effect as they allow the second speaker to voice his/her objection without offending the first speaker (Stenstrom, 1994: 74-75). In other words, metacomments preserve the current speaker's negative face, the desire not to be imposed upon.

One focal area of interest in the study of interruption behavior has been the role of gender differences in the initiation and use of interruption. Interest in the study of gender and interruption was sparked by the groundbreaking work of Zimmerman and West (1975). This classic study, which examines patterns of interruptions in conversations between same-gender and mixed-gender interactants, proves that in same-gender conversations, interruptions were evenly distributed between speakers while in mixed-gender conversations, male speakers nearly initiated all the interruptions. The study concludes that "*men deny*

*equal status to women as conversational partners with respects to rights to the full utilizations of their turns' and that "male dominance is exhibited through male control of the micro institutions of conversation" (Zimmerman and West, 1975: 125).*

Similar to Zimmerman and West's findings, Holmes (1992: 325) holds that *"In same-sex interactions, interruptions were evenly distributed between speakers. In cross-sex interactions almost all the interruptions were from males."* Moreover, Smith-Lovin and Brody (1989: 432) show that *"men discriminate in their interruption attempts, disrupting the speech of women far more frequently than that of men, while women do not discriminate, interrupting women and men equally often."* Moreover, according to Coates, in mixed-gender contexts, *"men infringe women's right to speak, specifically women's right to finish a turn"* (Coates, 1993: 110).

Contrary to these findings, other studies, including Dindia (1987); Hannan and Murachver (1999); James and Clarke (1993); Marche and Peterson (1993), show that men and women interrupted other men and women, i.e. no significant gender differences in

interruptions are found. Other studies, like Kennedy & Camden (1983) and Murray & Covelli (1988), show that women tend to interrupt more than men and that *"contrary to the assertion of Zimmerman and West...women are quite capable of interruption"* (Murray & Covelli, 1988:103).

Not only have gender differences in interruption been researched to determine if males or females were more interruptive but also to examine who interrupts supportively and who tends to be disruptive. For example, James and Clarke (1993: 268) show that *"a small amount of evidence exists that females may use interruptions of a cooperative rapport-building type to a greater extent than do males."* Holmes (1999:337) holds that in both same-gender and mixed-gender contexts, females seek agreement more than men do and tend to *"build on each other's contributions, complete each other's utterances, and affirm each other's opinions giving an overall impression of talk as a very cooperative enterprise."* Likewise, Tannen (1990: 210) considers supportive or cooperative interruption as characteristic of women's style of speech because women tend to use words that show agreement, support as well as anticipation of how their thoughts would come to an

end. Moreover, females' supportive interruptions elaborate on, rather than, change the topic (Tannen, 1990: 198).

As for males, Holmes shows that they are generally competitive and argumentative (1999: 343). Contrary to this view, Smith-Lovin and Brody (1989) found that in all-male groups, males direct supportive interruptions towards each other. These interruptions help clarify and encourage the ideas presented by the interrupted speaker (Smith-Lovin & Brody, 1989: 433). Like females, male-male supportive interruptions are "topic-continuing" (Smith-Lovin & Brody, 1989: 433). However, "*the odds of a male-male interruption being supportive decline steeply as the proportion of women in the group increases*" (Smith-Lovin & Brody, 1989: 431). In other words, in mixed-gender contexts, males interrupt disruptively and in this case, they tend to "*usurp[ing] or switch[ing] the topic*" (Tannen, 1990: 212). In short, in same-gender and mixed-gender contexts, females are supportive interrupters whereas males interrupt supportively in same-gender contexts and disruptively in mixed-gender contexts. Furthermore, while supportive interruptions do not change the topic, disruptive interruptions change it.

Since supportive interruption does not cause a change in the topic of conversation while disruptive interruption does, then it seems that the topic discussed is an important factor that helps understand why male or female speakers may interrupt their interlocutors. Dindia holds that supportive interruptions occur in casual conversations (as cited in Zhao & Gantz , 2003: 352). Other studies show that disruptive interruptions are found in work-related conversations (e.g. Kollock, Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1985; Roger & Nesshoever, 1987). Studies also examined the role of gender and expertise. For example, Leet-Pellegrini (1980) shows that well-informed male speakers dominate conversation as their style of interaction is based on power while uninformed female speakers talk less and use supportive and solidarity-building linguistic behavior and interactional style (as cited in Coates, 1993: 113). Thus, in mixed-gender contexts, "*men dominate conversation by interrupting women [and] controlling topics of conversation*" (Coates, 1993: 139).

It can be noticed from the above literature on interruption that previous studies focus only on whether males or females interrupt more, i.e. these studies are concerned with the role of males and females as

interrupters only and not as interruptees. Furthermore, these studies do not consider the role of various topics of conversation in detail in the occurrence of interruption, whether supportive or disruptive.

## 5. Results and Discussion

In this study, a total of 173 interruptions were identified. The number of supportive interruptions is 71 (41%) while the total number of disruptive interruptions is 102 (59%). Results also indicate a marked discrepancy in the distribution of interruption between males and females. Table (1) demonstrates the overall distribution of interruption by the gender of the interrupter and interruptee.

**Table (1): Distribution of Interruption by Gender of Interrupter and Interruptee**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Interrupter</b>	<b>Interruptee</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>60 (69%)</b>	<b>66 (76%)</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>27 (31%)</b>	<b>20 (23%)</b>

Table (1) shows that males both interrupt and are interrupted more than females. Whereas there are 60 (69%) interruptions by males, there are 27 (31%) only by females, and while the former are interrupted 66 times (76%), the latter are interrupted 20 times (23%).



Males are also more likely to be interrupted than females regardless of the gender of the interrupter. Of the 60 cases of interruption initiated by male speakers, 46 (77%) are directed to males and 14 (23%) to females, and of the 27 cases of interruption initiated by female speakers, 21 (78%) are directed to males and 6 (22%) only to females. Males are interrupted more by females (78%) than by males (77%) whereas females get interrupted more by males (23%) than by other females (22%). Table (2) demonstrates the distribution of disruptive and supportive interruption by the gender of the interrupter and interruptee.

**Table (2): Type of Interruption and Gender of Interrupter and Interruptee**

Type of Interruption	Male interrupters	Female interrupters	Male interruptees	Female interruptees
Supportive	24 (69%)	11 (31%)	24 (67%)	12 (33%)
Disruptive	36 (69%)	16 (31%)	42 (84%)	8 (16%)

As table (2) demonstrates, male speakers make more use of both disruptive and supportive interruptions than female speakers do. While males interrupt disruptively 36 times (69%) and supportively 24 times (69%), females interrupt disruptively 16 times (31%) and supportively 11 times (31%). Moreover, the

percentages of disruptive and supportive interruptions in males' and females' speech in the analyzed data are equal (69% each in males' speech and 31% in females' speech). This indicates that whether males interrupt supportively or disruptively, they tend to be dominance-oriented. Table (2) also shows that males are interrupted both disruptively and supportively more than females. Males are interrupted disruptively 42 times (84%) while females face the same kind of interruption 8 times (16%) only. Whereas males are interrupted supportively 24 times (67%), females are interrupted supportively 12 times (33%). Moreover, as interruptees, males are interrupted more disruptively than supportively (84% vs. 67%) while females are interrupted more supportively than disruptively (33% vs. 16%). It is also important to determine whether males interrupt other males or females more and whether females interrupt other females or males more. Table (3) presents the distribution of both types of interruption by the gender of participants.

**Table (3): Supportive and Disruptive Interruption by Gender of Participants**

	<b>M-m</b>	<b>M-f</b>	<b>F-m</b>	<b>F-f</b>
<b>Supportive Interruption</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Disruptive Interruption</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>

It is clear from table (3) that the largest number of interruption, whether supportive or disruptive, occurs in male-male interaction, and the smallest number of both types of interruption is found in female-female interaction. While supportive interruption is found 17 times in male-male interaction, it occurs 4 times in female-female interaction. Disruptive interruption occurs 29 times in male-male interaction and two times only in female-female interaction. This indicates that male speakers tend to be more competitive when they speak to other males whereas female speakers are more cooperative when they interact with other females. Moreover, males interrupt other males more disruptively than they do supportively (29 times vs. 17

times) but this difference is not found when they interrupt females. Males interrupt females both disruptively and supportively the same number of times (7 times each). In contrast, females interrupt other females supportively 4 times and disruptively 2 times, but they interrupt males more disruptively than they do supportively (13 times vs. 7 times). Thus, unlike female interruptees, male interruptees receive more interruption regardless of the gender of the interrupters. More specifically, male interruptees are interrupted more disruptively than supportively.

## **5.1 Supportive and Disruptive Interruption in Relation to Gender Differences**

### **5.1.1 Supportive Interruption**

The analyzed data shows that supportive interruption occurs in male-male interaction. The following examples illustrate the different causes of this kind of interruption:

(1) Dr. Radovic: And you can see here what people get in in-grown toe nails even after they bath because that nail goes all the way back and we are pushing this part back there. I'm also gonna push it up on

**Dr. Sears: [Doc, does this relate to something that she was doing wrong in clipping her nails?**

*(The Doctors, MBC4, 27/12/2010)*

**In extract (1), the male interviewee, Dr. Philip Radovic, a podiatrist, treats a patient who has got an in-grown toe nail and explains to Dr. Jim Sears, a pediatrician, how to remove the in-grown toe nail. While Dr. Radovic is speaking, Dr. Sears interrupts him to ask for clarification concerning the possible reason for which the patient got an in-grown toe nail.**

**(2) Karkouti: Libya is not like any other country...Gaddafi made sure that the army is weakened and underarmed all the time, under-trained at the same time. Now look at the army, when you see them even on television, you find those [**

**Hamouda: [Absolutely true and add to that the fact that Gaddafi in his ingenious way diluted political authority to create the so-called people's congress, keeping for himself the ability to pull strings when he needs. The problem is that he has these forces under his command and also he has the African mercenaries. He called himself the king of kings of Africa and under that banner, he brought in Africans to symbolize his own**

throne and he is using these people against his own people.

*(Dateline London, BBC World, 5/3/2011)*

In this extract, Mustafa Karkouti, a gulf-based writer and broadcaster, explains what makes Libya different from other countries. He says that Gaddafi made sure the army is weakened, under-armed and under-trained. When Karkouti was about to provide details to evidence what he says, Abdallah Hamouda, from *Focus Egypt*, supportively interrupts him to express his agreement with what he says. Hamouda says that Gaddafi diluted political authority in Libya to establish the people's congress and kept for himself the ability to pull strings when needed. He also brought African mercenaries to symbolize his throne and kill his own people.

(3) Dr. Sadriah: Treatment wise, we have a number of options depending on how severe a case it is. Americans start with something as simple as icing. After you've been wearing your shoes, you can take a bottle of water, freeze it and roll it under the fasciitis, stretch the fasciitis then [

Dr. Stork: [I think this feels pretty good.

*(The Doctors, MBC4, 27/12/2010)*

In extract (3), Dr. Ali Sadriah explains how to treat heel pain and while explaining one method used by Americans, which is icing, Dr. Travis Stork, an ER physician, says it feels good. In other words, he supportively interrupts Dr. Sadriah to comment on what he says.

The above examples show that male-male supportive interruption occurs to ask for clarification, express agreement with the current speaker, and comment on what is said. As for male-female supportive interruption, it was found that males supportively interrupt females mainly to comment on what they say. This is shown in the following example:

(4) Jackson: I mean there are moments when I wish I wasn't famous... but I can't say that I miss that because I don't know what it is like. You can't miss something you've never experienced. You know, because my brothers were famous, I got a lot of attention just for being the baby of the family and a little girl. So I got a bit of attention since I [

Morgan: [Not being able to lead a normal life for most of the time must be difficult. People can't understand that.

*(Piers Morgan Tonight, CNN, 20/2/2011)*

In extract (4), Janet Jackson, the famous singer, tells Piers Morgan, the host of *Piers Morgan Tonight*, that sometimes she wishes she was not famous and would not be recognized but she does not miss this feeling because she never experienced it. She always got a lot of attention due to the fame of her brothers. At this point, Morgan interrupts her to second her opinion by commenting on it saying that people do not understand how difficult it is not to be able to lead a normal life.

In female-male interaction, it was found that females interrupt males to ask for clarification and to complete the current speaker's utterance, as shown in the following examples:

(5) Gerges: All I can say is that we are seeing the beginning of the end of Gaddafi's rule which is 42 years, the longest autocrat in the Arab world. I think the regime itself is unraveling, no doubt about it. Will he survive the current storm? He is fatally injured. He has money. He has power. He has [

Badawi: [Are you suggesting he could survive? Is that what you are saying?

(*Hard Talk*, BBC World, 22/2/2011)



In extract (5), Fawaz Gerges, a Middle East analyst, tells Zeinab Badawi, the female host of *Hard Talk*, that Gaddafi's rule which lasted for 42 years is coming to end and that the regime is unraveling. Then he asks if Gaddafi will survive the storm but he does not provide an answer. When he starts listing what constitutes Gaddafi's strength, Badawi interrupts him to ask him if he suggests Gaddafi will survive. The purpose of her supportive interruption is to seek clarification concerning the point made.

(6) Steward: We need a rally to restore sanity. I can't take the fact that 15 percent of the people run the country and the rest of us are simply busy. People are busy running their lives. People don't have time to [

Oprah: [to think about whether the doings of the 15 percent are right or wrong.

(*Oprah*, MBC4, 28/12/2010)

In extract (6), the male interviewee, Jon Steward, a news caster, calls for a rally to restore sanity because 15 percent of the people run the country while the rest are busy with their lives. When he says that they do not have time, Oprah interrupts to complete his utterance

saying that they do not have time to think if the doings of the 15 percent are right or wrong.

The data reveals that female-female supportive interaction occurs mainly to seek clarification, as shown in the following example.

(7) Derek: I was too young when I got married and my parents weren't happy because my husband was 30 years older.

Oprah: 30 years older?

Derek: yeah. It was [

Oprah: [How old were both of you?

*(Oprah, MBC4, 20/2/2011)*

In this extract, the female interviewee, Bo Derek, an actress, tells Oprah Winfrey about her marriage. She tells Oprah that she was too young when she got married and her husband was 30 years older. When Oprah expresses her astonishment by asking "*30 years older?*" Derek says "*yeah*". Before Derek continues the elaboration, Oprah supportively interrupts her to ask about her age and her husband's when they got married.

### 5.1.2 Disruptive Interruption

To determine whether an interruption is supportive or disruptive, it is necessary to find out why it takes place and what the speaker's aim is. This is indicated by Tannen (1990: 190) who holds that *"To determine whether a speaker is violating another speaker's rights, you have to know a lot about both speakers and the situation...most important, what is the content of the second speaker's comment relative to the first: Is it a reinforcement, a contradiction, or a change in topic? In other words, what is the second speaker trying to do?"*

In the present study, it was noticed that male speakers tend to disruptively interrupt other males more than they do females. Whereas males disruptively interrupt other males 29 times, they disruptively interrupt females 7 times only. Moreover, whether the interruptees are male or female, male speakers interrupt males disruptively for reasons that differ from those for which they interrupt females disruptively. Males interrupt males disruptively to disagree, change the topic, develop the topic, disconfirm a point, and express a viewpoint. In the following extracts, the

reasons for male-male disruptive interruption are illustrated.

(8) Dr. Riedel: ... I think the polls in Afghanistan constantly have shown that the overwhelming majority of Afghans do not want to return to the Taliban government at all and that they want the NATO and US forces to succeed and to deliver security. The question now is whether we can do that or not. It's still too early to judge but that's [

Sackur: [But surely it's not too early to judge that in one key area the President's strategy which you have been intimately involved with is fundamentally flawed. And I'm thinking of the relationship with the Afghan government. Obama's approach rests on the notion that there's a partner to work with in Kabul but all of the evidence suggests that Hamid Karazai is not a credible and legitimate governor of the country.

*(Hard Talk, BBC World, 5/1/2011)*

In extract (8), the male interviewee, Bruce Riedel, the US presidential advisor on Afghanistan and Pakistan, tells the male interviewer, Stephen Sackur, that the majority of Afghans do not want the Taliban government and want the NATO and US forces to

succeed in Afghanistan. He also tells him that it is still too early to judge whether this is possible or not. This is where Sackur cuts in on Riedel to disagree with him concerning America's relationship with Afghanistan. Sackur explains that Obama's belief that he can work with Hamid Karzai is wrong because evidence shows that he is neither a credible nor a legitimate governor of the country. So Sackur disagrees with Riedel's point concerning the success of President Obama's strategy in Afghanistan because he believes that his strategy is flawed and has not really succeeded as Riedel claims.

(9) Morgan: If you win the Oscar, would it be the great moment of your career? Is it the pinnacle?

Firth: I don't know how much one even dares to contemplate dreams on that scale really. No one wouldn't love to win that statue and you know [

Morgan: [Have you thought who you would dedicate it to, if anybody?

*(Piers Morgan Tonight, CNN, 21/2/2011)*

In extract (9), when the male interviewer, Piers Morgan, asks the male interviewee, Colin Firth, star of the movie entitled "The King's Speech", about whether

winning the Oscar is the pinnacle of his career, he says that he does not know if one dares to dream of such a thing and that anybody would love to win that statue. While Firth was still answering the question, Morgan interrupts him and asks him about the person he-Firth-would dedicate the Oscar to. Thus, Morgan's disruptive interruption serves to change the topic from what winning the Oscar represents to who it would be dedicated to.

**(10) Zakaria: Democratic Arab countries will be pro-Iran or less anti-Iran?**

**Majd: Now, every one of them except for Syria is anti-Iran right now. I don't think they're terribly concerned about protests in Tehran. I'm not saying they shouldn't be. I'm just saying that I don't think they are terribly concerned about protests in Tehran and I do believe that [**

**Zakaria: [Don't you see these protests as spiraling at all?**

*(Fareed Zakaria, CNN, 20/2/2011)*

**In extract (10), Hooman Majd, a journalist and author of the "The Ayatollah Begs to Differ", answers**

the question raised by Fareed Zakaria, a male host, about whether democratic Arab countries will be more pro-Iran or less anti-Iran saying that all of them, except Syria, are anti-Iran. While Majd was saying that he does not think these countries are concerned with the protests in Tehran, Zakaria asks him if he thinks these protests are spiraling. So, Zakaria disruptively interrupts Majd to develop the topic of protests.

(11) Bruton: Well, clearly there's uncertainty in the country at the moment but we're using the department of finance forecasts which I assure you are yielding pretty [

Thompson: [Old ones say your opponents; ones from 2010 which are no longer relevant.

*(Hard Talk, BBC World, 21/2/2011)*

In extract (11), Richard Bruton, an Irish Opposition politician in Fine Gael, tells Noel Thompson, the male host of *Hard Talk*, about the economic status in Ireland. While Bruton tries to assure Thompson that finance forecasts are positive, the latter disruptively interrupts the former to disconfirm this point saying that the forecasts used are old and no longer relevant.

**(12) Roche: But you have to look at what the political parties have to offer. The analysis from Fine Gael is not that different from our analysis. What they're suggesting is that there will have to be cuts and there will have to be a variety of changes made in our taxation system. The analysis of the Labor Party is a void analysis. They're suggesting that we can somehow or the other depend on magic power to get ourselves out of this difficulty. Every adult person is sufficiently clever to understand that you can't continue as we have been while operating when we have a deficit of 20 billion a year. You have to balance your taxation and your expenditure. That analysis [**

**Thompson: [Your party created that deficit. You were in charge of the country's finances and now there is a 20 billion annual deficit. It is your fault.**

**(*Hard Talk*, BBC World, 23/2/2011)**

**In extract (12), Dick Roche, the Irish Minister for European Affairs, tells Noel Thompson, the male host of *Hard Talk*, the suggestions offered by the different political parties to overcome Ireland's economic difficulties. When Roche starts telling Thompson about**



the 20-billion deficit that Ireland suffers from, he disruptively interrupts him to tell him that his party caused that deficit.

The analyzed data reveals that the main reason for male-female disruptive interruption is to change the topic of conversation. This is shown in the following example:

(13) Jackson: I'm not very keen about television interviews. You see, I'm not much of a talker. I mean obviously I will if I have to but I rather listen. I rather stay very quiet and listen to [

Morgan:

[You've written this book which is incredibly open. I'm very surprised...I thought you are really being frank and honest here about very private stuff.

*(Piers Morgan Tonight, CNN, 20/2/2011)*

In this extract, the female singer, Janet Jackson, tells Piers Morgan the reason for not being keen about television interviews. While Janet Jackson elaborates on being a quiet person, Morgan disruptively interrupts her to talk about a book she has written and tells her that she tackled private matters frankly and honestly.

**So, the purpose of the disruptive interruption is to change the topic of conversation.**

**It was found that, like male-male disruptive interruption, female-male disruptive interruption occurs to disagree, disconfirm a point, change the topic, develop the topic, and express a viewpoint. The following are examples for the causes of female-male disruptive interruption:**

**(14) Hammer: That's a grace of God but the fact is that we're able to love each other beyond the flaws that we have and in particular more of her than me. As I was growing into a man, she was more forgiving, more patient with me. And I think that's the key to 25 years of marriage. God gave me the perfect mate and when I ask myself I say I didn't deserve it but He [**

**Oprah: [No, excuse me. You must deserve it or He wouldn't have given you the perfect mate.**

***(Oprah, MBC4, 20/2/2011)***

**In extract (14), MC Hammer, a male singer, tells Oprah Winfrey the reasons for 25 years of a happy and successful marriage. He also tells her that God has given him a perfect mate and he thinks he does not**

deserve this. At this point, Oprah expresses her disagreement by disruptively interrupting him saying that if he did not deserve this perfect mate, God would not have given her to him.

(15) El-Gamaty: ... The army, where does the army come from? The army are the sons of these people, of these tribes so they will side with the people (xxx) You see, I think the situation now is that Gaddafi and his sons and his close aids and security forces are mainly barracked inside Bab Al-Azizya. Even the city of Tripoli itself is in a miserable condition, the roads are empty. There are no security elements. There are no [

Badawi: [I really can't confirm what you're saying a hundred percent.

*(Hard Talk, BBC World, 22/2/2011)*

In extract (15), Guma El-Gamaty, a Libyan opposition member and a Libyan writer as well as political activist, talks to Zeinab Badawi, the female presenter of *Hard Talk* about the situation in Tripoli. He tells her that the roads are empty and there are no security forces in the streets but Zeinab Badawi interrupts him saying that she cannot confirm a

hundred percent. By disruptively interrupting El-Gamaty, she aims to disconfirm what he says.

(16) Alterman: And a billion of that, Hala, comes from commercial and television rights. Analysts say F1 races are watched by more than 580 million viewers around the world representing 90 countries. Top teams spend about 300 million in their annual racing budgets. They can spend more than that and leading teams, backed by multinational sponsors, can [

Gorani:

[But what happens with the Bahrain race? I mean is it rescheduled for later or did they skip altogether this year because of the demonstrations there?

*(International Desk, CNN, 21/2/2011)*

In extract (16), Hala Gorani, the female host of *International Desk*, talks to Jon Alterman, a director and senior fellow of the Middle East Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, about canceling Bahrain's grand prix. He tells her that F1 races are watched by millions of viewers and that top teams spend a large sum of money in their annual racing budgets. But Hala disruptively interrupts him to ask whether the Bahrain race will be rescheduled or

cancelled because of the goings-on in the country. The purpose of disruptive interruption is to change the topic of conversation.

(17) Shamis: I don't think he can hold on but it will be at a price. There will be a lot of bloodshed. There'll be a lot of killing but he'll not be able to survive this because of the international [

Leslie: [But will he take any notice of international pressure?

*(Dateline London, BBC World, 12/3/2011)*

In extract (17), Ashur Shamis, a Libyan journalist, speaks about Gaddafi and his allies. He says that they will not be able to hold on in front of the goings-on in Libya but before they go, they will kill many people. When Shamis talks about the role of international pressure, Dame Ann Leslie, a journalist at *The Daily Mail*, asks whether Gaddafi will pay heed to international pressure. Leslie's disruptive interruption functions to further develop the topic of conversation.

(18) El-Gamaty: The Libyan population are really enraged by the world community. For the last 5 days, there have been massacres going on in Libya and in a

lot of other cities and towns. You know, mercenaries are used and the world community are watching and they haven't done or said anything. Where is the EU? Where is the UN? Where is the British government? Where is the American administration? I mean, is this acceptable? Do they just want to watch Gaddafi commit [

Badawi: [What do you want them to do? The British foreign minister is in a situation where he can only condemn the violence. At the same time, it's not their job to change the leader of Libya.

*(Hard Talk, BBC World, 22/2/2011)*

In extract (18), Guma El-Gamaty expresses his anger with the world community. He says there are mercenaries in Libyan cities and massacres are carried out and yet the world community is passive. When he wonders why the EU, UN, Britain and America are not taking action against Gaddafi, Zeinab Badawi interrupts him asking what he wants them to do. She expresses her viewpoint concerning the intervention of the world community saying that the British foreign minister can only condemn the violence and that the world community cannot change Libya's leader.

**Females disruptively interrupt each other only to change the topic of the ongoing conversation, as shown in the following example:**

**(19) Boyle: My talent for singing was able to silence the bullies. That's what I was trying to do by singing because what you do is try to gain the respect of [**

**Oprah: [Do you feel that where you are right now in your life, do you still have other bad memories other than those about the bullies?**

***(Oprah, MBC4, 29/12/2010)***

**In this extract, Suzan Boyle, the famous female singer, tells Oprah Winfrey that she was always subject to bullies but because she is a talented singer, she was able to silence these bullies. While she explains this, Oprah interrupts her to ask if some of these bullies are still around. So, Oprah's disruptive interruption serves to change the topic from explaining how singing enabled Suzan Boyle to silence the bullies to asking about other bad memories.**

## 5.2 Supportive and Disruptive Interruption in Relation to Topic

It is necessary to determine the relation between the topic, the two types of interruption, and the gender of the participants in a conversational interaction. Table (4) presents the distribution of disruptive and supportive interruption by topic.

**Table (4): Supportive and Disruptive Interruption by Topic**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Supportive Interruption</b>	<b>Disruptive Interruption</b>
<b>Political</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Economic</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Social</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Medical</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>

Table (4) shows that supportive interruption occurs the same number of times in political and social topics (12 times each). This type of interruption also occurs 9 times in medical topics and two times only in economic topics. The largest number of disruptive interruption occurs the most in political topics (29 times) and the



least in medical ones (once). There is also little difference in the number of times disruptive interruption occurs in economic and social topics. It occurs 11 times in economic topics and 10 times in social ones. Thus, while disruptive interruption occurs the most in political topics and the least in medical topics, supportive interruption occurs the most in political and social topics and the least in economic topics. Table (5) demonstrates the distribution of disruptive and supportive interruption by topic and gender of participants.

**Table (5): Supportive and Disruptive Interruption by Topic and Gender of Participants**

Topic	Supportive Interruption				Total	Disruptive Interruption				Total
	M-m	M-f	F-m	F-f		M-m	M-f	F-m	F-f	
Political	9 (53%)	---	3 (43%)	---	12	17 (59%)	3 (43%)	9 (69%)	---	29
Economic	2 (12%)	---	---	---	2	10 (34%)	---	---	---	10
Social	---	4 (57%)	4 (57%)	4 (100%)	12	1 (3%)	4 (57%)	4 (31%)	2 (100%)	11
Medical	6 (35%)	3 (43%)	---	---	9	1 (3%)	---	---	---	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	

**Table (5) demonstrates that the largest percentage of occurrence of supportive interruption is found more in male-male interaction in the discussion of political topics (53%) and medical topics (35%). It occurs the least number of times in economic topics (2 times, 12%). Like disruptive interruption, in female-female interaction, supportive interruption occurs only in discussing social topics (4 times, 100%). In mixed-gender interaction, females supportively interrupt males more when discussing social topics (4 times, 57%) and less in political topics (3 times, 43%) whereas males supportively interrupt females more when tackling social topics (4 times, 57%) and less in medical topics (3 times, 43%).**

**Disruptive interruption occurs mostly in male-male interaction when discussing political topics (17 times, 59%) followed by economic topics (10 times, 34%). This type of interruption occurs the least number of times in the discussion of social and health-related topics as it occurs only once in each of the two kinds of topics (3% each). In female-female interaction, disruptive interruption occurs only when tackling social topics (2 times, 100%). In mixed-gender interaction, it can be noticed that females interrupt males disruptively more**

when discussing political topics (69%) and least in social topics (31%). Males, on the other hand, disruptively interrupt females more when tackling social topics (57%) and less in political topics (43%). This suggests that males are more likely to be interrupted disruptively in male-oriented topics (political and economic topics) whether the interrupters are males or females while females are disruptively interrupted more in female-oriented topics, namely social topics.

Analysis of the data reveals that both alerts and metacomments are found only in disruptive, rather than, supportive interruption. Alerts occur only once in political topics but metacomments occur the most in political topics (4 times) and the least in social topics (2 times). In political topics, male speakers use alerts to express a viewpoint whereas metacomments are used by male speakers to express disagreement (once), change the topic (2 times), and develop the topic (once). In social topics, they are used by female speakers to change the topic (once) and develop the topic (once). In both kinds of topics, metacomments serve as a polite means to request interruption. The following example demonstrates the use of alerts in political topics:

**(20) Gerges: I think we're really blaming the victims here. What I'm saying they are civilians. They are protesters. They're not using violence. It's the thugs of the regime that are using missiles...The question to me is whether it is really the morning after because you ask a question about civil war. I'll not put it this way, civil war. What has happened to the Libyan institutions in the last 42 years? What has happened to civil society?...What concerns me about the situation is [**

**El-Gamaty: [Listen! There is no civil society. There are no state institutions. Gaddafi has dismantled all that. But there is a very cohesive society that is determined to achieve a consensus and work hard to make the future of the country better.**

***(Hard Talk, BBC World, 22/2/2011)***

**In this extract, Fawaz Gerges, a Middle East analyst, says that Libyan protesters are civilians and are not violent. Rather, it is the thugs of the Libyan regime who are using violence. He also asks about what happened to civil society and to the Libyan institutions during Gaddafi's rule. While Gerges was speaking about what concerns him in the situation, El-Gamaty, a Libyan**

opposition member and a Libyan writer and political activist, interrupts him using the alert "*listen*" to force him to stop talking and listen to his viewpoint. El-Gamaty believes that there is no civil society or state institutions in Libya because Gaddafi dismantled all that. Yet, there is a cohesive society that is determined to agree and work for what is best for Libya.

The following are examples of the different uses of metacomments by males in political topics:

(21) Riedel: The report I did for the President in 2009 concluded that we were losing the war in Afghanistan and that if we did not do something dramatic, we would shortly face a very serious situation which I consider a catastrophic defeat. Two years later, we are a long way from what anyone would call success in Afghanistan and Pakistan but we're no longer on the break of a catastrophic disaster as we were in 2009. I'd say that [

Sackur:

[If I may, let me stop you there. It's an important point you just made. In telling me that the glass is sort of more half full than it is half empty, you seem to fly in the face of some basic cracks in the ground. If you look at what the UN and International Red Cross are saying

about the situation on the ground whether it be growing instability in north and west Afghanistan, whether it be the rising civilian casualty toll, or whether it be the opinion polls which suggest that Afghans have a pretty bleak outlook on what's happening in their country, things don't look good at all.

*(Hard Talk, BBC World, 5/1/2011)*

In extract (21), the male interviewee, Bruce Riedel, the US Presidential advisor on Afghanistan and Pakistan, talks to Stephen Sackur about the situation in Afghanistan. He says that he did a report for the President in 2009 which concluded that they are losing the war in Afghanistan and that something dramatic needs to be done or else they will face catastrophic defeat. He also says that although in 2011 they still have not achieved success, they no longer face catastrophic defeat. Before continuing, Sackur disruptively interrupts him using the metacomment "*If I may, let me stop you there*" to disagree with what Riedel says when he says "*we're no longer on the break of catastrophic disaster.*"

**(22) McAllister: I think a no-fly zone in Libya is certainly something that is conceivable for the US. I think sending troops will mean overstressing Iraq and Afghanistan. I mean it'll create a situation similar to what happened in these countries and I don't think a lot of American moms would say yes I want my son to die to get the Gaddafi regime out. I think [**

**Esler: [Can I just change track a little bit and ask this question: where are the Islamists in all this? I mean, one of the interesting things is of course we know the Islamic parties are being everywhere but this has seemed to be a largely secular operation both in Libya, in Tunisia, and in Egypt and perhaps in Bahrain too (xxx) Islamists who you may have expected to be in the forefront are not.**

***(Dateline London, BBC World, 26/2/2011)***

**In extract (22), Jeff McAllister, an American writer and broadcaster, says that a no-fly zone in Libya is conceivable for the US and that sending troops to Libya will create a situation similar to what happened in Iraq and Afghanistan. He does not think mothers want their sons to die to topple Gaddafi's regime. Before McAllister finishes what he wants to say, Esler**

interrupts him using the metacomment "*Can I just change track a little bit and ask where the Islamists in all this are?*" In this metacomment, Esler makes the reason for the interruption clear. He wonders where the Islamists are. Then he elaborates on his point saying that unexpectedly Islamic parties are not in the forefront in the revolutions taking place in Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrain. In other words, Esler interrupts to change the topic from talking about the use of sending troops to Libya to talking about the absence of Islamists from the scene in some of the Arab countries in revolution.

(23) Jibril: The international community is not doing us a favor. They should show their responsibility towards the civilians in Libya. We're on the edge of a catastrophe in Al-Zawia and Musrata and other cities in the western part of Libya. People in Al-Zawia and Musrata have been surrounded by Gaddafi's security forces. They'll run out of food and medical supplies so soon and therefore the international community must act urgently and quickly and air strikes are one of the ways they can help the Libyan people topple the Gaddafi regime. They can help [



**Sackur:**

**[Right. Let me stop you there because you just made a compelling point and I want to put it straight to Sir Jeremy Greenstock to see his take on it.**

*(Hard Talk, BBC World, 10/3/2011)*

**In extract (23), Ahmed Jibril, advisor to the Libyan Transitional National Council, explains why the international community must take effective steps to help the Libyan people. Jibril says that they are on the edge of a catastrophe because Gaddafi's security forces surround people in Al-Zawia and Musrata, and they are also about to run out of food and medical supplies. While Jibril explains how the international community can help, Esler interrupts him using the metacomment "*Let me stop you there...*" Esler says the reason he wants to stop Jibril is that he want to know Jeremy Greenstock's, Britain's former UN ambassador, on the point he – Jibril – is making.**

**The following examples illustrate the use of metacomments by females in social topics:**

**(24): Oprah: So how did you come to work with the Judds?**

**Potter: It'll take a great long time to explain all of that. This is a kind of an interesting story. It all started when [**

**Oprah: [Can I just interrupt the story? I'm not interested in what the answer is and the reason is that we don't want to talk about the music business with you. Today's show is really called "Thank you day". We don't care if you wanna say anything about music business and someone who thinks you're really special and is thankful to you is here. It is Naomi Judd.**

**(Oprah, MBC4, 25/12/2010)**

**In extract (24), Oprah Winfrey asks the guitarist and music producer, Don Potter about he came to work with the Judds. When Potter was about to start telling the story, Oprah interrupts him using the metacomment "*Can I just interrupt the story?*" She says the reason for the interruption is that she is not really interested in knowing the story or hearing anything about music business because the show on that day was known as "Thank you day". She tells him that someone in the studio thinks that he is special and wants to tell him thank you.**

**(25) Firth: I don't know how much one even dares to contemplate dreams on that scale really. No one wouldn't want to win that statue and you know [**

**Morgan: [Have you thought who you would dedicate it to, if anybody?**

**Firth: Well, you know, I've [**

**Carter: [Can I check in? You should dedicate it to me. Remember, I was the Queen mother in the movie and you wouldn't have been King without me.**

***(Piers Morgan Tonight, CNN, 21/2/2011)***

**In extract (25), Colin Firth, a male actor, talks about winning the Oscar and is asked by the interviewer, Piers Morgan, about the person he would dedicate the statue to. When he was about to answer Morgan's question, Helena Bonham Carter, a female actress, interrupts him using the metacomment "*Can I check in?*" to develop the topic saying that Firth should dedicate the statue to her because she was the Queen mother in "*The King's Speech*" and he would not have been a king without her.**

## **6. Conclusion**

**In this study, it is shown that the occurrence of disruptive interruption is higher than supportive interruption, and that not only do male speakers interrupt but are also interrupted more than female speakers whether the interrupter is male or female. Males are also interrupted more by females than by other males while females are interrupted more by males than by females. Thus, cross-gender interruption is more likely to occur than same-gender interruption.**

**In terms of the relation between supportive and disruptive interruption on the one hand and the gender of the interrupter and interruptee on the other hand, it was found that males interrupt and are interrupted both supportively and disruptively more than females. Moreover, both supportive and disruptive interruption occur the most in male-male interaction and the least in female-female interaction. When males are interrupted whether by males or females, disruptive interruption is more likely to occur than supportive interruption. When females are interrupted by males or females, the number of supportive and disruptive interruption is almost the same. Therefore, regardless of the gender of**

**the interrupter and type of interruption, males receive more interruption than females.**

**As for the uses of supportive interruption in the analyzed data, it was found that male speakers interrupt other males mainly to ask for clarification, agree with the current speaker, and comment on what is said, but they interrupt females to comment on what they say. While female speakers supportively interrupt females to ask for clarification, they interrupt males to seek clarification and complete the current speaker's utterance. Thus, a common reason between male-male and male-female supportive interruption is that male and female interruptees are interrupted by male speakers to comment on what is said whereas in female-female and female-male supportive interruption, it can be noticed that male and female interruptees are interrupted by females mainly to seek clarification of a point made.**

**In disruptive interruption, it was found that male-male and female-male interruptions occur for the same reasons: to disagree, change the topic, develop the topic, disconfirm a point, and express a viewpoint. Female interruptees, on the other hand, are interrupted**

**disruptively whether by males or females for the same reason, namely to change the topic of conversation. Thus, the gender of the interrupter does not influence the reasons for disruptively interrupting male participants in the conversation.**

**The topic of conversation plays a role in the occurrence of supportive and disruptive interruptions since the former occurs mostly in the discussion of political and social topics and less in economic topics, whereas the latter occurs more in political topics and less in medical topics. Furthermore, gender differences exist in the occurrence of the two types of interruption due to the effect of the topic of conversation. Male-male supportive interruption occurs more in political and medical topics and less in economic topics. In mixed-gender supportive interruption, male and female speakers interrupt each other more in the discussion of social topics. However, female-male supportive interruption occurs the least in political topics whereas male-female supportive interruption occurs the least in medical topics. In male-male interaction, disruptive interruption occurs more in political topics followed by economic topics and less in social and medical topics. Female-male disruptive interruption occurs more in**

political topics and less in social topics whereas the same kind of interruption occurs more in social topics and less in political topics in male-female interaction. In female-female interaction, both supportive and disruptive occur only in the discussion of social topics. Comparing the frequency of occurrence of the two types of interruption in the speech of males and females in the various political, economic, social, and medical topics discussed in the analyzed data underscores the role the topic plays in the occurrence of gender differences in the use of supportive and disruptive interruptions.

As for alerts and metacomments, they occur in disruptive interruption. While alerts occur only in political topics to express a viewpoint, metacomments are found more in political topics in which they are used by males to disagree, change the topic, and develop the topics, and less in social topics in which female speakers use them to change and develop the topic.

The study reveals that males are competitive and dominant participants in conversational interactions whereas females are more cooperative and gentle speakers. This is supported by two findings, the first of

**which is that males are more likely to interrupt and be interrupted than females. The second finding is that disruptive interruption outnumbers supportive interruption in all-male conversation in discussing political and economic topics. This shows that both gender and topic are equally important variables in studying the use of supportive and disruptive interruption.**



## **Appendix: Transcription Conventions**

**[ Interruption (The current speaker in the quoted extracts is interrupted and the second speaker starts speaking)**

**... Omitted speech**

**(xxx) Unclear speech**

**M Male interrupter**

**m Male interruptee**

**F Female interrupter**

**f Female interruptee**

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