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Gender, Power, and Interruption: A Corpus-Based Study of Mixed-Gender Interaction

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ABSTRACT

Interruptions act as an important discourse characteristic that shows hidden patterns of gender, power, dominance, and communicative agreement. However, the traditional gender analysis has often shown a behavior that is patriarchal in nature whereas, the new cross-cultural data show the sequences differ in cultural and linguistic settings. Different datasets taken from different sociocultural and discourse contexts, including Arab political television debates, Persian EFL classroom dyads, Congressional hearings whereas, Egyptian media talk shows, mixed-gender focus groups. Therefore, this corpus-based study scrutinizes into gendered action over seven datasets. Though Thai educational settings and multiparty workplace meetings occupy an expressive and descriptive corpus linguistic method influenced by the help of conversation analysis and evaluative discourse viewpoints. This study examines kinds, frequencies, and pragmatic purposes of breaks in mixed-gender communications. The consequences display contextual whereas Persian EFL learners displayed additional balanced interruption designs, Arab political debates, and Egyptian programs introduced the male dominated interventions as well as multiparty gatherings present in cooperative and competitive approaches. Approaches such as Thai educational settings, formed by cultural standards of regard, presented minimal female confident interruptions across all data sets. However, women were interrupted more often in public and organized settings. The analysis determines that interruption actions are not naturally gendered but instead formed by interactional objectives, issue delicacy, cultural standards organizational power systems, and discourse kind. The end results emphasize the importance of corpus-based methodologies in the finding of subtle international designs.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Corpus Linguistics, Mixed-Gender Talk, Power Relations

Introduction

Interruptions establish one of the most broadly examined aspects in research on gender and conversation. They act as strong signs of power, dominance, association, difference, topic

discussion, and the control of the conversational floor (Tannen, 1994). Formerly, studies frequently showed interruptions as a mainly male plan, supported with patriarchal societal systems and gendered standards of dominance (Zimmerman & West, 1975). However, more current studies encounter general reasons, claiming that the interruptions are formed by interactional settings as well as cultural beliefs and different discourse kinds. Mills (2003) argues that politeness and impoliteness are shaped by gender, culture, and the interactional context showing that interruptions should be understood as socially situated practices rather than biologically driven behaviors. *Gender and Interruptions in Mixed-Gender Groups Discussions* offers an extensive assortment of empirical results through numerous sets comprising EFL media conversation, administrative systems and English language educational settings. Talbot (2019) challenges simplified gender generalizations, emphasizing that interactional features such as interruptions shift according to discourse type, cultural expectations, and underlying power relations. These data collections together show that gendered interruptions are extremely conditional. For example, a study on Persian EFL students establishes that women occasionally started more interruptions, mainly subject-shifting and self-centered interruptions, throughout delicate debates (such as hijab debates). On the other hand, Arab political television shows revealed main male interruption designs, with women seems to be superseded by offensive plans. There are wide situational differences that demand a thorough corpus-based contrasting module. A corpus permits the well-structured analysis of the authentic spoken facts, allowing the researchers to identify the design on the interruption frequency, the kind and the pragmatic purpose via a wide range of sociocultural situations. There are several separate studies, including survey combined with corpus linguistics, that give a complete picture of how genres influence and communicate with the conversational process. The importance of this research has three main aspects and revolves around these aspects; multi-contextual comparison by analyzing the seven different settings and collecting all the information from EFL dyads, congressional hearings, political discussions, multiparty meetings, different talk shows, interviews with the groups and the cultural educational settings, involves the study that avoids generalizing about the gender barriers. Instead, this study prefers and focuses on the variation in gender patterns across contexts. The outcomes support the idea that gender is not an unchanging determinant of behavior but rather an enactment according to cultural values, discourse aims, and the interactive context (Butler, 1990). For example, in the Thai context, the research highlights the cultural norms of deference that reduce confidence; meanwhile, in the multipart professional meetings, the women use collaborative interpretations to keep the conversational participations.

Aims and objectives

1. The main objective of this research is to examine how different interruption patterns are different in a number of sociocultural contexts, such as political debates, talk shows, group discussions as well as English as a foreign language pairing, and educational settings.
2. Another objective of this research is to use a different type of approach like corpus method to estimate empirical objectives, it could be topic switching, association and disagreement.

3. To identify different factors like power dynamics, cultural references, personal development in order to examine how gender influences different interruption actions and behaviors.

Research Questions

- How do different interruption techniques used differently in the seven chosen contexts?
- What are the different types and communicative functions that appear to be in mixed gender relationships?
- How corpus-based method is used to determine mixed gender relationships?

Literature Review

The study of conversational breaks in mixed gender interaction has occupied an acceptable place in the language and in society studies, text and talk analysis, language use studies and gender studies for more than a decade. The interruptions are widely understood as the interactional techniques by which the speaker manages turn-taking, displays authority, the signal affiliation or shows strong disagreement (Tennen, 1994).

The fundamental belief of the early research, mainly in the western sociological traditions, was that the main interruptions were more common than those of women and the interruption serves primarily as a display of assertion of control (Zimmerman & West, 1995). The theoretical approach started an influential line of research while subsequent research has shown that the intervening behaviors are far more-multifaceted and variable across the context. Research shows barriers and fixed gender groups that vary according to the language and also vary according to the cultures and portal settings. Whereas, the educational union merges the findings as well as positions of the gender roles, communicative patterns and linguistics patterns within the research dialogues (Rafique, 2021).

Classical Perspective on the Gender and Interferences

Early research depicts that the man uses the dominant conversations and supports male-dominated conversations in mixed gender interactions (Fishman, 1983; Zimmerman & West, 1975). These studies show that the men interrupted more frequently and sustained the talk time, and introduced the new topics. Meanwhile, in the women's discussion, they supported the technique/methods and the joint interactive approach. However, the foundational research has been challenged for being narrow in range, limited in scope, culturally narrow and overly reliant on minimal speech data. Later work has reconsidered the general validity of men interfering more by pointing out the need to consider the shared values, context and participants' roles and relational intentions. According to Tannen (1994), the meaning of an interruption is not inherent in the act itself; it depends on the cultural norms that guide expectations about appropriate conversational conduct. The main concept that comes from all the previous research and the data is the significant diversity of interruption patterns across cultures. Several datasets explain how cultural strengths uphold the conversational expectations across genders. Kiany (2007) says Persian speakers rely heavily on continuous expressions as a strategy of involvement when culturally delicate issues are raised. Persian ESL learning participants had highlighted that the women create more trouble and conversational blocks as compared to the men especially, when the conversation is about an emotional topic or discussing a sensitive topic like the hijab practices, sense of self or the ethical norms. Many of them were self-centered, motivated by the individual viewpoint,

effective engagement or the intention to elaborate. The Persian EFL data also indicates that the continuous expressions are used as a significant conversational tool when the topic under debate is controversial or a culturally relevant topic. Men, in contrast, use the natural tone and natural interjections that belong to the regulating talks rather than with self-assertion. Thus, the intervention trends here are shaped less by the gender power dynamics and more by the subject delicacy and the individual engagement.

Diana El-Kurd (2015) opines that female political actors on Arab TV are routinely cut off or talked over, demonstrating structural gendered asymmetry in broadcasting. The Arab political talk shows showed a pattern of confrontational, disruptive interjections, most often triggered by men. The main purpose of these political talks is to suppress female speaker's perspectives especially during an intense debate or important topic. The Arab media content can be divided into hostile discourse environments and competitive turn-taking such as social norms of the male-coded conversations and broadcast representation that favors the aggressive exchange. Whereas, the female participants were more often cut off, belittled, or overlooked, demonstrating how the political communications and male dominance interconnect to influence the communication power. However, in Thai cultural context, interrupting behavior was mainly influenced by the expectations of the defense courtesy tactics and the status rankings. In this way, no men really have to interpret the conversation due to the strong cultural emphasis on civility, social balance and the non-confrontations. Meanwhile, the male authority in the conversation interruption is less direct and more socially embedded, rather than a lack of interpersonal control. Though, Multi-Party Meetings and Workplace Interactions analyzes the mixed gender workplace meetings, and the results revealed a notable trend such as;

- Women more often produce supportive interjections, affiliations as compared to the authority.
- Men produce more oppositional blocks, most importantly when it comes to the judgment periods.
- In administrative practice, the interpretative patterns ranks more firmly and strongly than gender role.

This is consistent with the previous research suggestions that the institutional rankings can supersede gender in identifying the interactional power. (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Rassool et al., 2025)). Karpowitz and Mendelberg (2014) say women in high-status political positions interrupt at the same rate as men, showing that authority mitigates gender constraints. In the highly formal context like the U.S congressional committee, interference behaviors are strongly linked together with the organization authority, the official government status and tenure. The data shows that speakers with the higher occupational level interrupted regardless gender. Whereas, women who are on the occupational level, show the same level of interruption behaviors as men on the same positions and in this case male respond with terror. On the other hand, women were more likely to interrupt female inquiry leaders (Saleem, 2021). This suggests that the official structure of gender operates with the power ranking dimensions not independently. Egyptian talk shows, male hosts routinely appropriate control through disruptive interjections (Sakr, 2004). The data collection from the Egyptian talk shows reveals the inequalities in the disruptive behaviors to move the conversation forward and to control the conversation. Furthermore, the female guests more often

interrupted during attempts to offer a detailed explanation. Interruptions were created to downplay or undermine women's thoughts or ideas in the public debates. Though, this type of interruption strengthens the male dominance in public communications; meanwhile, the male speech enjoys greater communicative room and authority. The data from the previous research include results from the mixed gender focus group and multi-party discussions, where the interruptive actions were influenced by content awareness, the subject familiarity, interactional relationships, speakers' aggression, and social connections among the members. Women, especially when self-assured or familiar with the topic, elaborate strongly and see the ability of forceful interjections. However, the highly stressed or the disputed subject men tended to take over the women's conversational turns. However, intrusive interruption usually used to challenge and control a different purpose whereas cooperative interruptions, usually used to present contract involvement. Though, self-center interruptions are generally used in sensitive topics related to emotions and sentiments (Schweinberger, 2025). Therefore, in all contexts, men used more intrusive and competitive interruption and women used more cooperative and supportive interruptions. Above all, cultural settings shaped whether women felt that intrusion was socially permissible at all. Meanwhile in gender and barrier research, there are different point of views, as result research moves away from essentialist interpretations and instead views barriers as contextually negotiated, culturally mediated, practically diverse and institutionalize. Furthermore, in this research all gaps are discussed by using the corpus-based descriptive methods and also identify different factors, including frequencies, types and functions of intervention. This literature review elaborates the requirements for the large-scale integrated corpus-based approaches to simplify a better understanding of the gender barriers beyond the isolated sociocultural problems.

Theoretical Framework

Conversation Analysis (CA)

Through the conversational analysis, we will get a microanalytical foundation for studying barriers as the analyzable international practices. Getting it from the work of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), the conversational analysis turns to turn-taking, repair, overlap and the sequential organization in conversation.

Therefore, in the conversational analysis, it is not necessary that all the interpretations are considered to be dominant rather than their meanings are based on interactional outcomes as a result.

CA and the Turn-Taking Mechanism

According to conversations analysis, basically conversation is structured by Turn Construction Units (TCUs), Transition Related Places (TRPs) and Speaker Selection Mechanism. Therefore, when a speaker begins a Turn Construction Units before the first speaker reaches a Transition Related Places. Though, interruption can be interpreted as tough, supportive, or neutral depending on the sequence of cues.

CA in Mixed-Gender Interaction

Research in CA suggests that gender differences in interruptions cannot be universally generalized. Instead, the meaning of the barrier should be based on ongoing activity as well as social relationship between speakers and institutional setting. Furthermore, The Persian EFL dataset in the research document clearly demonstrates that: the barriers that female learners made during discussions on emotionally charged topics (such as hijab were not acts

of dominance but rather self-directed attempts to express a stance related to identity). In meetings involving several parties, women usually initiated collaborative plans in which the importance of conversational analysis was classified as additional action rather than any obstacles for the sake of supremacy.

CA Justification for Thai Study

Conversation analysis is important for Thai study because it allows for the classification of interventions into intrusive, collaborative, supportive, neutral, and competitive types. It links barrier behavior to sequential interactional contexts. However, it also focuses on actual conversational patterns in order to prevent simple gender generalizations. In this way, CA informs micro-level coding and classification of barriers in the corpus.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

In order to understand how different barriers reflect power relations, social inequalities and ideological structures, Critical Discourse Analysis provides the lens which are considered necessary for understanding these structures. All the scholars, including Fairclough (1995), van Dijk (1997) and Wodak (2001), developed the CDA focus on how discourse enacts, produces or is against the power.

The Role of Power and Ideology in Gendered Discourse

The gendered language practices and the sociopolitical structure cannot be separated at any cost as per the CDA assumption.

Barriers often index:

- Patriarchal norms
- The institutional authority modules
- Cultural demands or expectations of the gender roles
- Media framing policies

Collecting the data from the Arab database defines: to silence the women, the male participants use intrusiveness and also claim political authority. The patterns like this cannot be understood through the sequential interaction alone. In the Arab media contest, they are embedded in the large-scale theoretical database about gender and authority. Meanwhile, the Egyptian talk shows database reveals the barriers that illegitimate women's speech which reflects the social norms that govern the public involvement of women.

CDA and Institutional Hierarchy

Though legislative hearings explain how different patterns of interpretation connect with hierarchical status, professional role and discourse formality. The research shows that higher ranking speakers, regardless of gender-based interpretation, clarify critical discourse analysis which claim that power is a social resource that is authorized through discourse.

Gender and Language Theory

Gender and language research examines how gender identity is performed, negotiated, and constructed through discourse. Rather than viewing sex as biologically determined, contemporary theorists argue that gender is a socially constructed performance (Butler, 1990) influenced by expectations, norms, and institutional roles.

Dominance and Difference Perspectives

Dominance and difference are two major perspectives that generally shape gender and language research. Dominance perspective (Zimmerman & West, 1975; Fishman, 1983) demonstrates that men are more intrusive due to patriarchal power structures. Difference

perspective (Tennon, 1994) demonstrates that often men and women belong to different "subcultures" of communication. Basically, both perspectives are displayed in the data sets, such as Arab and Egyptian media are strongly aligned with the dominance model, whereas Persian EFL interactions align more with the difference model where barriers are created by subject involvement rather than power.

Poststructuralist Gender Theory

Poststructuralist scholars (e.g., Cameron, 2005) argue that gender is an actualized performance. One example is that women are most likely to interfere in Persian context throughout the time of emotionally charged discussions whereas men interrupt more in political media because of associated expectations of masculine aggression. Therefore, this suggests that gendered intervention behavior is fluid, not fixed

Methodology

This study utilized the corpus-based comparative research design to analyze the gender obstacles in the social, cultural and institutional context. Because the data on the gender and the barriers in the mixed gender interaction discussions involve a variety of contexts such as, the EFL classroom interactions, the congressional hearing, political debates, the multiparty meetings, group discussion interview, and media talks. A corpus-based approach permits the structural comparisons of the patterns of interaction through the multiple data samples. Corpus linguistics provides the tools for measuring linguistic behaviors, analyzing the repeated pattern, and also identifying the contextual differences in the authentic spoken discourse (Biber et al., 1998). Adding up with the qualitative analysis, this approach provides a balanced methodology that is perfect to address the barriers which are naturally sequential and situation dependent.

Data Analysis

The data analysis method focused on establishing patterns of gendered interruption behavior in seven separate datasets: Persian EFL dyads, Arab political television debates, Thai educational settings, US congressional hearings, Egyptian talk shows, multi-party workplace meetings, and mixed-gender focus group discussions. Following the described procedure, interruptions were coded according to speaker type, function, and gender.

Overview of Corpus Data

Through all the data sets, the corpus contains over 1500 annotated interruption occurrences which is categorized into five important categories such as, intrusive interruptions as well as supportive or helpful interruptions. This involve channeling the complementation, agreements or encouragement and natural comets or the interjections asking for clarifications for managing the turn taking. Therefore, other focused remarks or interjections support the participation in completing the other speaker's ideas

Persian EFL Dyads

The Persian EFL data set involves the ten dyads of learning that discuss delicate cultural topics. The analysis showed Frequency Rate: on average 52% of the interjections occurred in men and the remaining 48% in women.

Though women use 42% of the interjections and mostly self-oriented, which depicts that women focus on the personal perspective. Meanwhile, the men's interjections are neutral and interruptive to regulate the conversations. Functions: the interjections used by women often explain or elaborate on the topic, while the men's interjections are limited in turn-taking

or introducing an opposing idea. CA indicates that the women in these days used discourse agency within the topic-related interruptions, while men maintained patterned control of the flow of the debate. This supports the idea that topic importance shapes the interrupting behavior (Tennon, 1994).

Arab Governmental Television Database

Arab discussions highlight highly gender-based patterns and interruptions.

Frequency: Women produce almost 22% of interruptions and men produce all 78%.

Functions: Interruption challenges oppose views that show the political authority and minimized the participation of the women. CDA suggests that these modules depict broader male dominance and the media-based hierarchies (Fairclough 1995). Interruptions are the tools of power that help to silence the women speakers and help them to shape the public opinion.

US Congressional Hearings

Analyzing the institutional hearing indicates:

Frequency: Regardless of gender, male and female interruptions are based on their positions and responsibilities.

Types: the senior ranking officers produce more interruptions than the junior officers.

Functions: Interruption managed the procedure flow, turn taking, the question answers flow and the topic management. Interruptions: Institutional hierarchy controls the interruption behavior because only genre cannot determine the interruptions in the formal settings (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003).

Multi-Party Workplace Meetings

The meeting analysis revolves around the mixed patterns whereas, the frequency of male's dominance is 60% and females' dominance is 40%.

Types: women use the supportive overlaps, and men use competitive overlap.

Functions: women focus on the topic inclusion and topic flow, while men prefer the decision making and a dominant approach.

Interruptions: In the workplace, interactions of both competitive and cooperative approaches occur and the gender behavior is adjustable.

Results and the Discussions

The results and details clearly tell us that the gender barriers vary as the context varies according to the cultural and institutional settings. Using the corpus analysis, the study depicts the structures, types, frequencies and functions and then aligns them with the CA and CDA also with the gender theory. This section will clearly summarize the pattern and its sociological implications.

The Method of Gendered Interruption Analyze the Corpus such as Male Dominance

The Male dominance appears strongly in the media setting and in the political patterns, where men produce 78-82% of the interruptions, which shows the expectation of male assertiveness.

Female Interruptions: The interruptions were most likely in the professional, educational and dyadic context, which indicates women participate more when the cultural and institutional barriers are lower.

Collaboration versus Competition: Women's Interruptions were cooperative, supportive and clarifying, while the men's interruptions were influential, competitive, and took the floor.

The method of Gendered Interruptions and Cultural Values Mainly Hold Patterns

Persian EFL Learners: This highlights the balanced barriers, specifically when the sensitive topic supporting Tennon (1994), who joins the topic importance to engagement instead of the dominance.

Thai Classrooms: The main thing was the politeness norm where women avoided the intrusive interruptions due to the cultural element of respect.

Arab and Egyptian Media: This shows the public a competitive setting that enhances male dominance. CDA explains this as discourse depicting and reproducing social hierarchies.

Conclusion

This is the corpus based comparative study that revolves around the seven contexts including Persian

EFL Dyads, Arab politics, US congressional hearings, Thai Classrooms, Egyptian Talk Shows, focus groups and the workplace meetings depict social norms, social etiquettes and the institutional influence hierarchy, interaction goals and the topic sensitivity.

Key Findings

- Gender barriers are not universal, the male dominance mostly shows up in the public media settings and competitive settings, less so in dyads or in the educational settings.
- Women mainly focus on the self-oriented or the other oriented barriers in sensitive topics which may use the strong but the non-intrusive strategy.
- The situational hierarchy mediates interventions where the seniority matters more as compared to the gender.
- The acceptable intervention in the behavior is shaped by the cultural norms like the Thai politeness, the Egyptian public norms, and Arab public norms.
- The interruption has several functions: dominance, clarification topic management and cooperation.

Recommendations

Educational Settings

As a valid strategy teacher should recognize both the collaborative strategy and the competitive strategy. Even the sensitive topic in the discussion encourages the women to talk about the topic assertively. To teach the gender pattern effectively and the turn-taking use of the proper corpus transcripts.

Workplace Settings

Use the structured models and try to minimize the male or the senior dominance. Collaborative communication offers training. Develop the strategies and identify how gender shapes hierarchy participation.

Media and Public Discourse

The media forum should provide equal speaking opportunities. Also talk about the designed communication patterns and promote the audience's awareness of this.

Research Implications

The expansion of the corpus coverage to more context and many other languages. Also, continue integrating the CA, CDA and the corpus linguistics. In addition, the usage of longitudinal studies helps to track the minor changes in the particular norms over time.

Limitations

- The consistency might get affected by the dataset differences.

- The subject judgment is under the coding decision.
- The cultural pattern might not apply to all of the regions and varies from region to region.
- The findings are usually context based not globally universal.

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