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EXAMINING INTERRUPTION IN CONVERSATION
AMONG MIDDLE-EASTERN COUPLES

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition:
Teaching English as a Second Language


by
Khetam Dahi
June 2001

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A Thesis
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Approved by:




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ABSTRACT

Differences between male-female speech, the idea of "genderlect" has been much studied and discussed in recent years. With the advent of Tannen's (1990) book, You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation, researchers have examined gender-related patterns in conversation such as, turn-taking, the use and function of tag-questions (Cameron, McAlinden, and O'Leary, 1988), as well as minimal responses ("yeah," "right," "uh huh," etc.) and hedging ("well," "so," etc.) (Coates (1991).

One interesting feature that can tell us a lot about the interaction of the two cultures (male and female) is interruption. Researchers define interruption in a variety of ways. Generated by the popular misconception that women tend to dominate conversation, much of the early research perceived interruption as the only way for men to "get a word in edgewise." Recent Research on gender language has suggested that interruption is a more complex phenomenon than previously thought. However, most of this past research has been done on western cultures.

The purpose of my study was to examine interruption in similar conversational interaction generated by non-English speaking individuals, specifically native speakers of Arabic. This study analyzes five conversations between

Syrian couples to determine whether or not the conclusions drawn from Western cultures "genderlect" studies can be applied to Middle Eastern cultures and whether the interruption effects are gender-specific, culture-specific, or both.

The findings were surprisingly different than I initially hypothesized. In other words, women in the Middle-East are perceived as submissive, and in that, they do more listening than talking when in mixed conversations. In this study, interruptions were almost equally distributed between the males and the females. In fact, in some cases, the females interrupted more, unlike the women in Western studies, where they were found to be interrupted by men more often than the reverse, and in various ways, as you will see in chapter one.

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I would like to thank my mother and father, who are, and will always be my inspiration in life, and without their help, this wouldn't have been possible. I also want to thank my daughters Kinda and Reem for their patience and understanding of my situation as a full-time student and a working mom, and my nine brothers and sisters for their continuous encouragement, and for always being there for me.

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CHAPTER ONE
LITERATURE REVIEW

Differences between male-female speech has been much studied and discussed in recent years to show variation in how speech functions differently for men and women in conversational interactions. For example, Zimmerman and West (1975), Coates (1993), and Fishman (1980) examined gender-related patterns in conversation, such as minimal responses ("yeah," "right," "uh huh," etc.) to show how women "use them more [than men] and at appropriate moments, that is, at points in the conversation which indicate the listener's support for the current speaker" (Tannen, 1993, p.58). The same researchers also studied hedges ("you know," "well," "so," etc.) to show the different functions they serve for both men and women, and whether they are signs of weakness, as previously believed, or signs of confidence.

Similarly, interruption, another very important and interesting feature in speech, can tell us a lot about the interaction of the two cultures (male and female). Many earlier researchers have looked at interruption between males and females in different contexts. For example, Gleason and Grief (1983) examined the speech of sixteen

mothers and sixteen fathers and found that fathers were more likely to interrupt their children, particularly daughters. De Francisco (1991), in a study of seven married couples, found that there were features of talk used by men that seemed to silence women. Two of the major features were "no-response, [which] accounted for 45 percent of the total 540 violations, [and] interruptions (unattentiveness, turn-taking violations, and uncooperative behaviors), [which] were the second most common violation" (p. 178), and they accounted for twenty-four percent. In other words, sixty-five percent of the no-responses were committed by men. This illustrates that the males in the study did not accept the females' topics. According to the women, the problem was that they worked a lot harder at keeping the conversation going than men did, but were less successful at it. This was due to the many ways they were silenced by men.

In addition, West and Zimmerman (1975) recorded and analyzed naturally occurring casual conversations between five males and females on different campus locations, and found that there were 28 instances of "deep interruptions" (disrupting a turn) of which 96% were initiated by men; in every conversation the male interrupted the female more often than the reverse.

Others, like Eakins and Eakins (1976), analyzed tapes of seven university faculty meetings and found that compared with women, men took more turns at talk, spoke longer per turn and initiated more interruptions. Similarly, Willis and Williams (1976) observed simultaneous talking in a high school discussion group, a university faculty office, and a cafeteria of a university student union. In general, they found that listeners were more likely to talk simultaneously if the speaker was female, and men were much more likely to talk when a woman was speaking. Furthermore, listeners were more likely to express agreement with male speakers, while both sexes were more likely to disagree with female speakers.

These studies seem to support the popular belief that women talk too much, forcing men to interrupt in order to "get a word in edgewise." Though the majority of these studies have focused on western cultures, the same belief persists in some eastern cultures. For example, in the Middle East, where even more traditional boundaries exist between men and women, this belief is pervasive.

This study is an attempt to verify whether or not the same conclusions about male-female speech in western culture apply to the Middle Eastern. This will help determine if differences are gender or culture-specific.

I also hope to raise some awareness about the Syrian culture, the conversational styles of men and women in this culture, and also add to the understanding of how people communicate in cultures other than western.

Although no studies have been done on the above subject, my goal is to find some generalizations, patterns, or rules that can be said to represent Syrian male-female conversational styles and to provide suggestions for further research in the areas of where possibilities of miscommunications can arise.

Definition of Interruption

The term interruption in conversation may spark various ideas in different people's minds, and what one person perceives as interruption may not be interruption at all to someone else. Therefore, considering common understandings and typical definitions from various sources is very necessary to this study.

Before considering the definitions that some researchers have provided, a look at the definition in some dictionaries may be of some help. The Oxford Dictionary describes interruption as "a break of the continuous progress of an (action, speech, person speaking, etc.), and the Webster's Dictionary describes it

as "[breaking] in, with questions or remarks while another [person] is speaking."

According to Tannen (1994), "interruption is understood by most people as a hostile act, a kind of conversational bullying. The interrupter is seen as a malevolent aggressor, the interrupted an innocent victim" (p. 57). Other people think that interruptions are assumed to be intrusions, attempts to steal someone else's right to the floor, or a form of dominance or control. West and Zimmerman (1983) agree and describe interruption as "a device for exercising power and control in conversation" and "violations of speakers' turn at talk" (p. 57). Their definition is based on a model of turn-taking in conversation advanced by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), where they argue that, "one party at a time" (p.55) is the preferred order of conversational interaction from the viewpoint of speakers.

Others like Esposito (1979) considered that, "interruptions occur when speaker A cuts off more than one word of speaker B's unit-type" (Thorne, 106), a term used by Sacks et al. for appropriate turn-taking, and this includes possibly complete words, phrases, clauses, or sentences, depending on their context (Thorne, 1975). On the other hand, Laffler, Gillespie, and Conaty (1982)

define interruption as "all vocalizations where, while one subject was speaking, the other subject uttered at least two consecutive identifiable words or at least three syllables of a single word" (p. 107). This means that any overlap in the conversation is considered interruption. Bennet (1981) though, points out that, "overlap and interruption are logically different types" (p. 107). He goes on to say that overlap, (when two voices are speaking at the same time) might have some negative connotation, whereas interruption, (a violation of someone else's speaking rights) clearly has a negative connotation (p. 108).

Since it would be somewhat troublesome to attempt a precise rendering of the concept, most researchers have established certain criteria that construct proto-typical characterizations of interruption vs. overlap. These criteria are conditions which researchers believe need to exist in order for overlap to be considered interruptive, or supportive. I will consider some of these conditions in chapter four, (Subjects and Methodology). In the next section, I will present some of the functions of interruption in conversational interactions commonly present in previous research.

Functions of Interruption

The following outline describes some of the major functions of interruption in conversational interactions, which are found in the literature.

(1) Interruptions can be tools of support in a conversation. For example, Tannen (1994), in her analysis of a two-and-a-half-hour Thanksgiving dinner conversation, found that, "some speakers consider[ed] talking along with another to be a show of enthusiastic participation in the conversations" (p. 54).

Other instances of interruption can contribute positively to the talk of the current speaker. Jefferson (1973) for example, analyzes the emphatic "yeah", a type of minimal response, interjected by a speaker to display recognition of that which is in-the-course-of-being-said (Thorne, 107). In addition, (Zimmerman and West, 1977) say that items like "um hmm," "uh huh," and "yeah" are responses that can give a kind of positive reinforcement for continued talk..." (p. 109).

According to West and Zimmerman (1975), "intrusions such as [the above] display active listening or intense involvement in the conversation" (Thorne, 1975, P. 105). Furthermore, the use of "assent terms" like, "yeah," and "right" "have some facilitative warrant" (P. 105).

Zimmerman and West (1975), Fishman (1973) and Coates (1989; 1991) show that when women use minimal responses ". . . more, and at appropriate moments, that is at points in conversation...indicate the listener's support for the current speaker" (Tannen, 1984) (p. 30). They call it "support talk" (P. 30).

(2) Interruption in the form of minimal responses, according to Moerman (1987), can also ". . . provide a delicate device for cooperation" (P. 26). It shows that "parties are of single mind, for allowing them to become a single social person, together fabricating an utterance..." (p. 27). Furthermore, using responses of agreement like, ("right," "true," "uhm," or "yeah") "is relevant and often required, for conversational closure, so their evidence for describing [these overlaps] as not conflictful" (p. 27). Also, Tannen (1984) says that women use cooperative overlapping when talking among each other "to show participation and support" and try to "create a community" (P.27).

Fishman (1980) "describes women's skillful use of minimal responses in mixed interaction as 'interactional shitwork'," (Coates, 1989, P. 112) thus, cooperating with the opposite sex in more than one way. In other words, they accept the topics raised by males, try to maintain

the conversation, finish speaker's utterances to help them get to the point, and use cooperative talk like, "you're right," which all indicate their positive impact on the outcome of the conversation.

(3) Interruption is a form of control and dominance. Some people assume that only one voice should be heard at a time, "so for them, any overlap is an interruption, an attempt to wrest the floor, [and] a power play" (Tannen 1984, P. 113). In addition, Coates (1993), reminds us that "when men do use minimal responses, [as interruptions of women], [they] are often delayed, a tactic which undermines the current speaker and reinforces male dominance" (p. 113).

"Conversational dominance," according to Coates (1993), can also be "realized more through silence than through grabbing the floor, [especially] when the subjects are married couples" (p. 113). DeFrancisco (1991) asserts that in her study of conversations of seven couples, men failed to respond to women's topics 68% of the time. Her findings show that these silences were mere interruptions of the women. Sattel (1983) supports the findings and argues that "silence is used by men as part of male dominance. He claims that male inexpressiveness is a

method for achieving control in both, mixed and all-male conversations" (Coates, 114).

(4) In addition to control and dominance in the conversation, interruptions can also cause negative reactions by the current speaker. In some situations, they can appear as intrusions that 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" (Thorne, 116). In other words, the interrupted subject may drop out of the whole discussion of the topic, and the interrupters continue to pursue their own "agendas." Tannen (1984) says that the men in her study "felt interrupted by women who overlapped [them] with words of agreement and support" (p. 114). When elaborating on a story with a man, the men felt often violated in a way that they saw the interruption as an intrusion and "a struggle for the control of the conversation" (p. 114). On the other hand, women usually complain about men interrupting them, because they walk into the conversation as if it were a contest, and expect the women to also compete. Since women are not in the conversation to compete, "and have little experience in fighting for the right to be heard" (p. 114), they end up losing the floor

to men, which indicates the unfairness in time distribution to the floor, which in turn leads to a negative result.

Women also complain about men when they usurp or switch the topic they raise (a form of interruption commonly used by men with women). This is not cooperative overlapping. Therefore, it leads to a negative result again. Thus, it is not always an interruption that makes a "person's right of speaking violated," (Tannen 1984, p. 113) but just merely changing the topic, because it undermines the speaker, especially women.

Another situation where interruptions may cause negative reactions is when the listener asks many questions during the course of the speaker's floor time. Tannen (1984) calls this type of questioning "machine gun questions" (p. 114). In cases like this, the speaker might feel intimidated, violated, or even threatened. It is, though, worth noting that not all people react negatively to constant questions, since we all have different conversational styles and react differently to different issues. But Tannen (1984) says that she learned from her study of the "Thanksgiving Dinner Conversation" ". . . not to use machine gun questions or cooperative

overlapping with people who don't respond well- a tangible benefit of understanding conversational styles" (p. 114).

Interruption may have more functions than has been suggested in previous research, but nevertheless, participants in the conversations may not be aware that they are interrupting for the above particular reasons. Some people are good listeners, while others want the attention drawn to them and their topics at all times. However, researchers have suggested that interruption in conversation functions differently for men than women. In the next chapter, I will shed light on some gender-related issues in studies that have been done on Western male/female communication.

CHAPTER TWO
GENDER STUDIES

Don't count on me for logic when it comes to men.

I've had a father, a husband, a son, friends, lovers, and I still don't have the foggiest idea what men are all about. The only solid fact I cling to is that they are sure different from the rest of us (Clark, 1977, p. 5).

Anecdotal and research evidence shows that there are significant differences between the way men and women speak. These differences can lead to frustration when men and women try to converse with one another. Men and women use language for different purposes. We notice the contrast between them since childhood (Tannen, 1990). Studies have shown that "boys use talk to assert control over one another, while girls' conversations are more often aimed at maintaining social harmony" (p. 150). If, for example, we listened to girls in pre - schools as most of us have, we can see that they cooperate with each other in a conversation more than do boys their age. Many studies have shown that girls use the word "let's" as all of us in the activity, and boys seem to give orders or

commands like, "Give me that," or 'hit the ball' (Maltz and Borker, 1999).

This type of language carries on into adulthood. One reason conversations between men and women generally run smoothly, according to Tannen (1995) is that women seem to accommodate the subjects that men introduce or raise. Both men and women regard topics introduced by women as tentative, whereas topics that men bring up are more likely to be pursued. The observation that women do the "labor" of the conversations holds true, because they seem to grease the wheels of the conversation by doing more work than men to maintain the conversations. For example, men usually feel more comfortable talking about themselves to women than they do with men. And since women generally adapt to men's topics, "...conversations are likely to run smoothly, if one-sidedly" (p. 58).

Things do not run smoothly all the time though. For example, women are used to talking to other women for major emotional support, self-understanding, and understanding of others (Tannen, 1990). So, when they get intimate with men, they may start expressing their feelings about certain issues to the women, and most of the time, they may feel that "their responses are wrong" (Adler, 1995, p. 89). According to Tannen (1993); Adler

(1995); Coates (1993), instead of listening to women and making them feel better, the men in these studies make them feel worse. In other words, men start telling women what to do to solve the problem when in fact they just want them to listen and empathize with them. At this point, men usually start by saying, "Here's what you do," (Adler, 1980, p. 59) thus, taking over the conversation again, and most likely, will continue talking until the discussion is over.

Language is both a marvelous communication tool and the source of many interpersonal problems, especially between men and women. There are many differences in the ways men and women speak: the content of the conversation varies, as do their reasons for communicating and conversational styles. However, not all differences in language use can be accounted for by the speaker's gender. Occupation, social philosophy, orientation toward problem solving, and cultural background also influence the use of language and how we present ourselves in conversations (Adler, 1995).

CHAPTER THREE

SUBJECTS AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of my study is to examine interruption in interactions between Middle Eastern couples, specifically Syrians. As a member of this culture and a native speaker of Arabic, I am in a position to do this study. The study consists of conversations from five middle-class, Arabic-speaking couples from Syria.

The conversations have been translated from Arabic to English and transcribed using microanalysis. According to Hutchby and Woofit (1998), microanalysis is described as "writing down in as close detail as possible such features of the recorded interactions as precise beginning and end points of turns, the duration of pauses, audible sounds which are not words (such as breathiness and laughter)" (p. 75). In other words, I note overlaps, pause length measured in tenths of a second, intonation, shift in pitch, etc.

This microanalysis allows me to examine the fine details of interaction that are normally not available to the reader. Below, I provide transcription conventions that are based on those developed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) that are found in Hutchby, 1998.

Methods of Conversation Transcription

Vertical lines to the left of the transcribed parts indicate the English translation.

[] Brackets are used to indicate overlapping utterances.

Left brackets note beginning of the overlap, and right Brackets "close" or end the overlap.

Example: A: Shaba:::b l'telefo:n amma y'rinn?

K: [La']

A: Gu::ys is the phone ringing?

K: [No]

= The "equal" sign indicates "latching" between utterances.

Example:

A: Linda jabet "A" b'fahs al'hissab
liom=

R: =Ba'ref

A: Linda got an "A" on the math test
today=

R: =I know.

Underlining indicates speaker's stress/emphasis.

Example: K: Ullilik malion marra ma takli bi udat
l'nome

K: If I told you once, I told you a

| million times not to eat in the
| bedroom.

- ↑ Up arrow precedes an upward shift in pitch.
- ↓ Down arrow follows the end of the upward shift in the pitch.
- ? Question mark indicates a rising inflection, not necessarily a question.

Example: L: Ruhna al mall?
K: Ma'a.
L: Uhm, ah:: mama?
K: Aha::?
L: We went to the mall?
K: Wi::th.
L: Uhm, ah:: my mom?
K: Aha::?

- . Period indicates falling inflection, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
 - , Comma indicates a continuing intonation, that is, a slight stretching of sound with a very small upward or downward intonation-contour.
- (.5) Single parentheses enclosing numbers indicate pause lengths in seconds and tenths-of-seconds. A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two-tenths of a second.

Example:

K: Xalasti Wazeeftik?

(.5)

J: Uhm, ah, ba'ed indi l'hissab, bass
ashra.

(.)

M: Ahh biftikkir lazem rooh al beit
halla'.

M: Are you done with your homework?

(.5)

J: Uhm, ah, I still gotta do my math
problems, I only have ten.

(.)

M: Ahh I think I have to go home now.

: Colon indicates the extension (stretching) of the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.

Example: R: Wo:::w, hal fusta:::n!

K: Ku:::l ma::rra bitshufi shi biddik
yaha.

K: E:::very ti::me you see:: something
you wanna get it.

R: Wo:::w, that Dre:::ss!

- Hyphen following a sound indicates a cut-off, a definite stopping of the sound.

(()) A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity. For example ((banging sound. Alternatively, double brackets may enclose the transcriber's comments on contextual or other features.

Example:

R: ((yass'ol wa yanshom)) Shu bikrah
l'rasheh.

A: Eih, waka'innu ana b'hubbo
((Yaghullu janb jidatahu)).

R: ((Caughs and sniffs)) How I hate
having a cold.

A: Yeah, like I like it ((cuddles next
to his grandmother)).

hhh h's indicates audible out-breaths, sighing, hearable as unvoiced laughter.

(h) h in parentheses indicates explosive aspiration, sometimes laughter.

Example: O: hhh imtiha(h) ta(h)ni axee(h)r.

A: hhh tawell balak.

O: hhh ano(h)ther fi(h)nal exa(h)am.

A: hhh take it easy.

.h Period preceding h indicates audible in-breath.
(xx) Single parentheses indicate indistinct utterances
hearings which are in doubt).

Since Middle Eastern culture is considered a "high involvement" (Tannen, 1994) culture, not every overlap will be considered interruption. Some of them will be regarded as "cooperative overlap" (Tannen, 1994). In other words, listeners who talk along with a speaker do not necessarily talk to interrupt, but to "show enthusiastic listenership and participation" (p. 190). What will be considered interruption are overlaps that seem to disrupt and disorganize the current speaker's turn at talk.

Five different Syrian couples were recorded for analysis in this study. The couples are engaged in conversations in naturally occurring situations at home. All the participants were tape-recorded in Syria by a family member or a friend. At least one person in the conversation knew that the recorder was on, but all the participants agreed to be recorded at any time of their daily discussions. The audiocassettes were sent to me with a friend from Syria.

In addition to the recorded conversations, I called each couple over the phone (the couples know me

personally) for interviews about their perceptions of their interactions. I tape-recorded the interviews, using the loud speaker on the phone.

In the following section, I will describe and give some background of the participants in each conversation. I first present the conversations in an attempt to offer examples of couples having typical, common, daily conversations. Recorded individual interviews were also used in the analysis for ethnomethodological purpose. Then, I analyzed the conversations to determine if they met the criteria for interruptions and overlaps. I also examined each overlap to determine whether all overlaps are interruptions, or supportive responses. Finally, I analyzed the conversations to examine the interactive styles of the participants to determine whether or not the conclusions drawn from Western "genderlect" studies can be applied to Middle-Eastern cultures and whether the interruptions are gender-specific, culture-specific, or both. (All transcripts are reproduced in the appendix).

Couple #1, "Bi Beit Al Jeeran" (At the Neighbors' House), is engaged in a conversation in the presence of their neighbors, a husband and his wife. They are referred to as M2 (male), and F2 (female). The main couple in this conversation is a male, 50- a teacher, and

his wife, 36-a housewife with a Masters Degree in French. They are referred to as M1 (male), and F1 (female). The couple had just been at the neighbors' house for five minutes before the male started telling a story to his neighbors, as they sat in the living room. The conversation lasted two minutes and forty-eight seconds.

Couple # 2, "Fil Beit Ba'dama Taraku al Jeeran" (At Home, After the Neighbors Left), is the neighbor and his wife (M2 and F2 mentioned in the first conversation) having a discussion after their visiting neighbors (from conversation #1) left that night. The husband is 45 years old and is a farmer and landowner. His wife is 40 years old, has a degree in science, but does not work outside the home. She stays home and takes care of the children, and some farm animals. Their discussion took place at their house, in the living room and the kitchen, as the female moved about inside the house. Their oldest son recorded the conversation, but did not participate. The conversation lasted three minutes and fifty seconds.

I called couple # three's conversation, "Ahli Biddon Yanna N'jeeb Walad" (My Parents Want Us to have a Baby). In this discussion, we have a couple of newlyweds, who have been married for a year and a half. The husband is 24, and serving in the military. He has a degree in law

practice, and he has just come home for a couple of days. And the wife is also 24 years old. She is a pharmacist, who works in a small pharmacy in their hometown. They went to the same schools since they were children. The conversation takes place in the small apartment that was built for them above the male's parents' house. The conversation lasted two minutes forty-eight seconds.

In conversation #4, "Inna Shi Lal Akkel?" (Do We Have Anything to Eat?), we have a couple who have been together (married) for ten years. The husband is 35 years old, and has a government job. He takes the bus into the city everyday to go to and from work. The wife is 30 years old, and she is a housewife, raising three children, ranging from six to nine. In this discussion, the wife knows that the tape-recorder is on, but the husband doesn't. First, she is trying to get her husband to talk, and second, she is trying to make him go to his parent's house, for a surprise birthday party for him, even though he comes home very tired. The conversation lasts three minutes and twenty seconds.

Conversation #5, "Fattin Ijat La Inna Liome" (Fattin Came Over Today), was prompted by the female in this discussion. The discussion includes a husband, who is 60 years old, and has a government job at City Hall, and the

wife, who is 55 years old, and works as a seamstress/tailor. They have been married for 35 years, and have four grown kids who are in different colleges and towns, away from home. Here also, the husband doesn't know that he is being recorded, but the wife does. She is the one doing the recording. The wife tries to start a conversation with her husband, and this lasts for three and a half minutes, just until the husband knows they are being recorded.

Overlap Vs. Interruption

When analyzing the conversations, I consider the following:

1. Overlap: (two voices are speaking at the same time) (Tannen, 1990).
2. Interruption: (a violation of someone's speaking right) (Zimmerman and west, 1977).

In order for us to determine whether someone is overlapping or interrupting, we have to know a lot about the participants-their characters, their personalities, how long they've known each other, and how their relationship has been. With this in mind, we can determine whether the interrupter is interrupting in a supportive way- being agreeable, sympathetic, cooperative,

showing active listening, being attentive, etc., (e.g., overlapping). They could also be trying to grab the floor from the current speaker in order to control the conversation. This can be shown in many ways, such as speaking for too long of time to keep the floor, changing the topic raised by the current speaker, silencing the current speaker by constantly interrupting, offering delayed responses, which are considered by Coates (1993) as "a tactic which undermines the current speaker and reinforces...dominance" (p. 113), or just failing to respond all together (labeled the no-response) (Fishman 1978a, 1983; DeFrancisco (1991); West and Zimmerman, 1983), which detours or hinders the speaker from continuing.

Before I present the analysis, I will give the following examples to demonstrate how an overlap is considered supportive or a mere interruption. The first example will show supportive overlap. Notice that "K" interrupts "A" three times, but trying to be agreeable, and supportive of his topic:

Example #2

1. A: The soldiers
2. K: [I like those points, I think
3. A: [and the common people
an the

4. K: [Yeah
5. A: Poor peasants an the hard-working class,
and stuff like that
6. K: [Yeah

"K" is not interrupting "A" for the sake of interrupting, nor is she trying to grab the floor from him, but rather offering terms of agreement like, "yeah," and "I like those points." Tannen (1990) calls these types of interruptions "cooperative overlap," which women tend to use in mixed and same-sex conversations.

On the other hand, the second example demonstrates a clear interruption by "A":

Example # 3

9. A: =from:: AFRICAN AMERICANS (.) from the
INDIANS o nthuh o=
10. K: =Yeah you're right, he did raise a few
11. A: [Y'know? From the uh
poor
12. K: Points
13. A: From yeah
14. K: Few important points
15. A: [poor people.

Here "K" projects a TRP (Hutchby, 1998) (Transitional Relevance Place, or a possible completion point [by "A"])

(p. 75) at line nine, after "INDIANS." Obviously, the rising intonation gives "K" an indication of a possible TRP, she then tries (politely agreeing) to take the floor to speak, but does not succeed. This shows clear, constant interruptions by "A."

Analysis of Criteria and Content in Conversations

In analyzing the conversations, I consider the four criteria for overlap and the five criteria for interruption outlined below. I looked to see if each criterion was present in the interaction in order to determine whether the interruption is "overlap" or "mere interruption," as they are commonly understood. The criteria for overlap and interruption are as follows:

Criteria for Overlap

1. The overlapper uses "cooperative talk" such as, ("uhm umm," "sure," etc.). According to Zimmerman and West (1977), interruptions like the above "are responses that can give a kind of positive reinforcement for continued talk" (p. 109). Furthermore, minimal responses like 'uhm,' and 'sure' "display active listening or intense involvement in the conversation" (p. 105).

Therefore, these minimal responses are not considered interruptions, but rather overlaps.

2. The overlapper uses "terms of agreement" such as "Yeah," "you're right," "absolutely," etc. Minimal responses such as these can contribute positively to the talk of the current speaker. Jefferson (1973) for example, analyzes "the emphatic 'yeah' (a type of minimal response) interjected by a speaker to display recognition of that which is in-the-course-of-being-said" (Thorne, 107). In addition, using terms of agreement "is relevant and often required, for conversational closure, so their evidence for describing [these overlaps] as not conflictful" (p.27). Thus, it is safe to say that offering terms of agreement in any conversation can prove to be constructive and not at all disruptive.

3. The overlapper uses "supportive talk" such as, ("I know what you mean," "you're kidding?," "me too," etc.). Tannen (1984) says that women in particular, use cooperative overlapping when talking among each other "to show participation and support" (p. 27) and try to "create a community" (p. 27). Intrusions such as the above also "display active listening and intense involvement in the conversation" (Thorne, 105). These supportive overlaps also encourage additional responses from the speaker,

which helps to keep the flow of the conversation (Kramarae, 1981). After all, keeping the flow of the conversation is the goal when interacting with others. Therefore, supportive talk should not be considered interruptive, but rather mere overlap that can add to the constructiveness of the conversation.

4. The overlapper uses "sympathetic talk" such as "you poor thing," "you do what your heart tells you," "I'm sorry," etc. Minimal responses such as these can show that the listener feels with the speaker, and accepts the topic at hand. According to Coates (1991), terms of sympathy are usually associated with women, and are often used to show bonding, empathy, and that the women in essence, relate to each other's problems or feelings. So, sympathetic talk among participants can add to the interest and value of the topic and the trust of the relationship.

Criteria for Interruption

1. The listener causes disorganization in the current speaker's turn to the floor. West and Zimmerman (1977) call this "disruption" or "deep interruption" (Thorne, 105). According to them, intrusions such as these "have the potential to disrupt turns at talk, disorganize the ongoing construction of conversational topic, and violate

the current speaker's right to be engaged in speaking" (p.105). In cases like this, the interrupted speaker may drop out of the whole conversation, and the interrupter may continue to pursue their own "agendas" (p.119).

2. The listener asks too many questions during the course of the current speaker's floor time. Tannen (1984) calls this "machine gun questions." According to Tannen, in some cases, the speaker might feel intimidated, violated, or even threatened, thus, leading to a negative outcome of the discussion, since it may detour the speaker's effort to develop the conversation.

Furthermore, constantly asking questions can be annoying and frustrating when a speaker is trying to get their point across. In fact, in the court scene, this is called "breaking the momentum." This is used usually by the defense attorney in the form of not exactly machinegun questions, but in the form of constant "objections."

3. The listener changes the topic raised by the current speaker. This can occur in many ways, such as introducing a new topic, giving unrelated responses, etc. DeFrancisco (1991) gives an example of this type of interruption where she says that when her husband gets bored with her topic, "he [changes] by 'getting mushy.'" Meaning, he would make a "romantic or sexual comment to

her. In effect, she knew that the next thing he said would have nothing to do with the topic she had raised" (181). Also, introducing a new topic after the current speaker had just introduced his/her topic, as a response, can be very destructive to the flow of the conversation. It indicates to the current speaker that the listener neither approves of their topic nor is interested in developing it any further. Therefore, strategies such as these, are used by the listener for interruption

4. The listener pauses for a long period of time before responding, also called, "delayed response," "a tactic which undermines the current speaker and reinforces dominance" (Coates, 1993, p. 113). Long pauses can create awkwardness in the interaction, and may in most cases discourage the current speaker from continuing their pursue of the topic they raised, or the question they asked. They also show disrespect and disinterest of the current speaker, in a way that they might feel unimportant and discredited. Therefore, the outcome of this type of conversation is usually a negative one.

5. The listener fails to respond (also called, "the no-response"), which sometimes tends to hinder or detour the current speaker from continuing, because as Sacks (1992) remarks, when talking in interactions, it is

systematically required of "hearers to attend to what speakers are saying, and to come to and display some understanding of it" (Hutchby, 43). This mechanism is called "adjacency pairs" (Schegloff and Sacks, 1992). It means that, "whatever utterance follows a first pair part will be monitored by the first speaker for whether, and how, it works as a relevant second part" (p. 42). So, if there is no response, the first speaker won't know what to say or do next, since the listener does not give him/her any indication of approval/disapproval of the topic at hand. In effect, not responding may create conflict and confusion on the part of the current speaker.

Failure to respond may also mean "conversational dominance," which can also "be realized more through silence than through grabbing the floor, [especially] when the subjects are married couples" (p. 113). DeFrancisco (1991) shows in her findings that the instances of silence by the males in the study were mere interruptions of the women. At one point in the tape-recorded conversations in the study, a man kept leaving the room during the course of his wife's telling him a story. This not only interrupted her, but also showed the wife his "lack of attentiveness" (p. 180). According to DeFrancisco, the

husband's action (leaving the room frequently) "seemed to diffuse the woman's punch-line of the story" (p. 180).

Similarly, Sattel (1983) argues that, "silence is used by men as part of male dominance." He claims that "male inexpressiveness is a method for achieving control in both, mixed and all-male conversations" (Coates, 1993, p. 114). So, while in some cultures silence on the part of the listener may be considered a sign of agreement, according to most researchers on the subject in Western cultures, it is quite the opposite. In fact, there is a popular proverb widely used in the Arab world, "if speaking is made of silver, then silence is made of pure gold." Also, when making deals (bargaining), or when on a date with someone, it is normally implied that if the person is silent, then they are being semi-agreeable to the proposition at hand, this according to many Arabs. In my study, I have watched for instances of silence to see whether they are taken as signs of agreement or as interruptions as in previous research on western interactions.

In sum, overlapping someone in conversation is not always considered interruption and not all interruptions are considered negative by the interrupted subjects, especially in cultures that are known to be "high-

involvement" (Tannen, 1984), such as Middle-Eastern culture. Similarly, not all overlaps are considered supportive and helpful for the flow of the conversation, because for some people who prefer the model of "one-person-speaks-at-a-time," any overlap can be understood as an attempt to steal the floor. This, in effect, may cause the interrupted participant to act negatively, which would then lead to an unintended outcome. I use these criteria in the next chapter as a functioning definition of overlap vs. interruption, and apply them to my data analysis.

I determine whether the four established criteria for overlap were present in my data by the following method:

1. To ascertain if minimal overlapping responses used by the interrupter (male or female) showed cooperation in the conversation, I looked for positive reinforcement or active listening by the interrupter and signs of continued talk without disturbance. I also looked for responses such as, "uhm umm," "sure," "Ok," etc. In the next example from couple #3, the husband was discussing earlier with his wife that his parents want them to have a baby. The wife first did not show enthusiasm for the idea because they could not afford it and her husband had to finish his military training. But later, as he convinced her, she began to show signs of cooperation with her him

as he tried to get intimate with her asking her if they could go in the bedroom and start trying to have a baby right away:

Example #5

MM: Shu ra'iyik nrooh nha:::wel halla:::a?

MM: How about if we go now a:::d give it a tr:::y?

FF: [Shhhhhhhhhh

FF: [Shhhhhhhhhh

MM: Shu? (.) Ma hada hone-ala shu xaifeh? Hahhhhh? Ahli aysheen fo' mu:: bi uuditna?

MM: What? (.) Nobody is here-what's are you worried about?

Hahhhhh? My parents live upstairs, not in our bedroo:::m?

FF: ((tuhawel an tugatti an mawdoo' al mussajila)) La, la mu:: ahl::k.

FF: ((Trying to cover up for the presence of the recorder)) No, no not you::r pa::rents.

MM: [Lakan meen? Al jeeran?

MM: [Then who? The neighbors?

FF: La, la, wala shi.

FF: No, no, never mind.

MM: [tai'ib hyati

MM: [Ok my life

FF: Rooh t'hammam, wi ana lahi'tak, hehe he he he he he

FF: You go take a shower, and I will follow you, hehe he

MM: [Hehe he uh
ummeih.

MM: [Hehe he uh umm
yeah.

The husband (MM) also shows his wife that he is cooperating with her when she asked him to go ahead and take a shower and she would follow him. He overlaps her by giving a laughter of support of her idea, and he cooperates by saying "uh umm, eigh" (uh umm yeah).

2. To determine whether the overlapped responses used by the listener indicated agreement of the speaker's topic or views, I look for terms like, "yeah," "absolutely," "you're right," etc. and also examine to see if there are signs of conflict between the males and females in the conversation. In other words, if there aren't any conflicts, and the conversation seems to be going smoothly, and the overlapper (interrupting subject) is using words of agreement, then the responses have a positive effect on the outcome of the discussion. The next example comes from couple #2 where the husband is telling the kids to stop talking and yelling so they don't

wake-up their other brother, and the wife is being sarcastic about the husband's usual empty threats that she's heard a million times before:

Example #6

M2: [Haj t'sihi. Rah t'fai'I ttanni. (..) Nammu intu litnein anel ma ijji wi wiwa-b'tirifu shu ba'amil

M2: [Stop yelling. You'll weak up the other one. (..) Go to bed you two before I come and and-you know what I'll do

F2: [Eih ya'wlad, b'tirifu shu bia'mil-mumkin yi'milkon muhadara lilmote <hehe he he he he he he he he he

F2: [Yeah kids, you know what he'll do-he might lecture you to death< hehe he he he he he he he he

M2: [Shu sirti komeediyeh aaxer hal lleil heheh he he he he he he

M2: [You are turning into a comedienne late tonight hehe he he he he he he

F2: [Hehe he he he-Bas habbi nnam mabsoota-mab hob nam b'afkar sayi'aa-b'tarif.

F2: [Hehe he he he -I just want to go to bed happy-I hate to sleep on a bad note- you know that.

M2: [Eih ba'rif.

(.)

M2: [Yeah I know.(.)

F2: [birtah

aktar heik

F2: [I'll

feel better this way

M2: [saheeh

M2: [Right

First the husband gets touchy when his wife makes fun of him about "mumkin yi'milkon muhadara lilmote" (he might lecture you to death." But then the wife explains that she

just likes to "nnam mabsoota" ("go to bed happy"). The husband then offers her terms of agreement as we see in the above example, "Eih ba'rif," and "saheeh" ("yeah I know," and "right"). This, in effect, leaves the couple to go to bed on good terms.

3. To ascertain if the overlapping minimal responses were used by the interrupter as supportive talk, I looked for active participation and listening and a sense of community between the male and the female to determine whether these responses kept the conversation flowing, and whether the speaker understood them as supportive.

FF: I guess we have to do it sooner or later. I just want you to know that it is very expensive. The whole process from start to finish, and believe me, it DOES NOT end. Heh hehe he he he he he he he he he he he he

We see above that the wife feels that she needs to support what her husband is saying, and she offers him minimal responses such as, "Ba'rif, "ba'rif" ("I know," "I know"). We also see that the man took it as supportive, because he had the courage to ask her again "shu ra'yik?" ("What do you think?"). In other words, the husband could sense that his wife is beginning to weaken by showing signs of support, and that encourages him to ask her again about the idea of having a baby. The result is positive, because the wife then responds by saying, "Hu'ue awalan wa axeeran bidna ni'malha" ("I guess we have to do it sooner or later").

4. To determine whether the overlapped responses were used by the listener to show sympathy, I looked for words or phrases (as mentioned in the criteria) and also examined the outcome of the discussion to see if the speaker understood these responses as sympathetic or interruptive. Example #9 will demonstrate how offering sympathetic responses to one's partner can encourage

him/her to also be more understanding and sympathetic too. The example comes also from couple #3, where the discussion leads the wife to start crying, and the husband feels bad, but he offers her sympathetic talk, which calms her down a bit:

Example #9

MM: [La tibki? Min fadlik la tibki. ANA HOAN
yomein.

MM: [Don't cry? Please don't cry. I'm
here for TWODAYS

FF:

[Aasfi, ta'ieb, shu ahlak?

FF: [I'm sorry, Ok, what about your parents?

As we see above, with the response from the wife, it is clear that her husband's overlapping minimal responses of sympathy not only makes her stop crying, but also prompts her to apologize to him, and she is willing to listen to what he has to say. Therefore, the outcome is a positive one in this case, since the communication is still open and the couples are on good terms at this point.

Next, I determined whether the five established criteria for interruption were present in my data by the following method:

1. To determine whether an interruption is a "deep interruption," I looked at the length of the interruption and also at the speakers' reactions to see whether they took the interruptions as violations of their turn to the floor. In the next example, I will show how a deep interruption affects the outcome of the discussion negatively. The example came from couple # 4, where the husband comes home and his wife doesn't have food ready. The wife tries to explain to him why, but the husband interrupts her:

Example #10

B: Ana ult inni

B: Did I say that I

A: [Laa ma ulti, bass aa::::ref, lianno lau tabxa shi, ma bitisalini shu bidi aakol.

(.5)

A: [No you didn't, but I kno::::w, because if You had cooked anything you wouldn't have asked me what I wanted to eat.

(.5)

B: Ma::::

B: *I didn::::'t*

A: [Ma:::: ruhti al sooq wa majibti akkil,wa ↑ma
ma

ma ma ma ↓. Jeebili shi a::klu mani Ma:kel too:::l al
nahar.

A: [You::: didn't go to the store, and you
didn't cook anything, and ↑ bla bla bla bla bla ↓ .
Get me something to eat I haven't ea:ten anything all
day.

Not only does the husband interrupt his wife twice, but in a very intimidating and controlling way. He also doesn't let her finish her sentence, on both occasions, where he steals the floor from her and tells her to go and get him something to eat. This of course, gives him the freedom not to listen to what she has to say, which in effect, is very disruptive to the wife, and makes it very difficult for her to do what she planned to do, which is to trick him into going to his parents' house for a surprise Birthday party for him.

2. I looked for constant questions posed by the interrupters to determine whether they were using a strategy known as "machine gun questions" Tannen (1984) to see if it was detouring the speaker, or making him/her feel intimidated, violated, or threatened to the point that they couldn't seem to develop the conversation. An example of that came from couple #1, where the husband is trying to tell his neighbor about an incident that

occurred earlier in the day, but his wife keeps interrupting with constant questions to the point of frustration on the husband's part, especially because he is being interrupted in front of his next-door neighbors:

Example #11

M1: Yazalami! Al wahed ma lazem yusaid ay hada mitlu.

Hayawan ya zalami!

M1: Man! You should never help anybody like him. He he he's just a jerk man!

F1: [Leish? Lianno ma dayyanna masari liom?]

F1: [Why? Bbbbecause he didn't loan us some money this morning?

M1: [Meen haka ala ay khara dain?

M1: [Who said anything about any stupid loan?

F1: [Lakan leish ya' ni hayhhhh

F1: [Then why is he ahhhhh

M1: [Kam marra ultillik WA'AT BIHKI USSA trikihnh nhhhni b'HAhali? Bididi ikzib ((inza'aja))

M1: [How many times have I told you that WHEN I TELL A STORY lea:::ve me::: alo:::ne? I WANT to lie. ((getting angry with his wife))

F1: [Leish la tikzib? Mafi da'I lal kizib.

F1: [Why lie?

You don't have to lie.

M1: Lainnu heih b'hob

M1: Because I like it

F1: [Leish ma b'tihki al ha'ee'a wa

F1: [Why don't you just tell the truth an

M1: [La heik ma

bhob itla' ma'ik ala mahal, lawma hdole jiranna, ma-
ifta ya zalami!

M1: [That's why

I don't like to go with you anywhere, if these
weren't our neighbors-oh man!

Though the husband admits that he likes to lie a little when telling a story, he seems to be frustrated and embarrassed over being constantly asked intimidating and threatening questions by his wife in front of his neighbors. It's clear through the conversation between him and his male neighbor that his wife does this to him often. As we see, the outcome is negative. At the end of the conversation, for instance, he tells his wife: "La heik mabhob itla' ma'ik ala mahal" ("That's why I don't like to go anywhere with you").

3. I also looked at the conversations to see if the males or the females tried to change the topic originally raised by the current speaker, using previously researched strategies such as introducing a new topic or offering unrelated responses.

4. To determine whether the responses were delayed, I timed the pauses starting at the end of the current speaker's turn to the beginning of the listener's response (pauses of 1.5 seconds and up were considered delayed responses). According to Hutchby (1998), long pauses can affect what comes next. In other words, delayed responses can affect what the listener may say or how they will react after. They can also be used as tools for control and dominance of the conversation, as suggested by Coates (1993).

5. Finally, I looked at instances where the listener failed to respond to determine whether they had a negative effect on the outcome of the discussion, as Coates (1993) and DeFrancisco (1991) point out in their studies. I also looked for instances where the listeners left the room, opened or closed the door, or talked to the dog, , while the other person was still talking, because these actions are also considered interruptions.

Analysis of Interactive Styles

In analyzing the interactional styles of the participants, I consider four different features (hedges, tag questions, information-seeking questions and minimal responses), described in Pilkington's (1992) and Coates' (1996) studies as associated with female interactional styles. I also considered one feature called, *musayara* that is particularly related to Arabs' conversational style observed by Greifat and Katriel (1993), and one other feature, which is called *mujamala* and is also widely known in the Arab world. I was interested in whether these features were present in my study of male-female interaction, and how frequently they were used by both genders. A description of each feature and an explanation of how I analyzed them follow:

1) Hedges. Hedges include responses such as, (well, you know, kinda, sort of, like, etc.). Coates describes this feature as a strategy that helps to avoid conflict among participants in a discussion. This is also referred to as being indirect among Arabs. Arabic-speaking people define hedging as reserving the right to come back to the conversation or avoid giving a direct answer. An example of hedging can be demonstrated in the following example that came from couple # 2, where the husband (M2) had just

been telling his wife how much it bothered him to witness his neighbor being interrupted by his wife constantly. The wife disagrees but hedges in her answer to avoid conflict:

Example # 12

M1: Wala shi. (.3) Bass djeeranna. DAYman b'ta'amil heik fih.

M1: *Oh, nothing. (.3) Just our neighbors. She does this to him EVERYtime.*

F1: Lau ma b'ti'mil fih heik, bi dall y'guirr, b'ta'arifu inta?

F1: If she doesn't, he will just go on, and on, you know him?

M2: [wa iza kan, ma lâzem kanat t'atuu wa hu'weh am yihkili shagli. Ma kan b'yamma b'nohhb.

(.2)

M2: [Still, she shouldn't interrupt him in the middle of telling me something. He wasn't even in her direction.

(.2)

F2: Ehheh, ma bidda y'qul shi sa'ye'e ala Abou Nabeel, wa ba'edain sammaa Abou Najwa min al bidayii la y'hinu, Wa la ana habbeit heik.(..)

F2: Well, she didn't want him to say anything bad about

Abou Nabeel, and then he called him Abou najwa from the beginning to insult him. I didn't like that either. (...)

When the wife (F2) sees her husband getting defensive about his friend, she decides to soften her response by saying "ehheh, ma bidda y'uul shi sa'ye'e ala Abou Nabeel, wa ba'edain sammaa Abou Najwa min al bidayii la y'hinu, Wa la ana habbeit heik" ("well, she didn't want him to say anything bad about Abou Nabeel, and then he called him Abou Najwa (his daughter's name) from the beginning to insult him").

As a result of the wife softening her argument, the husband (M2) comes back with a hedge himself, and says, "bass ala al aqall ma tadaxalti. . . ." ("but at least you didn't get involved"). This way he's not confrontational, and at the same time he reminds his wife not to get involved in men's talk next time as did his neighbor's wife.

2) Tag Questions. As stated by Coates, a tag question "switches the utterance from being a statement to being a question" (p. 175). It also switches a potentially rude request or order to a polite request, for example, "shut the door," as opposed to "shut the door, won't you please? Tag questions are also used to "invite

other speakers to participate, to draw them into conversation" (p. 192). This is used often among Arabic speakers. For example, I heard a woman talking to her friend Mary about a party that took place the night before. She then asked her in the form of a tag question, "Hala kteer kanet jameeli bil hafli, ma heik Mariam? (Hala looked very beautiful at the party, isn't that right Mariam?). At that point, Mariam was actually invited also to tell her view of how Hala looked. Thus, in addition to inviting other participants to the conversation, tag questions can sometimes draw personal or needed information from them, which may be useful to the other listeners.

3) Information-seeking Questions. A major function of questions, according to Coates, is to "invite [participants] to tell stories" (p. 265), which in turn prompts conversation among all participants. For example, Example # 13

Nada: b'tiftikri fustana jdeed, aw had li libsatu ala ummad Amer? (Do you think her dress was new, or that's the dress she wore to Amer's Baptism?)

Mary: La, la, hada jdeed, jabitu xsoosi la hay al hafli (No, no, she got it especially for this party).

In this case, Mary said, "La, la, hada jdeed, jabitu xsoosi la hay al hafli" (No, no, she got it especially for this party). Thus, Nada got the information she needed by this type of questioning and at the same time invited Mary to participate in the conversation.

4) Minimal Responses. Minimal responses such as "yeah" and "mm-hmm" can be very encouraging and supportive in a conversation (Pilkington, 1992). As I mentioned earlier in the criteria for overlap, minimal responses can be in the form of supportive talk, terms of agreement, or terms of sympathy. All of this can be very constructive in the development of the topic at hand, for they show good listenership and attentiveness on the part of the listeners, and are also supportive of the current speaker. The next example, which came from appendix F, will demonstrate how the female (K) in the conversation shows her active listening by using minimal responses in the form of terms of agreement:

Example # 14

1. A: [and if I changed my tone an if I lay out
2. a couple of jokes or if I (.1) even
3. K: [I understand
4. though he wus funny at a time. You have to admit
5. that=

6. K: =Yeah, yeah he was

7. A: [He's said a I mean he's out there

8. jus' to: (.2) basically:: .hhhh plant Some doubts

9. in you.

10. K: [Right, right

As we can see in the above example, "K's" minimal responses do not hinder the speaker, but rather encourage him to keep talking, since he is receiving support from his wife.

5) Musayara. This is a widely known characteristic of most Arabic-speaking people's conversational style, and refers to "going with" or "accompanying" one's partner in conversation. It is also "associated with an other-oriented, "humoring," "conciliatory" attitude, with individuals' effort to maintain harmony in social relations" (Greifat and Katriel, 1989, p. 120). In Brown and Levingson's (1987) terms, doing musayara involves an "array of politeness strategies designed to signal concern with one's interlocutor's positive face wants, that is, indications of support for the other's image of him- or herself" (p. 87). Therefore, there's a great deal of emphasis on displays of involvement and participation, "such as being accessible in the sense of being prepared to give one's time and attention whenever this is

required" (Greifat and Katriel, p. 120). This is why some of our younger members are often accused by their elders of failing to act with *musayara* when, for example, they limit their visit to some relatives, do not visit them as often as they should, or are not always available for conversation with elder people (who according to the younger generation, live in the slow-paced life still).

Moreover, the younger members feel that the pace of modern life and many demands placed on them, especially when their work takes them outside the community proper, make it impossible for them to abide by the rules of *musayara* (Greifat and Katriel, 1993). Some semiformulaic expressions used by Arabs about *musayara* are: "musayara is in the blood of every Arab person"; "you drink it with your mother's milk"; "it's in the air, you breath it in" (p. 121).

6) Mujamala. This term comes from the verb *jamala*, which is also derived from the adjective *jameel*, which means beautiful. Therefore, when doing *mujamala* to someone, you are treating them with niceness, or beautifying the situation by saying something nice.

Unlike *musayara*, *mujamala* is the employing of inner emotions and the overuse of flattery. This, according to many Arabs, is to show that you are very impressed by what

the speaker has to say. Doing mujamal can also add to the positive feedback. Furthermore, Mujamala is used more in social circles than in political circles. For example, if someone died in your town, and you never liked him/her, you are still expected to show mujamala to the family by showing up at the funeral, and you might even have to say something nice about that person. In this case, you do not have to deal with that person anymore, and at the same time, you are respecting yourself and the family of the diseased. Also, people who don't believe in holidays like Christmas or Easter, might show mujamala to their neighbors by visiting them on those days and taking gifts to their children. This maintains the close relationship that neighbors ought to have with one another, according to the cultural traditions in Syria (S. Dahi).

Thus, mujamala is usually used in social relations. The relationship between the individual and his community almost requires him/her to demonstrate a certain positive attitude that doesn't necessarily represent their true feelings. For example, when you see a relative whom you are not even fond of, you are still expected to plant an artificial smile on your face to show the person that you are happy to see him. The same can be said about similar

relationships when individuals show required affection that is not necessarily genuinely felt (S. Dahi).

In the next chapter, I looked for instances such as the above examples to see whether or not they were utilized in the same manner and functioned the same way as has been previously suggested.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, I will describe the findings of the analysis of the five conversations between the couples. The analysis will show which criteria of overlap and interruption were met by each couple, and compare the extent to which each aspect of interruption was exhibited. I will also discuss which features of interactive styles were observed in each conversation and how much each feature was used. All the above will help me determine whether certain features can be said to represent Middle-Eastern cultures in terms of conversational styles, and whether or not these features function differently for Western and Middle Eastern men and women.

Table 1 shows the time duration of each conversation. The shortest conversations are from couple #1 and #3, both lasting two minutes and forty-eight seconds each, and the longest is from couple #4, lasting about three minutes and fifty seconds. The total time of all interactions is fourteen minutes and eighty-six seconds. (See table 1 on next page).

Table 1. Length of Conversations

Couple #1	Couple #2	Couple #3	Couple #4	Couple #5	Total
2:48	3:50	2:48	3:20	3:30	14:86

Table 2 shows detailed results of the use of overlap (as defined earlier) in the interactions of the five couples. As can be seen, the most common type of overlap was in the form of agreement, with three males and one female exhibiting this pattern.

Overall, supportive talk in the form of agreement, cooperation, and sympathy (features associated with women's language) seem to be equally distributed among the males and the females in the study, as we can see in table 2 on the next page. This is a phenomenon that had not been present in previous studies on western communication.

Table 2. Usage of Supportive Overlap by the Men and Women in the Data

	Couple # 1		Couple # 2		Couple # 3		Couple # 4		Couple # 5		Total	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Cooperative talk	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Terms of agreement	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Supportive talk	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sympathetic talk	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	2

Table 3 shows detailed results of different types of interruptions (as described earlier) by both, the men and women in the conversations. We see that in couple # 2, the female interrupted her husband 9 times as opposed to 11 instances of interruption committed by her husband, and in couple # 3 the female committed 10 compared to her 8 by her husband. Couples # 2 and 3 did the most number of deep interruptions in all the conversations. Couples # 1 and 5 committed the least amount of interruptions, ranging between 2-4 each person. The total interruptions by all women in the study are 31, and the total number of interruptions by all men combined, are 31.

Machine gun questioning only shows up in the conversations of couple # 1, where the female used this

strategy with her partner on three occasions, and in couple # 5, where the male committed this same act on three different occasions. The rest of the couples did not show any signs of utilizing this strategy of interruption.

While change of topic is not present in any of the couples' discussions, we see that delayed responses were offered in three of the couples. In all the conversations, there was no sign of failure to respond, whether by the males or the females in the study (See table # 3 on the next page). However, previous studies on Western men and women's communication found that men were more likely to commit this act when conversing with women than the reverse.

Table 3. Instances of Interruption by the Women and Men in the Data

	Couple # 1		Couple # 2		Couple # 3		Couple # 4		Couple # 5		Total	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Deep interruptions	4	4	9	11	10	8	6	6	2	2	31	31
Machine gun questions	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	3	4
Change of topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delayed Responses	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	2	4	3
Failure to Respond	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4 displays the features of interactive style that were exhibited by the women and the men in the study. As can be seen, hedges were the most frequently occurring feature, where they accounted to 17 times by all the women combined, and 12 times by all the men combined. This finding is very similar to those of previous studies on Western women. The least amount of hedges used, were in

couple # 1, where only the male used hedges on one occasion.

Tag questions, another feature associated with women's language, was used only by the male from couple # 5 on three occasions. There were a total of thirteen information-seeking questions used among all the participants, eight of which were used by the males. This was also an interesting finding, since this feature is also known to be associated with women in previous findings. As can be seen, Couple # 1 used the least amount of Information-seeking questions, which was one by the female and one by the male. The most of those types of questions came from couple # 5, and there were two by the female and two by the male.

The couples displayed a total of six minimal responses-five by the women and one by the men. The most minimal responses came from the conversation of couple # 5, totaling two by the female and one by the male, and the least number of minimal responses were in couples # 1 and 3, which was zero.

Surprisingly, there were no instances of musayara or mujamala in any of the conversations from my data. These are features of interactive styles known to Arab men and women. (See table 4 on next page).

Table 4. Features of Interactive Styles

	Couple # 1		Couple # 2		Couple # 3		Couple # 4		Couple # 5		Total	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Hedges	0	1	4	6	4	1	4	2	5	2	17	12
Tag Questions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Information-seeking Questions	1	1	1	2	1	2	0	1	2	2	5	8
Minimal Responses	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	5	1
Musayara	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mujamala	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Judging the couples' conversations by the criteria for defining overlap and interruption established in chapter four, the women in the data actually offered less overlapped minimal responses in the form of supportive talk, terms of agreement, cooperative talk, and sympathetic talk than men did. In other words, the men displayed more supportive talk than did women-fifty-four percent to forty-six percent of all occurrences, and that is contrary to previous studies, which found that supportive talk is a feature usually associated by women in mixed, and same sex conversations.

Also, in terms of accounting for overlaps and interruptions, overlaps in western studies meant that if the current speaker was overlapped by the listener with up to two syllables, and anything over this would be considered interruption. In my study of Arabic-speaking couples however, overlaps were longer - up to three words or more sometimes. This was determined by looking at the reactions by the current speakers. In other words, if the overlapped part of the conversation did not create conflict or disturbance in the conversation, then I

considered it an overlap, since as I mentioned earlier, the Arab culture is considered a high-involvement culture. This means not all overlaps are considered interruptions.

Also, contrary to previous findings of other researchers, deep interruptions were distributed equally among the men and women in the data. Out of 61 deep interruptions committed, fifty percent was displayed by the women and fifty percent by the men. Previous findings showed that not only men interrupted women more often than the reverse, but also were more likely to display deep interruptions in mixed conversations. Again, this was not the case in my data.

Again, the equal distribution of these interruptions could be due to the fact that Syrians are from a "high-involvement" culture, which means that people tend to talk at the same time, and that is not necessarily a bad thing. This means that the majority of the subjects in the study did not show indications of feeling interrupted. There is always an exception though. For example, in the conversation from couple # 1, the wife kept interrupting her husband, which created a conflict, and a negative outcome, where the husband got angry, and stopped telling his story to his neighbor. As a result, the wife ended up going with her friend to the kitchen. When I asked the

wife why she interrupted her husband often, she responded, "Awwalan bi allef ussas, taniaan be'eed shaglat ayyelli'yaha min abel, ishreen marra" ("First, he makes up stories, second, he repeats things that he has told me before, at least twenty times"). In this case, it is not a typical style or pattern that is representative of most Arabs, but rather a special case relating to this particular couple. I say this because I did not see this in the rest of the data.

During the interview, four out of five men said that their wives interrupted them often, and they did not like that, especially in front of other people, as we saw in couple # 1. Similarly, four out of five women said that their husbands interrupt them all the time, and sometimes it bothered them. In fact, one woman told me that whenever her husband does that to her in public, she knows that she needs to "uskot" (shut-up). When I asked her husband why he interrupted her often, he said that "la innu ba'ref bil zabt shu bidha t'uul" (because I know exactly what she is going to say next." To that, the wife laughed and said, "Wala marra b'ta'rif shu biddi uul, bass ana buskot mishan ma nitxana'" ("you never know what I am going to say, I just don't say anything, so we don't fight").

Though the majority of men and women in the conversations didn't seem to complain about being interrupted, they were, nevertheless, right about their perceptions of each other when it comes to interruptions in conversational interactions.

In addition to speaking at the same time as the current speaker, interruptions can also be in the form of "machine gun questions," as we discussed in chapters three and four. Previous research found that this was a tactic used usually more by men to intimidate women, or pose a threat on them, and, in effect, undermine them in the discussion. This type of interruption was not used often by the men or women in my data. There were only seven instances combined from all couples-42.8 percent by women and 47.2 percent by men.

Though the average usage of machine gun questions (as a form of interruption) was only three by women to four by men, it still shows that men use it more often than women, which is also the case in previous studies. However, my data could be inaccurate in the true representation of this sort of interactional style because some of the participants were aware of the tape-recording, and maybe have held back their real style. I say this because according to the women in the study, five out of five said

that their husbands use that tactic with them, especially when they want them to "nhull annon" ("get off their backs").

On the other hand, when I asked the men if their wives used machine gun questions with them, four out of five said that they do not let them ask them too many questions, "la manu tabee'I innu al mara' tis'al jozza kteer as'ila" (No, it's not normal for a woman to ask her husband many questions), one man said. And another man told me that "la ana bi'mil illi biddiah, la ma b'tistargi tisal, liannu ana b'asseb bi wjhaha fawran, hehe hehe he he he bit uum hiieh bitwa'iff" ("No I do what I please, no, she doesn't have the guts to ask me, because I blow up in her face right away, hehe hehe he he he then she stops").

Another man said that his wife interrupts him with "asi'la saxeefa dayman, mishan tiz'ijni, b'ta'rif inni binzi'ij wa bit'dall ti'imilha" ("stupid questions always, so to make me angry, she knows that it makes me angry and she still does it"). This is the same man whose wife kept interrupting him and interrogating him in front of his neighbors. Therefore, he was right about his perception of his wife in the interactions. This, of course is also contrary to patterns reported in previous studies, which

found that women are not usually associated with using machine gun questions to interrupt men.

Many previous researchers found that men in their studies practiced the "trick" or strategy of changing the topic when in mixed conversation, but this feature was not present in my data at all, whether among men or women. An example of changing a topic would be to introduce a new one, which would undermine the current speaker and disregard their topic. The lack of this feature in my data could be due to the fact that most of the conversations occurred at home, where the husband would not see the need for changing his wife's topic, since there would be no other people to criticize her, as one of the male subjects told me, "bhawel gayyer al hadeeth, liannu al nass bi'yintiqdooaha ba'ath marrat, b'uum ana b'hassen al umoor" ("I try to change the topic, because people criticize her sometimes, so I make the situation better").

Delayed responses are another feature of talk known to be associated with men more than women, but in my data, the women used delayed responses more than men. The results were four to three-47.2 percent by women and 42.8 percent by men. According to previous research, delayed responses is a tactic used by men to show their

disinterest in the women's topics, and to detour them from getting to the point. But according to my data, and the responses from the couples' interviews on the subject, women use delayed responses to avoid conflict with their husbands. One woman told me that sometimes she doesn't respond right away, because her husband is "m'assib" (angry), so she waits a while until he calms down, and then she responds. Another woman told me that sometimes, if the topic is sensitive, she tries not to argue back and forth, but rather "bistanna shwai, w ba'dain bitdaxal minshan ma nitxana'" ("I wait a little bit, then I enter the conversation to avoid fighting").

Therefore, our understanding of delayed minimal responses in the West is different than my subjects' understanding of it in the Middle-East. This could be the reason why women in my data displayed more of the above feature than men did.

Another feature that is also recognized as a type of interruption by previous researchers is "failure to respond." This was not present in my data, and I was surprised to see that result, because according to the women's answers in the interview, four out of five complained that their husbands ignore them often, and act as if they don't hear them: "ba'ath marrat bihki, bihki ma

bi rud allayi, huwwe bikoon sama'anni, bass ma biddo y'jaweb, xassatan ala shaglat al awlad" ("Sometimes I talk and talk and he doesn't answer me, he hears me, but doesn't want to answer, especially about kids' stuff").

Therefore, the results in my data do not support previous findings, which show that men fail to respond more often than do women in mixed conversation, nor the participants' perceptions of each other, when it comes to the "no response" feature.

As far as conversational style is concerned, not all the features of interactive styles listed in table # four (in chapter three) were exhibited by the participants. The features that were least exhibited were musayara, and mujamala. In fact, they were never displayed in any of the conversations. This was another result that was not expected, for those features are known to be the most commonly used among Syrians, and Arabs in general. The reason they were not found in my data could be due to the fact that husbands and wives do not have to do that with each other, for they would not take each other seriously if they did musayara with each other (Greifat and Katriel, 1989).

Thus, these features may be used in social situations outside the home, where people would expect you to act a

certain way with certain people of the community. Also, as a few men and women told me in the interview that the younger generation has been trying to move away from using this type of interactive style, for it places them in a position of submission and conformity, and they simply do not have the time nor the energy to follow all these cultural/social norms that the older generation expects them to practice. Greifat and Katriel share this view and assert that the younger members feel that the pace of modern life and many demands placed on them, especially when their work takes them outside the community proper, make it impossible for them to abide by the rules of musayara.

As for other features, hedges were the most frequently used among all the couples, where they amounted to twenty-nine times, seventeen of those exhibited by all women combined and twelve by all men combined, 55.5% to 41.1%. According to Coates (1996) and other researchers on the subject, hedging is a feature typically used by women. This finding is also apparent in my data. It was also apparent that the women used them to soften their responses, whereas men used them when they were not sure of what they were going to say. In other words, men did

not use hedges to be in any way sensitive of the women's feelings about their responses.

Another feature that was displayed often among the couples was information-seeking questions. They amounted to thirteen times- five by the women and eight by the men. This was not agreeable with previous findings, for this feature is also known as typical of women's interactive style. According to Coates (1996), information-seeking questions "invite participants to join in the conversation," because when you ask a question, you typically get an answer. In effect, the person answering is invited to join in, and this can add to the duration and the interest of the conversation. In my data, the men, contrary to previous research, asked the women more questions that required answers. However, when I examined the questions men asked of women, the majority of them seemed to play a role of intimidation and interrogation rather than seeking information, and perhaps this explains why the men exhibited more of this feature than the women did, since women are not usually confrontational with men (Tannen, 1990).

Tag questions were also used, but only by the male from couple # 5 on three separate occasions. No instances of tag questions were used by the women in the data.

Again, this is a feature that is typical of women's language according to Coates (1996), and according to the comments that the women gave me during the interview. For example, one woman said that, "B'hiss innu ara'a w an'am wa't b'hki b'tareea gier mubashara, akthar ihtiram" ("I feel it's softer and more elegant when I speak in an indirect way, it's more respectful").

My data on the other hand, shows a different result—three instances by the men, compared to zero by the women. My findings from the conversations could be due to the fact that I did not examine enough conversations from the same couples to see if this was a recurring pattern when husbands talk with their wives. Also, the men might not use tag questions in same sex conversations or in social situations, where they may have to show their machoism, as expected in Middle-Eastern cultures (Sharabi, 1989). In other words, the men in the study might have felt comfortable enough with their wives to use tag questions.

This study shows that men offer more supportive and cooperative overlap (as commonly known, and as it was defined by other researchers in the criteria, in chapter four) than women. This suggests that there may be differences in male/female interactions cross-culturally,

since previous research on the same subject showed different results (exactly the reverse).

As far as interruptions are concerned, the overall number of all types of interruptions were distributed equally among the men and women in the study. In other words, there were seventy-six interruptions in all the conversations; fifty percent were exhibited by the men and fifty percent by the women. This, according to previous research, is not typical of Western couples, but in my study of Syrian couples, it seems to be the case. My analysis could have had a different outcome did I have more data from people of different age groups, different towns, or different socio-economical status. Therefore, I am not suggesting that this is representative of all Syrian men and women, but merely saying that this was the outcome in my particular study. However, my findings may suggest the need to further investigate the applicability of findings on western male/female conversational features to Middle-eastern communication.

This study also demonstrates the different features of interactive styles. Some features associated with women's language were exhibited by the men in the data more often. For example, tag questions and information-seeking questions were used more often by men, a feature

that has been associated with women in Western studies. This suggests that the men in the data may be more inclined than women to use these features within the privacy of their own home, and with their own partners, rather than in social circles.

To my knowledge, this is the first study on interruption and interactive features among Arab couples. It would also be interesting to see a similar study done on a larger group of Syrian couples that would represent most socio-economical classes, and compare them to studies on other Arab couples in different Arab countries. This could give us an idea of certain patterns, rules and norms that can be said to represent male/female Arabs' interactive styles in the Middle-East, and potential variation across different Arab groups. It would also be enlightening to see studies done on Arab men and women in different social situations and compare their interactive styles to the results in my study (at home).

Another area of further research might involve investigating how men and women interact with each other in same-sex conversations, and comparing the findings to those in my study. This could show the different conversational styles of men and women in their own communities, and add to our understanding of the

different, cultural-specific and gender-specific norms in that particular culture in various contexts.

Further research in these areas could provide more information on not only the gender differences in the Middle-East, but may also invite researchers from other nationalities to do similar studies relating to their own styles in conversational interactions that occur in daily conversations among members of their communities, and this, in an effort to foresee where miscommunication may arise. By doing so, we can help eliminate communicative conflict between not only men and women in particular cultures, but also men and women across cultures.

APPENDIX A

COUPLE #1 - FI BEIT AL JEERAN

M1: ((yuhawelu an yahki quissatan li jiranihi)) Ya zalami (.) Amma Abou Najwahhh (.)

M1: ((Trying to tell a story to his neighbors, husband and wife, with his wife also present)) Mahhhn (.) Isn't (.) Abou Najwahhh (.) something?

F1: [Hahha, ballash!]

F1: [Hahha, here he goes!]

M1: [Shu asdik, (.), ballash? Inti b'ta'arifi ala shu ana ambihki?

M1: [What do you mean, here he goes?

F2: Xallih yihki, ma aleish.

F2: Let him go on, it's Ok.

M1: Ya zalami! Al wahed ma lazem y'sa'ed ay hada mitlo. W'lik lik lik hayawan!

M1: Man! You should never help anybody like him. He he he's just a jerk man!

F1: [Leish? Lianno ma dayyanna masari liom?]

F1: [Why? Bbbecause he didn't loan us some money this morning?

M1: [Meen haka ala ay khara dain?

M1: [Who said anything about any stupid loan?

F1: [Lakan leish ya' ni hayhhhh

F1: [Then why is he
ahhhhh

M1:

[Kam

Marra ultillik WA'AT BIHKI USSA trikihkh nhhni b'HAhali? Bididi ikthib

((inza'aja))

M1: *[How many times have I told you that WHEN I TELL A STORY lea::::ve me:::: alo::::ne? I WANT to lie. ((getting angry with his wife))*

F2: Kammil ya zalami, al niswan bi yi' milu heik shaglat mishan y' dallu mithakmin fina heh hehe heh heheh heh hehe.

F2: *Continue man, women do this to stay in control of us hehe heh heheh heh hehe.*

M1: [lahhhh, marti dayman bi' taamil heik la txadjilni. Btimbisit waat bitkathibni uddam el aalam.

M1: *[Nohhhh, my wife always does this to embarrass me. She's happy when she makes me look like a liar in front of people.*

F1: [hadol jeeranna! Wa wa wa w ana ma bhib waat bit KABBIR al ussas, bikabbiron la .hhhhh,

F1: *[These are our neighbors! And an an an I don't like when he makes the stories BIGGER. He makes them a lot bigger to .hhhhh,*

M1: [La shu? Lahhhh ddahik al aalam? Aiy, HAYI JARimi!

M1: *[To what? Tohhhhh make people laugh? Oh yeah, THAT IS A HUGE CRIME!*

F2: [ballah xallih yinhi ussto la Sami, wa ana wa inti min rooh al matbax ndjiblon shi yakluhhh.

F2: *[Please let him finish
telling his story to Sami, and you and I will go to the kitchen and bring them
something to eat.*

M1: *[Aih, ballah xudecha min hone MI FADLIK la ikdir ihki ma'a djari,
heh heheh heh he he he he*

M1: *[Yeah, won't you take
her*

PLEASE from here so I can talk with my neighbor, heh heheh heh

M2: *Heheh heheh heh heheh heh heheh he he heh he he heh hehe heh heheh heh
heheh he (..) heh he he he he.*

(5)

M2: *Heheh heheh heh heheh heh heheh he he heh he he heh hehe heh heheh heh
heheh he (..) heh he he he he.*

(5)

M1: *Hehe he he he he he he-Niswan! (..) Z'geere, wa ma b'taarif keef titsarraaf bein
el nass ((qasdahu zawdjatahu))*

(.5)

M1: *Hehe he he he he he he-Women! She is young and doesn't know how to act in
Public ((He means his wife))*

(5)

M2: *Kullon heik ya zalami=*

M2: *They're all like that, man=*

M1: *=lahhhhhhhhh, mu kullon heik=*

M1: *=Nhhhhhhhh0, not all of them=*

M2: *=Lak ahhhhhhhhhiy ya zalami? Halla'a kamilli abil ma yidju heh he he he he he hehe.*

M2: *=Yehhhhhhhhhhhha man? Now continue with your story before the come back heh he he he he he hehe.*

M1: [Laa ya zalami,

M1: [No
mahhan,

M2: *Hehe he he he he hehe*

M2: *Hehe he he he he hehe*

M1: *xalas halla'a. (..) shi nhar m'nu'ud ana wa inta ala rawa'a wa bihkilak al Ussa.
(..) hai'I ussit Abou Najwa tawehhheli,*

M1: *not now.(..) One day when you and I are alone I will tell you the story. (..)Abou Najwa's story is vehhhry long,*

M2: [Aihhhh, mafi shuk.

M2: [Yeahhh, no doubt.

M1: *bass ala kul hal, al kull bieirfu*

M1: *but anyway, everyone knows him*

M2: [mafi

shak ya zalami, mafi shak.

M2: [No doubt man, no doubt.

APPENDIX B

COUPLE #2 - FIL BEIT BA'DAMA TARAKU AL JEERAN

F2: Salem, xallast?

F2: *Are you finished Salem?*

M2: (..) Aih ai, aih xallast.

M2: (..) *Yeah yes, yes I' finished.*

F2: [Shibaak?]

F2: [What's the matter?]

M1: Wala shi. (.3) Bass djeeranna. DAYman b'ta'amil heik fih.

M1: *Oh, nothing. (.3) Just our neighbors. She does this to him EVERYtime.*

F1: *Lau ma b'ti'mil fih heik, bi dall y'guirr, b'ta'arifu inta?*

F1: *If she doesn't, he will just go on, and on, you know him?*

M2: [wa iza kan, ma lazem kanat
t'atuu wa hu'weh am yihkili shagli. Ma kan b'yamma b'nohbb. (2)

M2: [Still, she
shouldn't interrupt him in the middle of telling me something. He wasn't even in her direction.(2)

F2: Ehheh,ma bidida y'uul shi sa'ye'e ala Abou Nabeel, wa ba'edain sammaa Abou Najwa min al bidayii la y'hinu. Wa la ana habbeit heik.(..)

F2: *Well, she didn't want him to say anything bad about Abou Nabeel, and then he called him Abou najwa from the beginning to insult him. I didn't like that either.(..)*

M2: Bass ala al Aqall ma tadaxalti. B'taarifi afdal min innik titdaxali bi shaglat ridjal. Al zalami kan am y'hawel y'ulli shagli djdeedi indu, inti b'taarifih? Ma

asdu sh?

(5)

M2: *But at LEAst you didn't get involved. You know better than to get involved in men's stuff. The man was just trying to tell us something new, you know him? He doesn't mean any Harm?*

(5)

F2: Dayman bi xadjilha uddam il niswan, wa hinni b'yidhaku aleiha ala kul hal liannu KBEEhhhr wa hiyyi z'geeri wa MUT

F2: *He embarrasses her all the time in front of other women, and they make fun of her already because he's OLD and she is YOUNG and edu*

M2: [Wa shu? Muta'allima? Heik kunti biddik t'uuli? Eh,xara aleiha wa ala ilma iza ma b'tarif keef t'aamil djoza, WA tihtirmu bein al nass.

(.5)

Ba'adein, inti muta'alimi wa MA B''TAIMLI heik bein al nass. Wa ala fikra, huue muta'allem Kaman. Huue muddaress, muhtaram aydan.

M2: [And what? Educated?

Is that what you were going to say? The hell with her and her education if doesn't know how to deal with her husband's personality, AND respect him in public.

(.5)

Then again, you're educated and you DON'T DO that in public. Oh yeah,

he's Educated too. He is a teacher, and a very respected one too.

F2: [Biehtirmuuh lianno kbeer wa
ibin Mousa, eh abuuuh kan muhtaram.

F2: [They respect him because he's old
and he's Mousa's son, now his FATHER was a very respected man.

M2: [Ya'ani am t'uuli innu huue manu muhtar

M2: [Are you saying that he's not resp

F2: [Laa

F2: [No

M2: ram? Haah?

M2: [ected? Ha?

F2: Dayman al tullab b'yidhaku aleih.

F2: *Students make fun of him all the time.*

M2: [Wala marra ulti=

M2: [You never told me that=

F2: =Ehh, lainnu sadee'ak, wa djarna.

F2: =Well, because he's your friend, and OUR neighbor.

M2: [Wa rah nib'aa heih

M2: [And we will stay that way

F2: ((Thahabat ila al matbax, wa bisawt aalen)) Bukra bitissel be Fadwa wa bihki
ma'aha

F2: ((She goes to the kitchen and yells) I will call Fadwa tomorrow and talk to her

M2: [La ti'imli
shi.

M2: [Don't do
anything.

F2: Haaaa?

F2: Haaaa?

M2: TRIKEEHON B"HAHLHON, am tisma'inini? ((Yasrax min gurfat al jiluus)).
Hinni bie'erfu shu yi'imlu. Inna mashakilna bidha hull.

M2: LEAVE THEM ALONE, you hear me? ((yelling from the livingroom)) They
Know what to do. We have our own problems to deal with.

F2: ((Raji'at min al matbax)) Ay mashakel? Al hamdu lil lah ma inna shi
mashakel k'beeri. Asdi, fi shaglat baseeta nihna 'mnixtilif aleiha, bass, mushi
azeem.((badaat tataathar))

F2: (comes back from the kitchen) What problems? Thank God we don't have any
major problems. I mean we some issues that we disagree about, but nothing
major. ((she starts getting emotional))

M2: Yallah yallah. Annoam abil ma niblash min awal wa djadeed.

M2: Alright alright. Let's go to bed before we start again.

F2: [Mani am uul ay

F2: [I'm not saying any

M2: [Wala rah t'uuli. Kaffana
al lleili. Xallina n'nnam bi amaan (..) Allah y'xalliki!

M2: *[And you won't. We've had enough talking this night. Let us live till tomorrow peacefully (..) for God's sake!*

F2: La, b'jadd, ay mashakel inna? Al hamdu lillah (.) sahitna mleecha, wil wil w'lad
Mlah ktheer-wil mawsem am yithassan-sh

F2: *No, really, what problems do we have? Thank God (.) we have our health-the kids are doing Very well-the farm has never been better-wh*

M2: *[Taieb, ma inna aya mashakel.*
MA INNA AY MASHAKEL, halla'a ta'ay nrooh nn

M2: *[Ok, we don't have any problems. WE DON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS, now let's go to*

F2: *[Fi shagli ma am bit ulliyaha*

F2: *[Now you are not telling me something*

M2: *[Uh hu:::;, mafi mashakel-ma asdi shi-asdi innu kil wahed indu mashakel, b'tarrifi shu asdi? Bi shikkel aam-shinekk inti?*

M2: *[Uh hu:::;h, no problems-I didn't mean it literally-I just mean that everyone has their own problems to deal with, you know? In general- What's wrong with you?*

F2: *[La, lainnak faja'itni shway wa't ul*

F2: *[No it's just that you kinda surprised me by saying wh*

M2: [Taib, muta' assif ya sitna, shoofi al awlad-
ba' adon am yihko ju' wa

M2: *[Ok, I'm sorry my dear, check on the kids. They're still talking in
there.*

F2: ((x x x x x x x x x x)) ((ba' eeda an al musajjila))

F2: ((x x x x x x x x x x)) ((far from recorder))

M2: Ba' irif biddon-lizalek kan biddiahon yaklo bakkeer. Kul marra bie'imlu heik.
Lazem tla' illik shi hal ilhon. Bit' dallilihon kteer.

M2: *I know they will-that's why I wanted them to eat earlier. They do this
everytime. You need to do something about them. You spoil them, too much.*

F2: [((x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x))

F2: [((x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x))

M2: [Haj t'sihi. Rah t'fai'I
ttanni. (..) Nammu intu litnein anel ma ijji wi wiwa-b'tirifu shu ba'amil

M2: *[Stop yelling. You'll
weak up the other one. (..) Go to bed you two before I come and an an and-you
know what I'll do*

F2: [Eih ya'wlad, b'tirifu
shu bia'mil-mumkin yi'milkon muhadara lilmout <hehe he he he he he he he he
he

F2:

[Yeah kids, you know what he'll do-he might lecture you to death< hehe he he

he he he he he he

M2:

[Shu sirti

komeediyeh aaxer hal lleil heheh he he he he he he

M2:

[You

are turning into a comedienne late tonight hehe he he he he he he

F2:

[Hehe he he he-Bas habbi nnam mabsoota-mab hob

nam b'afkar sayi'aa-b'tarif.

F2:

[Hehe he he he -I just want to go to bed

happy-I hate to sleep on a bad note- you know that.

M2:

[Eih ba'rif. (.) T'fee al adwiyeh bil matbax wi wal balkone.

(..) jeebi may ma'ik.

M2:

[Yeah I know.(.)Turn off the lights in the kitchen

ana na and the balcony.(..) Bring some water with you.

APPENDIX C

COUPLE #3 - AHLI BIDDONYANNA N' JEEB WALAD

FF: Aiy, jay la cam yoam hal marra?

FF: So, you came home for how many days this time?

Mm: [Habibti, la balshi
tit'thammari min halla'a, MIN FADLIK

MM: *[My love, don't start complaining from now,
PLEASE*

FF: [Ma am bit'thammar. Bass
habbi a'arif mishan o'zom ahlak wa asdiqa'ak al asha bukra.

FF: *[I'm not
complaining. I just want to know so I can invite your family and friends for
dinner tomorrow.*

MM: Yhhhhhhhhho! Axer marra kunti tishtiki liana ma addeina waqt kifaya maa
ba'ad, wa hala'a ana jaiy yomein zaman, wa biddik tu'uzmi al asheera kulha.

MM: *Last time you were complaining that we don't spend enough time together, and
now that I only have two days you want to invite the whole tribe over.*

FF: [Yaani ma ma'ak geir YOMEIN?

FF: *[So you only have TWO DAYS?*

MM: *Aih, biftikit heik kifaya li anhi shugli. ((yodaibaha))*

MM: *Yeah, I think that will be enough to finish my business ((teasing her))*

FF: [Shuglak shu? ((lan tafham al nuktha))

FF: *[What business?((doesn't get the
joke))*

MM: Isma'I habibti,(.) ahli

MM: Listen my love,(.) my parents

FF: [Ahlak, ahlak, AHLAK

FF: [*Your parents, your parents, your PARENTS*

MM: [Tawli balik da'ia. (.3) ana ba'erif inni mu
dayman bil beit, wa bitmanna innu ma iddtarr ishrahlik innu ana al'aan bil
jeish la tlat sneen. Bitmanna innik t'irfi mani hunak li u'aquibik.

MM: [*Relax a minute. (.3) I know
that I am not home very often, and I hope I don't need to explain that I am
stuck in the Freaking army for three years. I hope you know that I am not
there to punish you.*

FF: [Ba'erif, shibak inta? A'a tini
shuayit thiqa.((bada'at tabki))

FF: [*I know, what's the
matter with you? Give me some credit (starts crying)*

MM: [La tibki? Min fadlik la tibki. ANA HOAN yomein.

MM: [*Don't cry? Please don't cry. I'm here
for TWO DAYS*

FF: [Aasfi,
ta'ieb, shu ahlak?

FF: [*I'm sorry, Ok, what about your parents?*

MM: Ahli biddon yana ndjeeb walad!

MM: My parents want us to have a baby!

FF: [ba'erif shu biddak t'uul, wa mani muwafqa. Al fikra
mu ma'uuli. Mana waqui'iyyi- Mustaheeli!

FF: *[I know what you're going to say, and I don't
agree. It's not a sound idea. It is not logical- It is impossible!*

MM: [b'akkidlik innu manaha mustaheeli
(yamzah ma'aha)) Hehehe He he he he hehe he he he he he he he he he he

MM: *[I assure you it's not ((teasing
Her again)) heheh He he he he he h hehe he he he he he he heh heh he
he he*

FF: [Xalas
Abdo. B'taerfif shu shi'uuri bil nisbi la hal mawduu'a. B'tidji kul shahreim
marra, wa ba'eddain la hali ba'I al waqt.

FF: *[Stop Abdo. You
know how I feel about this. You come home once every couple of months, and
I am alone for the rest of the time.*

MM: [Keef bituuli la Halik, ma' ahlik, ahli, wa kul ASDIqua'ik?
Ana lli lazem hiss inni waheed. Al ullik arraf! Al jaish arraf. (.3) Ha?
Aih?(.3)

MM: *[How can you say you are alOhhne with your family around, my family,
and all your FRiends? Your STUdents? I'm the one who should feel alone. I*

FF: ((tuhawel an tugatti an mawdoo' al mussajila)) La, la mu:: ahl::k.

FF: ((Trying to cover up for presence of the recorder)) No, no not you::r pa::rents.

MM: [Lakan meen? Al
jeeran?

MM: [Then
who? The neighbors?

FF: La, la, wala shi. Rooh t'hammam, wi ana lahi'tak, hehe he he he he he

FF: No, no, never mind. You go take a shower, and I will follow you, hehe he he he
he

MM: [Hehe he he
he he he he he he he he he eh. Uh ummm, eih?

MM: [Hehe he
he he he he he he he eh. Uh ummm, yeah?

APPENDIX D

COUPLE #4 - INNA SHI LAL AKKEL?

A: Shu inna akkil?

A: What do we have to eat?

B: Shu bit hob Taakol?

B: What do you like to eat?

A: Yaani manik tabxa shi?

A: So that means you didn't cook anything?

B: Ana ult inni mani tabxa shi?

B: Did I say that I didn't cook anything?

A: [Laa ma ulti, bass aa:::ref, lianno lau tabxa shi, ma bitisalini
shu Bidi aakol.

(.5)

A: [No you didn't, but I kno:::w, because if you had cooked
anything you wouldn't have asked me what I wanted to eat.

(.5)

B: Ma:::-

B: I didn:::'t-

A: Ma::: ruhti al sooq wa majibti akkil, wa ↑ma ma ma ma ma ↓. Jeebili shi a::klu
mani ma:kel too:::l al nahar.

A: You::: didn't go to the store, and you didn't cook anything, and ↑bla bla bla
bla bla ↓. Get me something to eat I haven't ea:ten anything all day.

B: [Oh, habibi, manak ma::kel tool al nahar?

B: *[Oh, my love, you haven't
Eaten anything all day?*

A: ((Yuqallidaha wa yaquillu sabrahu)) La:::,, habibek ma akal tool alnaha,
biddik t'tamina shi willa?

A: ((imitating his wife, and getting impatient)) N:::,, your love hasn't eaten all
day, are you gonna get us anything to eat, or what?

B: [yalla, yallah rayha- Shu rayak nrooh nakol ind ahlak? Ommak
alat li Al sobih, wa utilha innak b'tidji taba:an mi al shogol, wa-

B: *[Ok, ok, ok, I'm going- how about if
we go eat at your mom's, she told me this morning, but I said that you come
home tired, and-*

A: Wa shu? Talama ulteelha inni bidji taban, l

A: And what? If you said that I come home tired, w

B: [La::, lainno hhh hhh ah, ah hum

B: [No::, Because hhh hhh ah, ah
hum

A: [wik inti

Shu feeki liome? Manik ala ba'dik, fee shi?

A: *[You-
what's the matter with you? You're not all together, is there anything?*

B: [la-

B: [No-

A: Immi? Feeha shi?

A: My mom, Is there anything?

B: [La, la=

B: [No, no=

A: ↑=Yil

A: ↑=Dam

B: [La t'seeh la t'seeh ((tahki bi sawt waten)) al musadjila shaggala- b'tit thakar shu Alat Ruwaida innu lazem n'sadjil ha::lna wa nihna am nithaddath ma' ba'ath?- Mishan Khetam. Bidha muhadathat bein azwaj wa zawjat?

B: *[Don't yell don't yell ((Talking in a low tone of voice)) The recorder is on- remember what Ruwaida said, that we have to record ourselves having a conversation?- Because Khetam needs conversations between couples?*

A: [Yilanik wa yilan Khetam! Xawafteeni lal amma bi ussasik al baixa eh eh
hhh

(.5)

A: *[Damn you and Khetam! You scared me to death with your stupid eh eh hhh*

(.5)

B: Wa lazem nrooh la in:::d ahlak, lianno liome e:::ed mi:::ladak

B: And we have to go to your parent's house, because it your birthday

A: [Mu liome eid
milady- Bukra.

A: *[My birthday is not today- it's tomorrow.*

B: [Ba'erif habibi, bass ommak a::milto liome lianno akhook jayyi mi al
jaish wa ragi' bukra.

B: *[I know my love, but your mom is having it
Today because your brother is here from the military for one day, and going
back tomorrow.*

A: Yani bididi it'hammam- sakkarti al musadjila, ma?

A: So, that means I'm taking a shower- you turned off the recorder, yah?

B: [Eih, min zaman! ((takthib))
Ana Rah jahhiz hali lakan- biddak shi lal kawi?

B: *[Yeah, a long time
ago! ((lying to him)) I'm gonna go and get ready then-do you need anything to
be ironed?*

A: La::, bass a'alatik! Heh hehe he he he he he he he he he he

A: No::, only your little brain! Heh hehe he he he he he he he he he he

B: ((tatakallam li nafsaha qareebatan min al musadjila)) hhh hhh Ift, rassi sar

Yawji'ani

B: ((*talking to herself very close to the recorder*)) hhh hhh Ift, *My head hurts*

APPENDIX E

COUPLE # 5 - FATTIN IJAT LA INNA LIOME

- S: *[This*
Woman has no manners whatsoever=
- N: = Bass, umh, ma'::aha haq shuayyi.
- N: = *But, umh, sh::e is right a little bit.*
- S: *[Haq shu? Haq al tharthara al nass? Ala joza? Ala*
hamata?
- S: *[What right? The right to gossip? About her husband?*
Her mother-in-law?
- N: *[Ma am bit tharthir*
um
- N: *[She's not gossiping*
um
- S: *[Lakan*
shu? Am timdah bi hadol al a:lam, biftikir, he he hehe
- S: *[Then*
what? She's speaking about these people with the highest regard, I guess, he
he hehe
- N: La:::, b- um, ana biftikir inha am tishkili humoomha wa an mashakilha- la meen
 bidha
- N: *No:::, b- um, I think she is just telling me her dilemmas and her problem- who*
can she talk to

N: [La, mabiddi iblash marra Tania-halakitni la hakeit shi-halla'a
xallina n'xalliss, min fadlak?

(.5)

N: *[No, I don't wanna start over-it took a lot of energy to
get you to talk-now let's finish this, please?*

(.5)

S: Hada min al awlad ittassal?-Oh akeed Summaia al taree' halla'

S: *Have any of the kids called?-Oh Summaia is probably on the road now*

N: [ittassalat hawali il
10:00 al suboh-al bas biddu y'wa'iff bi Halab awwal, lizalek ma rah t'wassil lal
xamseh.

N: *[She called around 10:00 this
morning-the bus is gonna stop in Alepo first, so she won't be here till about
five.*

S: W Rammi?-Ittssal shi?-innu jay bi halwa't willa-

S: *How about Rammi?-did he call at all?-about coming home soon, or what-*

N: La.

N No.

S: Hal walad ma byihi m'noab-

S: *That boy hardly ever calls-*

N: W wa't bi, mnihk ma'u, wala marra byilti'I-yimkin mashgoul bildirassi, aw:: shi.

N: *And when I, we call, he is never there-I guess he's busy studying or:: something.*

S: Lazem nin'ulu la ind uxto

S: *We should move him in with his sister*

N: [Aayshi ma' bintein wa

N: [She's living with two other girls and

S: [Taib, taib-fikra bas-mani, ma, ma,
mu habbib-lazem rooh shoof shu am yi'mil h'neek.

S: [OK, Ok-
it was just a suggestion-I'm, I I don't like- I don't- I have to go and see what he's doing there.

N: [Am yudros mitil ba'I al nass-

N: [Studying like everybody else-

S: Eih?

S: Yeah?

N: S'tanna la tijji Summaia al beit, hiyyeh bit ulna annu-bit shufu ala al aquall tlat marrat bil isboo'.

(.5)

N: *Just wait until Summaia comes home she, will tell us about him-she sees him at least three times a week.*

(.5)

S: Umm hhhh eih la tiji Summaia al beit.

S: *Umm hhhh yeah until she comes home.*

APPENDIX F
DISCUSSION OF THE HOWARD ZINN
LECTURE AT CSUSB

1. K: ((sniff)) So::: whatdd you think about .hh Howard Zinn (.) the-uh::
lecture
2. A: [The lecture you
3. mean?
4. K: Mm hmm
5. A: Well, I think it uh wus it pretty good, y' know I mm wanted you to be
there: it (.2) y' know it I think it, it he had many good: topics to talk
about a:::nd a: of course he express uh (.) his radical view of history::
and not in terms of uh:, uh: the view of the heroes and: the leaders and
stuff: but the view of the people who were there (.2)
6. K: [Right, right =
7. A: = from:: AFRICAN AMERICANS (.) frim the INDIANS o nthuh o =
8. K: = Yeah you're right, he did raise a few
9. A: [Y' know? From the uh poor people
10. K: points
11. A: From yeah
12. K: few important points
13. A: [poor people.
14. I like it (.) I like it (.), how 'bout you? I mean I think I enjoyed the:
15. lecture (.1) how 'bout you ?
16. K: I did too (.) except:: .hh I don't know (.) I wus: expecting (.2) .hhh (.) a
17. lot

18. more:: charisma from him (.1) ya know?
19. A: [Wh whadju you mean?
20. K: His speech: his (.2) I know he's not out there to
21. A: [Well he's not a
22. politician.
23. I mean: whadju mean, charisma? So you can be taken by him?
24. K: [No just you know he's he's
25. passionate
26. A: [he's not a
27. Hollywood actor
28. K: about what he is talking about.
29. A: Well people get passionate about: issues in different ways: ya know, not
30. all
31. of us get: passionate about: what we believe in the same manner.
32. K: mmhnnm=
33. A: =Whadju mean, uh-uh do you think like ha? (.)
34. K: No, he wus jus .hh so::: ha ya know, he used this low tone: in in his
35. speech throughout, didn't change, did not change
36. A: [That's true.
37. K: in any way any point: .hh even though he's not trying to convince us:
ya know? out at least: he could (.1) ya know? (.2) make some
38. A: [Ok: you .h mean

39. he's like uh .hh well, this
40. what I think about it, he is not (.1) out there: as you said
41. K: [mh-nm
42. A: I think probably to convince you of certain things
43. K: [mm-hmm
44. A: Remember that: .hh he is .hh first you have to remember he is an
45. intellectual.
46. K: [mm-hmm
47. A: an academic. He is not an actor an he's not a politician
48. K: [Right
49. A: who's trying to (.2) .hh generate .hh tremendous emotions from the
50. audience to capture his, their visions or their views
51. K: [Yeah
52. A: an stuff like that, no.
53. K: [Uhum=
54. A: =He wants to: .h tell you about his radical view: (.1) his radical views
55. of society (.1) and:
56. K: [Uhum
57. A: in some ways: make it, y' know, what I mean?
58. K: Right right right
59. A: [he's not out there to convince you oh I think this because you
60. should believe in me, because of this, because of this=

61. K: =Oh I under STAND,
62. A: [and if I changed my tone an if I lay out a couple of jokes or if I (.1)
63. even
64. K: [I understand
65. though he wus funny at a time. You have to admit that=
66. K: =Yeah, yeah he was
67. A: [He's sais a I mean he's out there jus' to: (.2)
68. basically:: .hhhh plant some doubts in you.
69. K: [Right, right
70. A: [about the main stream .hh
71. media, the st, the main stream politicians:, the establishment
72. K: Right, right
73. A: itself.=
74. K: =No, I understand, I think he did that.
75. A: It's not what they say its. An he did that very effectively, I thought=
76. K: = Very effectively, except it wazint something new. It wazint anything
77. that I haven't heard before
78. A: [Well, you haven't heard, because we: discuss many
79. times, we read thing about this an I tell you about it, but remember this
80. is .hh basically aba .hh wus, wus meant
81. K: [For the common people
82. A: Wus For the: common people, to everybody who show up there, who

83. probably are exposed to, to this from the first time: so, so I mean how
84. many=
85. K: = could be.
86. A: [How many .hhh how many times or how often you hear
87. somebody talking about the history, ok those are not our heroes those
88. Presidents, or those the Generals or those=
89. K: =Right=
90. A: =The really heroes or the people who made history,
91. K: mm-hmm
92. A: the soldiers
93. K: [I like those points, I think
94. A: [and the common people an the
95. K: [Yeah
96. A: poor peasants an the hard-working class an, and stuff like that
97. K: [Yeah
98. A: So when you talk how many, how many historians or how many, .hhh
99. K: [mm-hmm
100. A: Teachers will tell you that the history come from those people, not
101. from: .hh founding fathers: or from the: .hh
102. K: [No, no they've
103. A: [mm-hmm
104. K: all falsified history

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