

## Building Solidarity through Interruption in Face-to-Face Interaction amongst Iranian Men

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### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates interruptions among upper middle-class Iranian men and the way they strategize and manipulate turns in face-to-face interaction. The recordings of informal conversations of these well acquainted men were transcribed and Beattie's Interruption Model (1981) was adapted and applied as the framework of analysis. This study employed qualitative research design whereby natural-occurring conversation of participants from 15 participants from five groups, with each group comprising three participants, was recorded in the living room of one of the participants. The recorded conversations were transcribed according to an adapted version of Jefferson's (1979) transcription convention and were qualitatively analysed. The transcribed data were analysed using Beattie's interruption model (1981) and conversation analysis (CA) to examine the utterances and occurrences of interruptions based on turns being successful and complete at the time of interruptions. The findings of this study suggest that Iranian males interrupt each other cooperatively in order to show their support and solidarity. Although interruptions provide an opportunity for the interlocutors to dominate the interaction, there were no instances of dominance or any traces of intrusive behavior. In fact, the strategic use of interruptions denotes a collective effort to create in-group power that emphasizes solidarity amongst men in this study. This paper yields findings that go against stereotypical characteristics of men who exert power in their interactions. Such findings can be the result of the moderated patriarchal norms in Iranian society, which may have implications for studies on men's interactional attitudes.

**Keywords:** interruptions; cooperation; turn-taking; power; Iranian men

### INTRODUCTION

Interruptions are considered violations of speech, as they infringe on the natural flow of conversation (Zimmerman & West, 1975). In the domain of language and gender, men interrupt and struggle to hold the floor more often than women do in order to show their power, supremacy, and ultimately express their own ideas (West, 1979; Bohn & Stutman, 1983; West & Zimmerman, 1983; Peterson, 1986; Locke, 2011; Albaqami, 2017). This can be explained by Kaufman's statement that the world of men is the world of power (Kaufman, 2000) and interruption provides an opportunity for men to practice this in both same gender and mixed gender conversations. However, studies that demonstrate women as becoming more assertive in talk in certain circumstances (Jariah Mohd. Jan, 2006; Mohajer, 2015a) are still lacking.

In a patriarchal society such as Iran, the show of power is observed throughout men's lives. They show and practice power in the context of society and preserving that power is a

vital part of their community. Their powerful role is evident in the active role that they play in economics, politics, technology and social decision makings where most of the decisions are made by men (Mohajer, 2015b). As for the men, the dominant role of Iranian men is evident in their linguistic behavior (Heidari Darani & Heidari Darani, 2013), and interruption provides a way for exerting power in their language.

However, in recent years, Iranian men and their patriarchal power have been challenged in how people view gender discrimination in society. The patriarchal views and ways of life have been questioned in the domains of society, family and culture (Darvishpour, 2017). Therefore, the question is whether these changes have had any impacts on the linguistic power demonstration of Iranian men especially in the way they negotiate turns at talk. This study investigates the notion of power as prevailed in the speakers' attempt to interrupt and seize turns and own the floor.

### TURN-TAKING, INTERRUPTION AND MEN

Speakers can demonstrate how powerful they are in pursuing their ideas by either interrupting one another's speech or holding the floor when they are part of a turn-taking process in an interaction. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), demonstrate the importance of turn-taking in a conversation and argue that turn-taking is a natural part of every conversation. The legitimate occurrence of interruption in an interaction is almost inconceivable, because of 'one speaker at a time' rule whereby one speaker should talk at a time, and another speaker should commence talking only when the sentence is complete in terms of meaning and grammar (*ibid.*). While the 'one speaker at a time' rule is less typical in non-dyadic conversations, turn-taking organizes the speakers' time to speak and it relies on the speakers themselves to allocate turns to each other and respect these.

Interruptions, according to Zimmerman and West (1975), are categorized as any deep intrusions into the boundaries of a unit type - a meaningful end of the current speaker's speech - prior to the lexical elements that could be considered the termination of the utterance. They consider interruptions as infringements because they disrupt the consistency of the turn-taking.

Based on previous studies on interruptions and overlaps, Zhao and Gantz (2003) proposed two types of interruptions. The first type is called disruptive, as the speaker rejects, disagrees, opposes, and ultimately attempts to achieve the control of the conversation. As a result, the interrupter infringes the flow of talk and makes an attempt to own the floor. This type of interruption can be an indication of the interrupter's power and dominance. The second type of interruption refers to cooperative interruption, where speakers support, agree, or ask for clarification.

As stated earlier, some studies indicate that an interruption within the framework of turn-taking can serve as an opportunity for interactants to display their power. If the interactants interrupt each other and do not allow the other parties to take their turns, this may be an indication of a struggle for power and authority. In certain studies, interruptions and power relations correlate (Zimmerman & West, 1975; Zhao & Gantz, 2003; Minxia, 2010; Rodrigo, 2010). However, some studies have found that overlap, which is a type of interruption, can demonstrate cooperation in an interaction (Alfaraz, 2009; Jariah Mohd. Jan & Mohajer, 2012) rather than an expression of power. Alfaraz (2009) explained that interactants cooperate with each other via overlaps in an effort to minimize the introduction of new information. In other words, the speakers overlap with the intention of supporting each other rather than to be informative. It can be inferred that interruptions are not simply a matter of cutting off the statements of others. In addition, different types of interruptions may serve different purposes.

Gender as a social variable, however, can further influence the process of turn-taking and interruption. Both females and males may employ and value interruptions differently in order to pursue different purposes in the turn-taking process. Men have the tendency to speak out of turn and hold the floor more often than women (Zimmerman & West, 1975; West, 1979; Bohn & Stutman, 1983; West & Zimmerman, 1983; Peterson, 1986; Minxia, 2010, Van Eecke & Fernández, 2016) and self-select themselves to take turns (Chalak & Karimi, 2017). Minxia (2010) disputes that men speak out of turn more frequently in order to control the conversation, while women cooperate (Qanbar, 2012) and make more frequent supportive interruptions (Menz & Al-Roubaie, 2008). However, Menz and Al-Roubaie (2008) have discovered that the status of the interactants is more significant than their gender in terms of the frequency of interruptions. People in higher status demonstrate more tendencies to interrupt people who are in lower status than them (Jarrah Mohd. Jan, 1999).

In terms of the relation between gender and the frequency of interruptions, there are various debates. There are studies that indicate no significant asymmetry relationship between genders in terms of the interruptions they make. For instance, Ayunda et al. (2016), have discovered that both men and women are capable of making intrusive interruptions. Stubbs (2014), on the other hand, found evidence of gendered attempts to interrupt and take turns in order to gain control of the conversation.

#### BEATTIE'S MODEL AS A FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

Beattie (1981) proposed dividing the process of turn-taking into five categories. In this model, different types of speaker-switches have been identified and classified into two main divisions. In this division, he has sorted the speaker-switches based on either successful or unsuccessful attempts at taking turns. Success in Beattie's classification is measured by the interrupter as being able to win the floor over the interrupted speaker, while lack of success in his model means that the interrupter stops before managing to take the floor. These two general divisions are further subdivided into five categories, which are summarized as follows:

- Successful
  - Overlap: simultaneous speech present and utterance complete
  - Simple interruption: simultaneous speech present but incomplete utterance
  - Smooth speaker-switch: simultaneous speech not present but utterance complete
  - Silent interruption: simultaneous speech not present and incomplete utterance
  
- Not successful
  - Butting-in interruption: simultaneous speech present

Beattie (1981) has ascribed the presence of simultaneous speech to the completeness of the first speaker's utterances. Completeness refers to the "intonational, syntactic and semantic features" in both verbal communication and nonverbal behavior (Beattie, 1981, p. 20).

Although interruptions are mainly associated with power and dominance, some of these categories may not necessarily demonstrate dominance. For instance, overlaps and smooth speaker switches demonstrate the interrupter having accurately estimated the completeness of the current speaker's utterance before interrupting. As such, this does not imply that the interrupter is fighting to take the floor.

In the present paper, Beattie's speaker-switches model (1981) was adopted and applied as a framework to analyze instances of interruption. This model is preferred because the best-known turn-taking model (Sackes et al., 1974) is based on one speaker at a time and does not consider that in a non-dyadic interaction like the present study where the occurrence

of simultaneous speech and interruptions are not scarce. Beattie's model, on the other hand, considers this notion into a detailed account and is used in this study to identify the different types of interruptions and the manners in which men use interruptions in their interaction. The realization of power in the course of interruptions within utterances is examined as well.

## METHODOLOGY

The data for the study were collected from 15 professional men from upper middle-class, working in various fields who consented to participate in the study. Upper middle class refers to the participants' status in society where their income is more than the average range in Iran and they hold more or less the same position at their workplace. The participants were chosen from this group of Iranian men who speak English even though they were non-native speakers of English. They prefer to communicate in English in informal gatherings. Further, their work profile and certificates indicate that they have no problems communicating in English.

A total of 300 minutes of natural-occurring conversation of participants from five groups, each group comprised of 3 participants, was recorded in the living room of one of the participants. The participants were also free to talk about any topics that they favored. The recorded conversations were then transcribed according to an adapted version of Jefferson's (1979) transcription convention.

The transcribed data were qualitatively analysed using Beattie's interruption model (1981), while conversation analysis (CA) theory was used to examine the utterances and occurrences of interruptions based on turns being successful and complete at the time of interruption. Accordingly, the interruptions made by the participants were interpreted relative to the speakers' intentions.

## ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The data revealed that the male participants engaged in a continuous stretch of interruption with one another. The occurrences of interruptions are categorized based on whether the interruption was successful or otherwise. In addition, the function of interruptions and relevant examples of the respective categories are provided in the following sections.

### SUCCESSFUL INTERRUPTIONS

Based on Beattie's model (1981), successful interruptions refer to the instances where the interrupter wins the floor over the current speaker(s). Successful interruptions found in the data include overlaps, simple interruptions, smooth speaker-switches and silent interruptions.

#### OVERLAPS

In instances of overlaps, the interrupter shows attentiveness and consideration since he interrupts when the current speaker's utterance is complete.

In Excerpt 1, line [2], L1 assumes that L2 has completed his utterance and takes the floor by indicating his agreement. He also shows further support for the idea mooted by L1. As can be observed, the interrupter does not intend to express new ideas but supporting his friends. This is an indication of cooperative overlap.

### Excerpt 1

- [1] L2: yeah / my father building a / um / making a billion dollar building / [I]  
[2] L1: [yeah] I can imagine some / years / in  
future / he'll come to us / *I have lunch with Bill Gates* ((L2 laughs)) / it wasn't good ((they laugh))

### Excerpt 2

- [3] K2: ... I want to say something about K1 / K1 is very good for *all the ladies* / [because]  
[4] K3: [yea::h] / he is the *only*  
*guy* ((K1 chuckles)) / *I leave alone* with my wife  
[5] K2: he is **not dangerous** [anymore]  
[6] K3: [yeah he is] **not dangerous** any / he has never been you know (.) ((K1  
giggles))

In Excerpt 2, the participants are talking about one of their mutual friends where K3 overlaps K2 twice in lines [4] and [6]. Each of the turns involves an overlap in which both participants talk simultaneously to indicate their agreement [yeah] and add on to the discussion. For instance, when K2 expresses that their mutual friend is not dangerous, K3 overlaps him in line [6] to further asserts that he has never been dangerous at all. These instances demonstrate that the participants overlap each other's utterances to offer support of the ideas conveyed or to add more to the topic of conversation. The male participants are seen to cooperate with one another in the overlaps that they make, which illustrates elements of cooperation and solidarity.

### SIMPLE INTERRUPTIONS

In simple interruptions, although the interrupter is successful in gaining the floor before the current speaker's utterance is complete, there is no indication of struggle or show of power in the interruptions that the participants make.

### Excerpt 3

- [7] L1: come on / poor his children / what / *what* [*does he do?*]  
[8] L2: [yeah / poor] **his children** yeah mate  
[9] L3: that's not important any [more]  
[10] L2: [that's] none of our business actually  
[11] L3: yeahs  
[12] L1: *yes*

In Excerpt 3, all the participants are talking about a mutual friend and his bad behavior. In line [7], L1 expresses his sorrow for their friend's future children. L2 interrupts L1 in line [8] and obtains the floor to show his agreement by echoing L1's phrase "yeah / poor his children...". This simple interruption may seem intrusive because the interrupter did not pay attention to the completion of the first speaker's utterance. However, it appears that the interrupter intended to show his support towards the current speaker rather than winning the floor. Additionally, the same is observed in line [10], when L2 interrupts L3 in order to agree with him [that's none of our business...]. It is observed that agreement is easily achieved without any conflicts via cooperative interruptions. This clearly demonstrates the solidarity that exists between the interactants.

### Excerpt 4

- [13] N1: *yeah* but / you think it's so bad? I don't think [so]  
[14] N2: [yes] [uh I don't think]  
[15] N3: [it's not that much] bad that people think  
the and they always uh say the they always / criticize the / *the* [smokers]  
[16] N2: [smoking] (.) for example...

There are more instances of cooperation in Excerpt 4, whereby the participants make simple interruptions to show their support and agreement as evident in lines [14] and [15]. This shows that they are not vying for the floor, instead they appear to build on each other's utterances to convey the same meaning and idea. Moreover, with these interruptions, the interrupter at times shows his support by suggesting a word [smoking] and completing the current speaker's utterance as in line [16]. In this line, N2 interrupts N3 in order to complete his sentence, which is considered as an act of solidarity.

#### SMOOTH SPEAKER-SWITCHES

As the term suggests, the turns between the speakers are switched smoothly without any simultaneous speech present. The participants show their respect as they wait for their friends to finish their utterances and then express their own ideas. In addition, the first speaker does not intend to continue after the completion of his utterance and voluntarily relinquishes the floor and allocates the turn to the second speaker. This is also an indication of cooperation among speakers (see Excerpt 5).

#### Excerpt 5

- [17] M1: so the film was captured you know / had a footnote?  
[18] M4: yeah / transcribed that all  
[19] M3: uhuh  
[20] M4: what do you think about the movie? / I mean just //  
[21] M3: // that was an interesting movie  
[22] M4: no / twenty one grams  
[23] M3: twenty one grams? I thought it was great  
[24] M4: why did you like this one?  
[25] M1: how were you impressed?  
[26] M3: uh / I was impressed uh / because how / because if you watched the film at the end of the film you can discover that twenty one / the name / the movie was ...

The topic of conversation in Excerpt 5 focuses on movies. Except for one instance of silent interruption in line [21], the rest of the exchanges from lines [17] to [26] are soft and smooth, which develops the flow of interaction and there is no evidence of power play between interlocutors unlike previous studies where power was observed in turn exchanges amongst men (Zimmerman & West, 1975; Zhao & Gantz, 2003; Minxia, 2010). The participants ask questions as in lines [17], [24] and [25] in order to allocate turns to their friends, wait for their responses, and affirm one another as illustrated in line [18]. Exchanging ideas through smooth speaker-switches facilitates the interaction and provides the possibility for the speakers to build on each other's speech.

#### Excerpt 6

- [27] L2: I wish that you didn't mention the name that was very you know ((L1 and L3 laugh))  
now you destroyed everything mate ((L3 laughs))  
[28] L1: no / it's ok (.)  
[29] L2: yeah / he is a very / perfect guy for / you know / we *all the time* talk about him ((he laughs))  
[30] L3: all the time  
[31] L2: he is a free topic ((he laughs)) / actually  
[32] L1: he has a lot of black parts (.)  
[33] L2: yeah / what did he do to *you*?  
[34] L1: he didn't do something bad for / to me but / *you know him* / everyone knows him  
[35] L2: yeah I know him  
[36] L1: you know all the / all the problem is his *behaviour* / it's not correct (.)  
[37] L2: oh all the problem is he always lies  
[38] L1: yeah / that's that's / that's it

[39] L2: that he always lies

The interactants in Excerpt 6, change turns smoothly in order to confirm each other's idea as seen in lines [30], [31], [35] and [38]. They also appear to relinquish the floor easily and invite others to take turns by asking a question and waiting for their reply as shown in line [33]. The interactions in this example confirm the participants' cooperative attitude in assisting one another to develop the topic of conversation and create a smooth flow of talk.

As illustrated in Excerpts 5 and 6, participants are seen to exchange turns smoothly in order to develop the topic of conversation. In doing so, they demonstrate solidarity and maintain camaraderie, display mutual trust, and build friendship with those whom they spend a lot of time with.

#### SILENT INTERRUPTIONS

In instances of silent interruption, it is found that the current speaker gets interrupted before he completes his utterance and without any occurrences of simultaneous speech. Although this type of interruption may seem intrusive and disturbing, there appears to be no indication of power play between the interlocutors. Instead, participants tend to cooperate and assist one another to build on each other's ideas. Excerpt 7 shows an example of how the participants use silent interruption to develop the conversation by helping to complete each other's utterances.

#### Excerpt 7

[40] N1: it's common in in //  
[41] N3: // **every country**  
[42] N1: **country** / even if you're English you like to apply for French university / even if you're French...  
[43] N2: no / I think uh / all the graduate students uh / in my in Iran uh are *not* uh so u::h //  
[44] N1: // **satisfied these days**  
[45] N2: **yes** / and even u::h / in uh many departments in our country...

In Excerpt 7, participants interrupt current speakers in order to assist each other and complete their utterances. For instance, when N3 feels that N1 in line [40] is struggling to come up with the right word, he interrupts and takes a turn in line [41] to complete the utterance [every country], which is acknowledged by the current speaker in line [42]. Furthermore, in line [44], N1 interrupts N2 to help him find a phrase, namely [satisfied these days], which is also acknowledged by the current speaker in line [45].

In these instances of interruption, it can be observed that the interrupters, despite having the opportunity to continue with their rightful turn, do not intend to keep the floor and lead the conversation. In fact, instead of showing dominance, the participants have adopted a cooperative attitude when interrupting each other.

The high display of solidarity can also be seen when participants assist one another and even apologize for their 'inappropriate' interruptions as demonstrated in line [48], Excerpt 8.

#### Excerpt 8

[46] M2: the order of the episodes was *great*  
[47] M4: in a //  
[48] M2: // that was new / **sorry** M4 I interrupted you

In line [47], Excerpt 8, M4 attempts to speak but M2 quickly interrupts him to express his own opinion (see line [48]). However, M2 immediately apologizes for the interruption because he does not want it to be interpreted as intrusive and dominating, which clearly demonstrates solidarity and respect towards the other participants' right to speak.

### NON-SUCCESSFUL INTERRUPTIONS

Non-successful interruptions occur when the interrupter is not able to win the floor over the current speaker(s) and simply relinquishes the attempt to take a turn. Findings of the study suggest two categories of non-successful interruptions namely, completeness or incompleteness of the current speaker's utterances at the time of interruption. The first category is referred to as 'butting-in overlaps', while the second inherits the term already coined by Beattie, namely 'butting-in interruptions'.

In the first category, the current speaker's utterance is complete when the interrupter butts in and in the second category, the current speaker's utterance is incomplete at the time of interruption. According to this distinction, 'unsuccessful interruptions' in Beattie's model can be modified as follows:

- Not successful
- Butting-in overlap: Simultaneous speech present and utterance complete
  - Butting-in interruption: Simultaneous speech present but incomplete utterance

At this juncture, it is important to emphasize that Beattie's category of 'overlaps' would entail the success of interruption where the speaker is able to seize the floor. On the other hand, 'butting-in overlaps' disallowed current speakers to take the floor. In both instances, the current speaker's utterance is complete. This categorization serves us better in understanding and interpreting the participants' intention of the interruptions that they make. In other words, the function of the interruptions is more apparent with this new form of classification and modification.

### BUTTING-IN OVERLAPS

In instances where the interrupter overlaps to take the turn as soon as the current speaker's utterance is completed, it is found that the current speaker continues his utterance and does not relinquish the floor. In butting-in overlaps, the one who interrupts does not win over. On the contrary, Excerpt 9 illustrates the manner in which butting-in overlap can be considered as cooperative in nature.

#### Excerpt 9

[49] L1: yeah /first day he wears tuxedo [and] (xxx)  
[50] L3: [tie]

The participants are talking about the appearance of one of their mutual friends. Assuming that L1's utterance is complete, L3 butts in to add on to the conversation (see line [50]). It does not appear that the interrupter is vying for the floor because he does not plan to seize the turn but instead adds something more to the discussion.

This interruption indicates the cooperative attitude of the interrupter, who adds on to the conversation without being assertive about taking the floor. This example also shows that the participants try to build on each other's utterances to show solidarity even through interruptions. Another instance of cooperative butting-in overlaps is seen in Excerpt 10.

#### Excerpt 10

[51] M3: this / it's something secret  
[52] M4: deal  
[53] M3: secret  
[54] M4: ok / forget about it  
[55] M2: are you partners? [are you partners?] / are you partners?  
[56] M1: [forget about it / forget about it]



In this excerpt, M1 interrupts M2 in line [56] in order to show his cooperation with the other participant, M4, and echoes what he has just said in line [54] “forget about it”. This confirms that M1 does not intend to win the floor but only to show his agreement and corroboration.

#### Excerpt 11

[57] R1: ahan / they they believed huh? / [they] believed in themselves?  
[58] R3: [yes] maybe  
[59] R1: ok / [let’s find]another topic / [let’s talk about] yes  
[60] R2: [you need to go] [another subject?]

The interruption in Excerpt 11 also shows no traces of struggles for power or dominance. For instance, line [58] demonstrates that the interrupter, R3, aims to answer the speaker’s question which is an indication of attention and care. However, his reply overlaps the current speaker, R1, who did not plan to stop, even though utterance was completed at the time of R3’s interruption.

Further, line [60] shows 2 more instances whereby the interrupter, R2, overlaps the current speakers’ utterances. The first butting-in overlap occurs when the current speaker utters “ok”, which gives the impression of not intending to continue talking, considering the intonation and tone. In addition, the word ‘ok’ is complete on its own. As such, R2 in line [60], assumes that the speaker does not intend to continue further so he reminds him that he needed to go. The second instance of butting-in overlap also refers to line [60], and R2 overlaps to echo what the current speaker has just said. Therefore, he does not intend to challenge the current speaker and take his turn away.

It is inferred from these excerpts that the participants do not display any signs of vying for the floor or take the floor from the others when they make butting-in overlaps. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the purpose of their interruptions is to support others and build solidarity, which ultimately creates a friendly interaction rather than to exert power.

#### BUTTING-IN INTERRUPTIONS

In butting-in interruption, the person who interrupts may appear invasive since he does not pay attention to the completeness of the current speaker’s utterance. However, the participants in this study have shown otherwise. The following excerpts illustrate instances where the participants utilize this strategy to express their support and cooperation in the interaction they are in.

#### Excerpt 12

[61] L3: I’ve decided to go to / [free topic] / yeah / free topic discussions  
[62] L2: [discussions?]

In Excerpt 12, L3 indicates that he has decided to take an English class (line [61]). However, L2 butts in (see line [62]) in an attempt to guess the kind of class he wants to join. Even though L2 interrupts L3 before the completion of his utterance, he does not attempt to dominate the floor. On the contrary, he interrupts to show his attentiveness, excitement and interest in his friend’s statements. It is clear that butting-in interruptions can indicate solidarity, even though they may seem intrusive.

#### Excerpt 13

[63] R1: here’s your duty ((he laughs))  
[64] R2: to catch uh (.) [uh] to catch a visa / to catch a //  
[65] R1: [a girl]

In line [64] of Excerpt 13, R2 is struggling to find the word he is looking for. R1 immediately interrupts him in line [65] to suggest the word girl. R1's interruption is clearly not an attempt to take the floor, but rather to collaborate and cooperate with the current speaker to look for a word. This is another indication of solidarity via interruptions.

## DISCUSSION

Studies on men are scarce and even those that have been researched on looks at power and dominance. Previous works that denote interruption as cooperative could be seen in formal or informal interactions amongst females, not males. This study, however, provides evidence from men's informal interaction where they employed various types of interruptions in an effort to cooperate and develop each other's utterances. In contrast to other studies where power is correlated with men's interruptions, the male participants in this study did not engage in any forms of power play to seize the floor and dominate the conversation.

It is evident from the analysis that male interlocutors were more inclined to show their interest and involvement in the topic of conversation. They tend to interrupt each other in order to confirm and build each other's ideas, echo and complete each other's utterances. These forms of interruptions indicated the participants' attention to the interactive process of conversation and demonstrated their collective as well as mutual support that ultimately led to strengthening their collaboration.

The analysis also reveals that conversation amongst men is not necessarily laden with elements of intrusive behavior, power and competitiveness as has been reported in numerous studies. The male participants have adapted a relatively tolerant attitude, which may not necessarily indicate powerlessness.

Instead of resorting to the use of linguistic elements to show powerful or aggressive behavior, they have used similar elements, namely cooperative interruptions, to promote and ascertain a certain level of diplomacy in their interactions, which in turn reinforces their in-group power where building on each other's utterances was akin to male bonding or brotherhood of men. In this instance, House et al. (2004, p. 30) refers the notion of 'in-group power' as "the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families" that evidently relates to solidarity amongst men in this study.

## CONCLUSION

Iran, in recent years, has experienced noticeable changes in power allocation and gender roles. Women are given more opportunities to show their abilities and power in the society. Consequently, these changes have resulted in women's autonomy (Jariah Mohd. Jan & Mohajer, 2012; Mohajer, 2015a) and men's cooperative behavior (Ansari, 2008). These changes may have effected and moderated Iranian men's patriarchal roles. This may be a contributing factor to the participants in this study not intending to appear powerful and competitive to their male counterparts. Instead, men cooperated with one another and built an in-group power to promote their closeness and solidarity.

Studies on men and language are scarce and most of the studies in hand focus on men and power. Further investigations on various linguistic features among men in different cultural and social settings such as work place would shed more lights on the language style that men employ to interact. Other potentially important factors such as status and age, which were not referred to in this study, can be addressed in future researches. Moreover, the results of this study indicate that similar studies should be conducted among Iranian male interactants, both in single-gender and mixed-gender groups. Finally, this study suggests a challenge to the stereotypical linguistic features which are attached to men's talk.

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## APPENDIX

### TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTION

- [ A single left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset
- ] A single right bracket indicates the end of the overlapped utterance
- Bold** **Bold** letters indicate the utterances which are uttered with loudness
- ? Question marks show a question or the rising tone which signifies a question
- (xxx) Three xs in single parenthesis indicate unintelligible speech
- / A slash indicates a short pause- less than 1 second
- (.) A dot in parenthesis indicates a long pause - more than 1 second
- Word* Words in italics indicate some sort of emphasis
- ::: Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound
- // Double slashes, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of a next line indicate an interruption without any simultaneous speech
- ... Three dots are used to indicate the continuation of utterances within a turn which has been eliminated
- ((word)) Words in double parenthesis are used to explain any non-speech sounds and non-verbal actions and any necessary information such as translation and the researcher's clarifying comments
- [1], [2] Arabic numerals indicate the lines of the transcription form the beginning of each transcription
- L1, M2 Capital single letters indicate male speakers in each group and the immediate number after each letter indicates the order of speakers appearing in conversation

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