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## Research Paper

### Cognitive and Sociolinguistic Analysis of Gendered Communication Patterns in Iraqi TV Talk Shows

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#### Abstract

This article examines gendered patterns in public discourse by analyzing the cognitive and sociolinguistic features of interruptions, turn-taking, and collaborative language during Iraqi TV talk shows. We used a mixed-methods approach to examine transcripts from 20 episodes of TV talk shows in which both male and female guests appeared. This and other studies suggest that there are strong gender-based differences in, for example the per cent of talk with interruptions (evaluated by numerical frequency), topic control or continue, males talking more than females coded as take-talks or pivoting responses, whereas types of type-control regards turn taking was higher among female speakers than male while total degree of fluency to engaged language use. These trends are consistent with Iraq's historical gendered norms — a juxtaposition against American shifts toward more equitable media relations. The main conclusions suggest the significance of cultural constraints in communication, indicating practical paths for media literacy as well as suggestions where sociolinguistic training and gender-inclusive policy design may benefit from a closer look.

**Keywords:** Collaborative Language Constructions; Gendered Communication; News/Cable Satellite Programs; Public Discourse; Turn-Taking

#### الگوهای ارتباطی جنسیتی در گفتار رسانه‌ای عراق: تحلیل شناختی و جامعه‌شناختی

این پژوهش به بررسی الگوهای شناختی و جامعه‌شناختی ارتباطات جنسیتی در برنامه‌های گفتار رسانه‌ای عراق می‌پردازد و بر چگونگی تأثیر وقفه‌ها، نوبت‌گیری و تعامل بر گفتار عمومی تمرکز دارد. لذا از یک رویکرد ترکیبی برای تحلیل متن‌های پیاپی‌سازی شده از ۲۰ قسمت برنامه گفتگوی رسانه‌ای با حضور شرکت‌کنندگان مرد و زن استفاده شده است. یافته‌ها نشان‌دهنده تفاوت‌های معنادار جنسیتی هاست به‌طوری که سخنرانان مرد با نرخ بیشتر وقفه‌ها و کنترل موضوع بر گفتارها تسلط داشتند، در حالی که سخنرانان زن حساسیت بیشتری نسبت به نوبت‌گیری و استفاده از زبان تعاملی نشان دادند. این الگوها با هنجارهای جنسیتی سنتی عراق هماهنگی دارد و تفاوتی را با روندهای رو به رشد غربی که به سمت پویایی‌های جنسیتی متعادل‌تر در رسانه‌ها متمایل است نشان می‌دهد. این پژوهش بر نقش هنجارهای فرهنگی در شکل‌گیری ارتباطات تأکید می‌کند و پیامدهایی را برای رویه‌های رسانه‌ای، آموزش جامعه‌شناسی زبان و توسعه سیاست‌های حساس به جنسیت برجسته می‌سازد.

**کلمات کلیدی:** ارتباطات جنسیتی، جامعه‌شناسی زبان شناختی، نوبت‌گیری، زبان تعاملی، گفتار رسانه‌ای

## Introduction

This quote highlights the double nature of language that is not only a lubricator glue of human society, but it also forms our identity and reflects individual personality traits as well as social values. Regardless of the society, language use is impacted by a great number of variables ranging from gender to cultural norms and social roles. The patterns with which we gender language shine a light on the broader cultural expectations that undergird it as well, since where and how we mark specificity in our tongues can be shaped by values related to gender roles and stereotypes. In the realm of media, these aspects are quite visible in language choice as well as tone and mannerisms around conversation which makes this connection all the more apparent; dolling territory for social normative stereotyping (or dismantlement) to occur. And, public platforms such TV talk shows further facilitate this discourse and making it part of our behavioral pattern that take a toll on gender sensitive societal thinking.

Gendered communication was extensively examined in Western media contexts but little is known about the impact of cultural norms on gendered aspects of human-technology interaction in non-Western societies, especially Middle East. According to western studies men and women speak differently due partly to processes of socialization where masculine language is often assertive, competitive styles that tend toward independence while feminine styles are more supportive rapportronic inkindness (Tannen, 73). Social norms are changing and gender power dynamics have evolved to the point where we see far more assertive communication styles among women reflected in Western media than elsewhere. But in societies with a powerful tradition of patriarchy, including Iraq, the dynamics are still commonly male dominance and female submissiveness. This study seeks to address this gap by examining Iraqi media in which public discourse is highly steeped in traditional values and gender roles.

Iraqi TV debate shows provide a distinctive context for studying gendered language use, as their highly regimented structure permits the observation of public interaction in real time. These shows often discuss issues of national and cultural import accountability itself that constitutes a significant place for democratic discussion. Iraqi patriarchy is evident in the dynamics of conversation, the way turn-taking works and specific verbal strategies used by male and female speakers especially within this speech context. In Iraq, the traditional hierarchical gender expectations assign multiple roles to men in all spaces as opposed to one or even another role that women often have while dealing with still subordinate and deferential norms (Evans & Green 2013). This analysis deepened the exploration of how power, identity and control over conversation was negotiated between male and female participants in a liveness practice which is public yet culturally embedded.

The present study explores the gendered communication in Iraqi TV talk shows how cognitive and sociolinguistic factors impact on it through addressing interruption frequency, turn-taking sensitivity, also collaborative language use. Each of these elements served to explain how men and women inevitably interact with one another in a formal, public sphere — mirroring the already existent societal demands made upon each gender. Interruption frequency uncovers conversational dominance — which speakers try to control the conversation and in what proportion. Indeed, the turn-taking sensitivity may be partially explained by adherence to social codes of politeness (46) and perhaps reflects women's heightened patience and deference in this particular culture. The joint language usage points out that female participants exhibit gendered, rapport-building supportive conversational strategies in comparison with their male counterparts.

This study furthers our understanding of how traditional gender roles affect public communication in Iraq, and contrasts these dynamics with the larger research into tendencies toward male-dominated verbal patterns that are well documented throughout Western media. In as much it has shown the difference that perhaps still exists between traditional norms and new



age societal standards, representing a modernizing Iraq where national dialogues are turning global; at least its public discourse becoming more westernized. With growing global exposure through digital platforms, Iraqi audiences will inevitably come across feminist communication styles unsettling conventional gender roles. In this sense, the analysis of Iraqi media in this study may represent a mirror to societal attitudes and possible indications for changes in gendered communication.

In short, the study presented in this article relates to a broader context of research on gendered communication in non-Western media by offering an understanding of how cognitive as well as sociolinguistic factors affect language use with regard to sex determinations gender program speeches. The research has methodically analyzed and it provides useful information to the media practitioners in Iraq as well decision makers if they are wondering what kind of interventions, which can be flourished by policy level that could promote gender equity balance ethos whilst demonstrating them through media. This study thus highlights the significant influence media has in shaping cultural values and effecting social change by illustrating how representations of gender roles can both reproduce and challenge stereotypes prevalent within traditional society.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The role of cultural norms in shaping gendered communication has been widely researched within Western societies but little is currently known regarding the fits and starts of Iraqi media where patriarchal values clearly flavor public discussion. A significant body of Western research has examined the ways in which men and women speak or are spoken to within media, with that work often based on assumptions about male dominance (men have more access to speech-making activities); assertive vs. supportive language use by males stretch out what Laura Mulvey calls "to-be-looked-at" statements; + "& henceforth) collaborated action between members of construction [proper] femininity scenery viewing audience is produced. Nonetheless, these studies often privilege societies where gender equality movements have been widespread and traditional norms of gender are under question. This is sharply different from the cultural and social roots of Iraq which still live in a patriarchal environment where most everyone understands what men are allowed to say, do or simply GIVE SOCIAL ALLOWANCE TO BECOME VISIBLE PLATFORMS LIKE TELEVISION.

Iraqi TV talk shows are a useful way to observe those dynamics in action. Men and women navigate social issues, politics (with visible examples of cultural beliefs in gender roles being enforced or contested). In these shows, male participants also seem to interrupt more and dominate conversations with the tradition of viewing a woman as submissive in nature. Female participants instead can display turn-taking sensitivity, taking much longer to speak and using more collaborative language which aligns with the social behaviors expected from women in polite, helpful manners.

These behaviors, while based on individual social communication styles -- also highlight and endorse the cultural norms of what is likely considered an appropriate gender role out in society. And in cases such as men constantly interrupting and controlling topics, these performances of dominance are part and parcel with more generalized expectations for the public participation always to be led by Men. Yet, in the case of women such preferential turn-taking and collaboration-oriented language can be perceived as a form of socialization to fulfil supportive functions within public discourse. Therefore, men and women communication styles that appear on Iraq TV shows are not only a result of individual but is also promoted, as well maintain the long-standing social expectations roles.

Finally, it is essential to see how media operates in this context as media representation matters a big deal end route, they shape societal attitudes. TV talk shows are seen by a large public, so the gendered communication patterns displayed among participants on these programs



have implications for what when audiences view as socially desirable behavior and how they understand being male or female both within media product itself (in terms of content) but also outside it in society. Through the application of specific features in which male and female participants interact with each other, this study seeks to explore how Iraqi media — like its counterparts around the world — mirrors traditional gender norms? Or can it challenge them. Moreover, it asks to what extent the gendering of patterns in Iraqi media is commensurate with global trends and how far local context defines communication style.

Their work is about a deeper, more-culturally-rooted look into gendered communication in the non-Western traditional cultures to complete and fill this literature gap, by focusing on how deeply rooted cultural norms impact their language usage in Iraqi media. This approach not only deepens our knowledge when it comes to how gender-specific communication has been examined in Iraq and serves as an initial evaluation for benchmarking Iraqi media dynamics with those of other cultural landscapes. It seeks to do this in a manner that contributes towards expanding resources and spaces for gender-based sociolinguistic research, whilst also providing groundwork for further studies of women's language practices and media across comparable non-Western sites.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this research can hold major potential for the study of sociolinguistics, in that a great part is played by them simply to extend our knowledge about gendered communication within an Arab community. Readers might like to think about the fact that this research can be a useful house in which we can dissect media communication still marked by traditional Iraqi cultural doctrines and all knowing how deeply society-set gender roles fertilize ways of speaking. This has implications that extend beyond academic discourse concerning gender and language, as these examples illustrate a form of variation in the interactional accomplishment of speakers' performance targets which seem due to issues with cultural context not encountered outside particular Western micro-varieties (were behavior relevant to communicative style etc., may be less rigorously policed). Accordingly, it constitutes an important newcomer on the global stage of sociolinguistic studies focusing on aspects that have not previously been studied in non-Western cultures.

The results of this investigation have implications for media practitioners, sociolinguists as well as policy makers who are interested in structural and attitudinal gender equality in public discourse. This understanding would help media practitioners in Iraq and other similar societies to write programming that is more balanced and gender sensitive; it will be shown what male speech which takes these cultural trends into consideration should look like, helping them produce the kind of discourse their audiences are looking for. Through documenting and analyzing these gendered interactions, the work identifies practical spaces in which media representations reflect —and on occasion aggravate— traditional societal normativity. Indeed, these observations are the very stuff of media gender-sensitivity that works to encode how men and women are represented into every aspect. Such provisions may allow a transformation of the Iraqi media from its routine sexism, stereotyping and glorifying gender roles to forms more equitable that can pave the way for including other communication styles.

Moreover, such study can offer a concrete direction for educational programs in sociolinguistics and gender studies. In illustrating gendered communication patterns with examples that are culturally contextual, this work helps educators to use more culture-specific case studies in their classrooms outside the classroom and allows students to understand how language must be (and becomes) a part of its cultural landscape. Framing the discussion of language and gender in this way, showing students how studies about gendered communication



may vary across cultures helps to provide a fuller picture of sociolinguistics. It could also provide a benchmark in the future direction of academic studies on gender and communication but, given that sociolinguistic networks may operate vastly differently to what has been described in literature from Western cultural context.

The study provides policy recommendations for tackling gender bias in the media, and helps inform future progress towards creating a truly diverse public space that mirrors more accurately usual Iraqi society — something vital to improving social equality across-regions. Understanding in what ways media perpetuates — and also challenges — gender norms can help inform policies to promote more equal representations of women and men in the global mediascape. These insights could also serve as a call for policymakers to have guidelines that limit the overstating of voices from male and female genders, providing training activities among media workers on how gendered communication can best be employed. These undertakings are crucial to growing a media that reflects varying views and aids our evolution toward an equal society.

Generally, then, this research has implications not just for sociolinguistics or gender studies. With concrete use cases such as in media, education and policy, Yalla Nshoufeh has the potential to shape public debate for gender equity on media or inclusive representation that Egypt can benefit from. As a result, the study contributes to a more complete vision of how media plays on perceptions about gender and establishes with that understanding groundwork for socially beneficial ways by which theoretical knowledge can inform practices in conscious (media) creation.

### Objectives of the Study

- Analyze gender-based differences in interruptions and topic control in Iraqi TV talk shows.
- Assess how cognitive factors, such as turn-taking sensitivity, shape communication.
- Examine the impact of collaborative language use on conversational dynamics.

### Research Questions

The current study addresses the following research questions and hypotheses:

**RQ1.** How do male and female participants differ in interruption rates and topic control in Iraqi TV talk shows?

**RQ2.** What cognitive factors, such as turn-taking, influence male and female communication patterns?

**RQ3.** How do Iraqi communication patterns align or contrast with recent findings in Western media?

**H1.** Male participants will show higher interruption rates and more topic control.

**H2.** Female participants will exhibit greater turn-taking sensitivity.

**H3.** Iraqi communication patterns will reflect traditional gender roles more strongly than Western settings.

### Significance of the Study

This study holds significant implications for the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in expanding our understanding of gendered communication within a Middle Eastern context. By analyzing how traditional Iraqi cultural norms shape communication styles in media, this research provides valuable insights into how deeply ingrained societal expectations influence language use between genders. These insights not only contribute to academic discourse on gender and language but also highlight how cultural context can lead to notable variations in gender norms when compared with Western settings, where communication styles and gender roles may be less rigid. Consequently, this study serves as a critical addition to the global body of sociolinguistic research by shedding light on underexplored, non-Western cultural dynamics.



The findings of this study are relevant to various stakeholders, including media practitioners, sociolinguists, and policymakers who aim to understand and promote gender equality in public discourse. Media practitioners in Iraq and other culturally similar contexts can benefit from understanding how gendered communication patterns are perceived by audiences, enabling them to create more balanced and gender-sensitive programming. By documenting and analyzing these gendered interactions, the study identifies specific areas where media representations reflect—and sometimes reinforce—traditional societal expectations. Such insights underscore the need for gender-sensitive media practices that consciously promote a balanced representation of men and women. This could pave the way for a shift in Iraqi media toward more equitable portrayals, challenging entrenched gender roles and encouraging a wider acceptance of diverse communication styles.

This research also provides a practical foundation for educational programs focused on sociolinguistics and gender studies. By offering context-specific examples of gendered communication patterns, it enables educators to integrate culturally relevant case studies into their curricula, enriching students' understanding of how cultural context influences language. This approach to language and gender studies highlights the diversity of gendered communication across different cultures, fostering a more complete and nuanced understanding of sociolinguistics among students. This research can also serve as a framework for future academic work examining gendered communication in similar non-Western contexts, where sociolinguistic dynamics may differ significantly from those documented in Western literature.

For policymakers, the study offers actionable insights that can support efforts to address gender bias in media, which is critical for fostering an inclusive public sphere that reflects the diversity of Iraqi society. By highlighting specific ways in which media perpetuates or challenges gender norms, this research can guide the development of policies aimed at promoting gender equality in media representation. Policymakers could use these insights to establish guidelines that encourage more balanced representations of male and female voices, as well as training programs that raise awareness among media personnel regarding the impact of gendered communication. Such initiatives are vital for creating a media landscape that values diverse perspectives and supports the progression toward a more inclusive society.

Finally, the significance of this study extends beyond academic contributions to sociolinguistics and gender studies. Its practical applications for media, education, and policy highlight its potential to influence public discourse, promote gender equity in media, and advance inclusive representation within Iraqi society. By contributing to a deeper understanding of how media can shape perceptions of gender, this research offers a foundation for fostering positive social change through conscious, informed practices in media production and representation.

## Review of Literature

The literature on gendered communication underlines persistent differences in language use between men and women, showing both universal trends and culture-specific variations. Previous research in cognitive sociolinguistics has found that gendered communication is modeled by the intersection of cognitive predispositions, social expectations, and situational context (Holmes, 2023; Meyerhoff, 2023). While most Western studies investigate workplace and interpersonal communication, recent scholarship has turned to media as a unique context for exploring public expressions of gendered language.



## **Theoretical Background**

### **Cognitive Sociolinguistics**

This area of research investigates how the cognitive processes and social structures interact to shape the use of language, mostly in respect to mental frames that orient linguistic choices (Evans & Green, 2023). Cognitive sociolinguistics views language as a tool with which people navigate and interpret reality socially. In this view, gendered communication is understood to be the product of both mental predispositions—such as turn-taking sensitivity—and social norms—such as the expectation that men lead conversations.

### **Gender and Communication**

Tannen (2022) and other pioneering researchers in sociolinguistics believe that men and women will often adopt different styles of communication because of socialization processes. Men's language will typically adopt a "report" style, expressing information and authority, while women will more likely adopt a "rapport" style of communication, building connection and support. Such patterns are further solidified by social structures that promote assertive behavior in men and cooperative behavior in women, although recent studies in Western contexts noted a shift toward more balanced gender roles (Purba et al., 2023).

### **Gendered Communication in Media**

As media studies point out, the gendered patterns of communication that hold for interpersonal interactions also hold in more public settings, where men tend to dominate conversations and women show higher levels of politeness and deference (Holmes, 2023). Western media studies have traced the shift in this pattern as women move towards more assertive use of language. However, in more traditional societies like Iraq, male dominance in public discourse does prevail with female speakers more frequently taking on supportive roles (Meyerhoff, 2023).

### **Empirical Background**

Previous studies in gendered communication within non-Western settings have shown how cultural norms inform patterns of conversation. For instance, studies of media in Middle Eastern countries suggest that the conversational dominance of men is effectuated in harmony with cultural norms that highlight male power in both the public and private spheres (ibid.). In the Iraqi media, this was affected through TV talk shows: men were placed as topic controllers, and women were relegated to secondary, supportive roles (Evans & Green, 2023).

### **Gap in the Literature**

Despite all the research on gendered communication, studies dealing explicitly with Iraqi media are rare. Most research has focused on Western contexts, meaning that generalizations to non-Western cultures may not be easily applicable. In this regard, this study fills the gap by examining gendered communication in Iraqi TV talk shows, in which traditional gender roles are deeply influential. Thus, this research aims to contribute to the universal aspects of sociolinguistics and cognitive linguistics with a perspective that takes into account the cultural particularities.

### **Methodology**

A mixed-method approach is followed in this study, which covers quantitative and qualitative analyses of gendered communication in Iraqi TV talk shows. The mixed-method approach is especially helpful in that it allows the inclusion of both fine-grained, measurable features of conversation, such as frequencies of interruptions or turn durations, and the more qualitative, contextual aspects that underlie gendered interactions. Such methodological choice would allow



for both breadth and depth, giving insights into statistical patterns and the socio-cultural underpinnings of gendered language use in Iraqi media.

### **Research Design**

This study is based on a descriptive-analytic design, through which descriptions, measurements, and interpretations of the conversation dynamics across gender lines are utilized. Such a design would empirically allow an exploration of how male and female participants engage in public discourse on Iraqi TV talk shows with an emphasis on interruption frequency, turn-taking behavior, and collaborative language use. It uses quantitative data to calculate specific frequencies and averages, while qualitative observations allow for a more nuanced interpretation of the gender dynamics within the cultural context of Iraqi media.

### **Corpus of the Study**

It contains transcripts of 20 episodes of five popular Iraqi talk shows, chosen in a way to represent a balance of male and female participants and to discuss various social and political topics. These are chosen to bring dynamic interaction among participants and bring out conversational styles that reveal underlying gender norms. These episodes—amounting to over 15 hours of recorded material—were chosen purposefully based on the criterion of popularity and wide audience appeal to ensure the findings are representative of mainstream public discourse in Iraq.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data were collected in a stepwise manner as follows:

**Recording and Transcription:** Recordings of all episodes were transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy against the audio. Each transcript was coded for speaker turns, interruptions, overlapping speech, and collaborative phrases to ensure consistency in identifying the gendered interaction features.

**Coding for Conversational Features:** Interruptions, turn durations, topic initiation and collaborative language use were some of the specific markers highlighted. Each transcript was then analyzed according to these markers to allow for quantifiable analysis. For instance: Interruptions were coded by the number of times male and female speakers interrupted or were interrupted.

Turn-taking sensitivity was indexed by means of average turn duration, number of overlap instances and waiting time before taking a turn, o Collaborative language featured supportive remarks, affirmations, and empathy markers frequently linked to rapport building.

**Contextual Analysis:** Additionally, cultural and contextual notes were added, drawing on the conversational topic and situational dynamics, providing insights into why certain communication strategies were employed.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The two levels involved in data analysis include the quantitative and qualitative methods:

**Quantitative Analysis:** Interruption frequencies, turn durations, topic initiations, and collaborative language use for both genders were quantified using descriptive statistics. This allowed the researcher to establish if there were any statistically significant differences in conversation behavior between male and female participants. Frequency counts for each feature provided a measurable basis for comparisons between genders.

**Qualitative Analysis:** The researcher conducted thematic analysis of the transcriptions, coding each for any recurring patterns and conversational dynamics that aligned with gender-specific





communication strategies. This provided contextual depth into how traditional gender norms manifest in specific conversational choices. In order to further elaborate the sense of the quantitative data, each instance of interruption or collaboration was examined for tone, intention, and consequences for the flow of conversation.

### Model of the Study

This study uses a cognitive sociolinguistic model based on the frameworks of cognition and social rules that dictate gendered communication. In particular, the model utilizes cognitive sociolinguistics to explain conversational behavior as both a reflection and a reinforcement of societal expectations of gender. In this respect, it takes up how male dominance and female deference manifest in turn-taking and interruption behaviors, emphasizing the interplay of cognitive predispositions with socially learned gender roles.

### Reliability and Validity Measures

Establishing the reliability and validity of findings:

**Inter-Coder Reliability:** Multiple coders analyzed the transcriptions for consistency in identifying interruptions, sensitivity to turn-taking, and collaborative language. Discrepancies were reviewed and reconciled to ensure high reliability in data coding.

**Triangulation:** Data triangulation was achieved by comparing observed conversational patterns with findings from similar studies on gendered communication in Middle Eastern and Western contexts, which supported the study's external validity.

**Member Checking:** Preliminary findings were reviewed by cultural and sociolinguistic experts familiar with Iraqi media to ensure contextual accuracy and cultural relevance in interpreting gender dynamics.

**Reflexivity:** Being aware of the researchers' influence on interpretation, reflective notes were kept throughout data analysis to log personal biases and ensure these did not unduly shape the findings.

## Results

**Table 1**

*Interruption Rates and Topic Control by Gender*

Feature	Male Speakers	Female Speakers	Difference (%)
Average Interruptions	15 per episode	7 per episode	+53% (male-dominant)
Collaborative Phrases	8 per episode	15 per episode	+47% (female-dominant)
Topic Initiation	12 per episode	5 per episode	+58% (male-dominant)

This table highlights a distinct pattern in interruption frequency and topic control among male and female participants. Male speakers are shown to interrupt conversations more frequently, with an average of 15 interruptions per episode, compared to 7 for female speakers. This substantial difference suggests that male participants are more likely to assert conversational dominance by interjecting and steering discussions. In sociolinguistic terms, interruptions are often associated with a desire to control the flow of discourse, indicating that male speakers may perceive these talk shows as an arena where they can establish authority and assert influence.

The data on **topic initiation** reinforces this observation, showing that male speakers are twice as likely to initiate new topics as female speakers, with 12 instances of topic initiation per episode for males versus 5 for females. This aligns with research indicating that men in patriarchal societies are often socialized to take leadership roles in conversations, particularly in public settings (Holmes, 2023). By frequently initiating topics, male participants not only



maintain control over the conversation's direction but also position themselves as authoritative figures within the discussion.

Conversely, female speakers demonstrate a higher usage of **collaborative phrases** (15 instances per episode compared to 8 for male speakers). Collaborative phrases—such as agreement markers, supportive comments, and expressions of empathy—are indicative of a rapport-building approach to communication. This finding suggests that female participants are more inclined toward fostering cooperative and supportive interactions, which aligns with traditional gender norms that encourage women to adopt nurturing and harmonious roles. This emphasis on collaboration, even in a public and formal setting, reflects societal expectations for women to be accommodating and deferential in their communication styles.

**Table 2**

*Turn-Taking Sensitivity by Gender*

Turn-Taking Feature	Male Speakers	Female Speakers	Difference (%)
Average Turn Duration	2.5 minutes	1.8 minutes	+39% (male-dominant)
Overlapping Instances	10 per episode	4 per episode	+60% (male-dominant)
Waiting Time for Turn	5 seconds	10 seconds	+50% (female-dominant)

The **turn-taking sensitivity** analysis reveals that male speakers not only speak for longer durations on average (2.5 minutes versus 1.8 minutes for females) but also have more **overlapping instances**, with 10 overlaps per episode compared to 4 among female speakers. These findings underscore male speakers' inclination to dominate conversation time and highlight a pattern of conversational assertiveness. The frequent overlapping instances suggest that male participants are less concerned with observing conversational boundaries and more focused on asserting their views, which could reflect a cultural inclination toward assertive male participation in public discourse.

Female participants, in contrast, exhibit greater sensitivity to **turn-taking cues** by allowing more time before speaking. The average **waiting time** for women is 10 seconds compared to 5 seconds for men, reflecting a more cautious and respectful approach to turn-taking. This finding aligns with gender norms that encourage women to exhibit politeness and deference, especially in formal and public settings (Meyerhoff, 2023). The observed turn-taking sensitivity among female speakers may also suggest an awareness of the conversational dominance typically displayed by male speakers, prompting women to wait longer before speaking to avoid confrontation or interruption.

The shorter average **turn duration** for female speakers (1.8 minutes) compared to males (2.5 minutes) further supports the idea that women engage in more concise and cooperative communication. This brevity may stem from an awareness of male dominance in conversations and an internalized understanding that longer turns could be perceived as encroaching on male authority within the discussion. Together, these turn-taking behaviors illustrate the contrasting conversational approaches encouraged for men and women within the cultural context of Iraqi society.

**Table 3**

*Gender Comparison with Western Media Contexts*

Variable	Iraqi Shows	TV Western Studies	Difference	P-value	Significance
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Variable	Iraqi Shows	TV Western Studies	Difference	P-value	Significance
Average Interruptions (Male)	15 per episode	10 per episode	+5	0.02	Significant
Collaborative Phrases (Female)	15 per episode	18 per episode	-3	0.12	Not Significant
Turn-Taking Sensitivity (Female)	10 seconds	6 seconds	+4 seconds	0.03	Significant

This table provides a comparative analysis between gendered communication in Iraqi TV talk shows and findings from Western studies, offering insights into the influence of cultural norms on conversational dynamics. In the Iraqi context, **male speakers interrupt significantly more** (15 interruptions per episode) compared to their Western counterparts (10 per episode), with a statistically significant p-value of 0.02. This higher interruption rate suggests that, in Iraqi media, traditional gender norms more strongly encourage male dominance in public conversation, in contrast to Western settings where gender equality initiatives have gradually reduced the acceptability of male conversational dominance.

Female participants' **collaborative phrase usage** in Iraqi shows (15 per episode) is slightly lower than that observed in Western studies (18 per episode), though the difference is not statistically significant. This finding indicates that both Iraqi and Western female participants engage in rapport-building communication. However, the slightly lower rate in Iraq might reflect constraints posed by the traditional conversational hierarchy, where overt collaboration might sometimes be curtailed by the more dominant behavior of male speakers.

**Turn-taking sensitivity** among female speakers is markedly higher in Iraqi media, with an average waiting time of 10 seconds, compared to 6 seconds in Western contexts. This difference, which is statistically significant ( $p = 0.03$ ), highlights how Iraqi cultural norms may reinforce deferential behavior in women. In contrast, Western societies' emphasis on equality may allow for more assertive turn-taking behavior among female speakers, who are less socially constrained by expectations of deference.

## Discussion

The present study analyzed gendered communication dynamics in Iraqi TV talk shows with regard to the ways through which cultural and sociolinguistic elements affect the patterns of interruptions, turn-taking, and collaborative language use. Its findings reveal large gaps between males and females on these features, which reinforce conventional gender expectations about male dominance and female deference in public spheres. A comparison of these findings with similar research conducted within the Western media also underlines the role played by cultural norms in determining conversational behaviors and further explains why patriarchal values persist within Iraqi media.

### Patterns of Interruption and Topic Control (First Research Question)

Results showed that males did interrupt and change topics more than females. The current finding is compatible with past research on gendered communication, where interruptions are associated with conversational dominance and topic control (Holmes, 2023). Regarding this aspect, a traditional Iraqi context—where patriarchal norms are widely enforced—interrupting and changing topics by males would be a mirror of the expectations of society from men to take charge in public discussions. This pattern establishes the authority of men and puts them into the position of principal contributors to the discourse, setting the course for conversations and controlling the conversation.



The high frequency of interruptions by male participants also reflects a socialized tendency toward assertiveness in male-dominated settings. Contrary to Western studies, where the interruption rates of men have decreased over time due to movements related to gender equality (Purba et al., 2023), the Iraqi context deviates very little from traditional norms. This suggests that, in the Iraqi media, male dominance in conversation still largely shows acceptance of reinforcing male authority in public discourse. Women, on the other hand, tended to use collaborative language, not conversational control, in order to reinforce traditional roles of showing supportiveness and agreeableness for women in public settings.

### **Turn-Taking Sensitivity and Deferential Behavior (Second Research Question)**

Female respondents showed much greater sensitivity to turn-taking cues than did males; on average, the time they waited was twice that of males. This is in line with prior studies indicating that in more traditional societies, women are generally more inclined to take part in deferential behaviors in public communication and to act out cultural norms placing a greater premium on politeness and non-abrasive communication for women (Meyerhoff, 2023). In the context of Iraqi TV talkshows, this deferential approach by the female participants might suggest that they are very well aware of male dominance in conversation and wait longer to speak as a strategy to avoid interruption and assertive overlaps from the male participants.

The shorter turn time for females compared to males also underlines the gendered nature of conversational dynamics in Iraq. Iraqi women may self-limit their turn time as an adjustment to cultural expectations that discourage overt assertiveness in public settings. This is contrary to the findings from Western media, where female speakers increasingly match or even surpass male speakers in both turn time and assertive turn-taking (Holmes, 2023). This would suggest that the cautiousness in the turn-taking of Iraqi women is based on some internalized idea of what is expected of their role in public discourse, where brevity and politeness outweigh longer, assertive turns.

The significantly higher instances of overlap by male participants further reflect their prioritization of self-expression over conversational politeness. In traditional Iraqi society, male assertiveness is often viewed as a positive trait, signifying leadership and authority. Consequently, male participants may feel culturally validated in their frequent overlaps, viewing them not as interruptions but as rightful contributions to the conversation. This aspect of the Iraqi gendered communication reveals how cognitive and social factors coalesce around the maintenance of traditional gender hierarchies in media.

### **Collaborative Language Use and Supportive Roles (Third Research Question)**

Indeed, female participants' use of collaborative language—supportive comments, affirmations, and agreement markers—was significantly higher than that of male participants, thus supporting the idea that women in Iraqi media engage in rapport-building strategies. Collaborative language is normally associated with feelings of empathy, solidarity, and supportiveness—qualities assumed by traditional expectations of women in patriarchal societies (Tannen, 2022). This would suggest a trend whereby Iraqi media often, if not always, culturally and socially encourage female speakers to take on a supportive role in maintaining conversational harmony, even in a potentially public and adversarial setting such as a TV talk show.

The slight decrease in collaborative phrase use by Iraqi female participants compared to Western participants (Evans & Green, 2023) may point to a restrictive conversational environment that inhibits women's self-expression in male-dominated settings. Unlike in the Western media, where female collaboration and rapport-building have evolved balancing with assertiveness, Iraqi women's use of collaborative language use almost only fulfills traditional



expectations without extending into the leadership role. This constraint limits their role to ancillary functions, which prevents women's voices from influencing the debate in any significant way.

### **Comparative Analysis with Western Studies**

These results are in contrast to those of recent Western studies of gendered communication, where gradual changes toward conversational equality have lessened the gendered differences in interruption, turn-taking, and language use. In the Western context, promotion of gender equality and change in policies have nudged equal representation and empowerment for women; this may have surely brought about reduced interruptions by men and more conversational leading by women (Purba et al., 2023). However, within the Iraqi context, it contributes to perpetuating traditional gender norms through the media, further entrenching male dominance and relegating women to secondary or supportive roles.

This difference would suggest that Western societies have moved toward more gender-equitable styles of communication, while the Iraqi media interaction continues to reinforce gender hierarchies reflective of broader societal values. This divergence of the Iraqi pattern from the Western one serves to underline the role of cultural context in shaping gendered communication, with Iraqi media deviating little from patriarchal expectations. As such, it provides the necessary affirmation for culturally sensitive approaches in media reforms within Iraq, aimed incrementally at gender equality and introducing balanced representation without the imposition of Western norms that might not resonate with Iraqi society.

### **Conclusion**

This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the features of gendered communication in Iraqi TV talk shows and demonstrates that traditional cultural expectations greatly influence the conversational dynamics. Male participants dominated the conversations in terms of high interruption rates, topic control, and longer turn durations, which reinforce societal expectations for men to lead and assert authority. In contrast, female participants were turn-taking sensitive, brief, and used collaborative language in ways conventionally consistent with the traditional role of women that emphasize politeness, supportiveness, and non-abrasiveness. These findings reveal that there are lingering gendered communication patterns in Iraqi media; therefore, public discourse in Iraq is enormously conditioned by patriarchal values.

**Implications of the Study.**

The findings of the study have important implications for media practitioners, educators, and policymakers in Iraq. The research insights given here carry an important message for media practitioners in introducing gender-sensitive programs that would help to promote equitable representation. By promoting balance participation and reducing gendered interruptions, Iraqi media can gradually change public discourse toward a more inclusive environment, valuing both male and female contributions. This research will also provide educators with context-specific examples to teach sociolinguistics, where students can critically analyze how gendered communication varies across cultures and reflects the norms of a society. These findings can also guide policymakers in the promotion of gender equality in the media, encouraging policies that address gender bias and ensure balance in representation throughout Iraqi public discourse.

This is so because the study is bounded in an Iraqi TV talk show context, and the findings may not generalize to other forms of media or even interpersonal settings in Iraq. Another limitation is that this research focused upon verbal interactions and excluded non-verbal components that could very well strongly influence the conversational dynamics. In fact, a future study could include these non-verbal components, thus rendering a more holistic view of gendered communication in the Iraqi media.



The present study zooms in, by design, on those aspects of communication that include interruptions, turn-taking, and collaborative language use. The chosen areas are selected to show salient dimensions of gendered communication in the media context; other features, such as styles of conflict resolution, body language, or eye contact, might be explored in future research to further densify the description of gender dynamics in public discourse.

### Suggestions for Future Research

It would be a further development of this research to examine gendered communication in other Iraqi media contexts, such as news programs, social media platforms, or interactive talk shows involving audience participation. Alternatively, a longitudinal approach might consider shifts in gendered communication over time as Iraq becomes more exposed to global media influences that will contest traditional gender norms. Finally, comparative studies on gendered communication in other Middle Eastern contexts are needed to shed light on regional commonalities and differences in norms of gender and media representation.

This paper underlines the powerful influence of cultural norms on gendered communication in Iraqi media. While global trends toward gender equality continue to change the patterns of communication in so many societies, Iraq's public discourse remains bound to traditional expectations and reflects the deeply held cultural values in this country. This paper provides the groundwork for further academic research and practical applications, encouraging a move toward more inclusive and balanced media representations that echo the diversity and dynamic changes of Iraqi society.

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