

# Gender Speaking Differences in *Stranger Things*

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**Abstract:** Traditional media often displays a power difference between the male and female identity, where the male counterpart is presented in a higher social status than the female, which is represented through dominance and assertiveness. The aim of this paper is to analyze conversational traits between men and women in *Stranger Things* based off of the turn-taking model developed by Sacks et al, and more specifically, identify the frequency of overlaps and interrupts, which are two common rule breakers of the model. Overall, this paper has concluded that women are diverging from their past stereotypes of passiveness and are showing the same traits of dominance like men in conversation in *Stranger Things*. This identification could possibly reflect changing ideologies of gender representation in media and the real world.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to linguistically analyze the irregularities found in mix-sex conversations in *Stranger Things*, a Netflix series that was released in 2016, based off of the turn-taking model that was developed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson. Two major irregularities that have been notably observed by multiple research papers are overlaps, when one speaker talks at the same time as the present speaker, and interruptions, when one speaker speaks before the current speaker could complete their turn (Abdelrahim, 2006; Fei, 2011; King, 2010). This paper will analyze same-sex and mix-sex conversations in *Stranger Things* and see if the characters attempt to break away from the claim that men tend to interrupt women more often than women do as an attempt to exert dominance and control.

*Stranger Things* has gained massive popularity within the past year, notoriously for its nostalgic factor with people who grew up in the 1980s. While nostalgia may be one factor for its success, the show captures the 80s' Reagan-era anxiety and lax attitude regarding children and child vulnerability, or "the particular terror of childhood vulnerability in homes undefended by fathers" as Williamson writes in "Familiar Things" (Williamson, 2016).

*Stranger Things* also draws upon multitudes of genres, such as a teenage romantic comedy, adventure, mystery, etc., that attracts a diverse audience. I believe that the show takes these tropes that are normally prevalent within various genres and subverts them. This makes the show particularly engaging because it ripples with widely reused plot lines and renders out a different course of action that exceeds the audience's expectations.

While trope subversion is one reason why I chose to conduct research on this show, gender and character interactions are also another reason. The turn-taking method combines both of these aspects by analyzing the conversational patterns. This, particularly the irregularities in conversation and the turn-taking model, allows further

research to be done on gender disparity within post-modern media, which could further reflect on the socioeconomic status on men and women in the 21st century. This paper was also created under the assumption that a character's background and circumstance affected their own speech styles.

### **1.1. The World of *Stranger Things***

Brief background information about the characters and the setting is needed to further understand how context could potentially influence talking styles. To begin, *Stranger Things* is a science fiction thriller centered around the mysterious disappearance of a young middle schooler, Will Byers. The cast resides in 1980s Hawkins, Indiana. The show centers around four main groups of characters tackling their own plot line in regards to Will's disappearance. While these four groups aren't explicitly pointed out in the show, I will be categorizing the characters into such groups to allow for an easier explanation of the characters and their relationship to the mystery.

The first group includes Will's three school friends, Mike, Lucas, and Dustin, and a runaway girl, named Eleven, with mysterious powers who later joins them. The second group consists of the high schoolers Nancy, who is the older sister of Mike, and Jonathan, the older brother of the missing Will Byers. Along with Will's disappearance, Nancy has to deal with her romantic troubles with Steve as well as the eventual disappearance of her best friend, Barbara.

On the opposite side of the age spectrum, the last two groups consist of adults. The third sleuths include Joyce Byers, Will's distressed mother, and Chief Jim Hopper, the sheriff in charge of this mystery. The fourth group is a secret government-funded organization, the Hawkins National Laboratory, that grew out of World War II and performs research tests to combat the Russians, a prime political example of Cold War tensions in this show. The main person behind these experiments is Dr. Martin Brenner. Both Dr. Brenner and his team are anxiously trying to recapture Eleven, one product of the human experiments.

This paper assumes that there is a correlation between talking patterns and a character's circumstance. For example, Joyce, the mother of Will Byers, is frantically searching for her own son, disbelieving others when they claim that he is dead, causing others to think that she is mental. She is especially seen as deranged when she makes claims of supernatural forces happening in her own house. All of the psychological stress can possibly be found in her talking style; Joyce constantly interrupts and overlaps with others. Therefore, a character's context and role should be taken into account when conducting a conversational analysis.

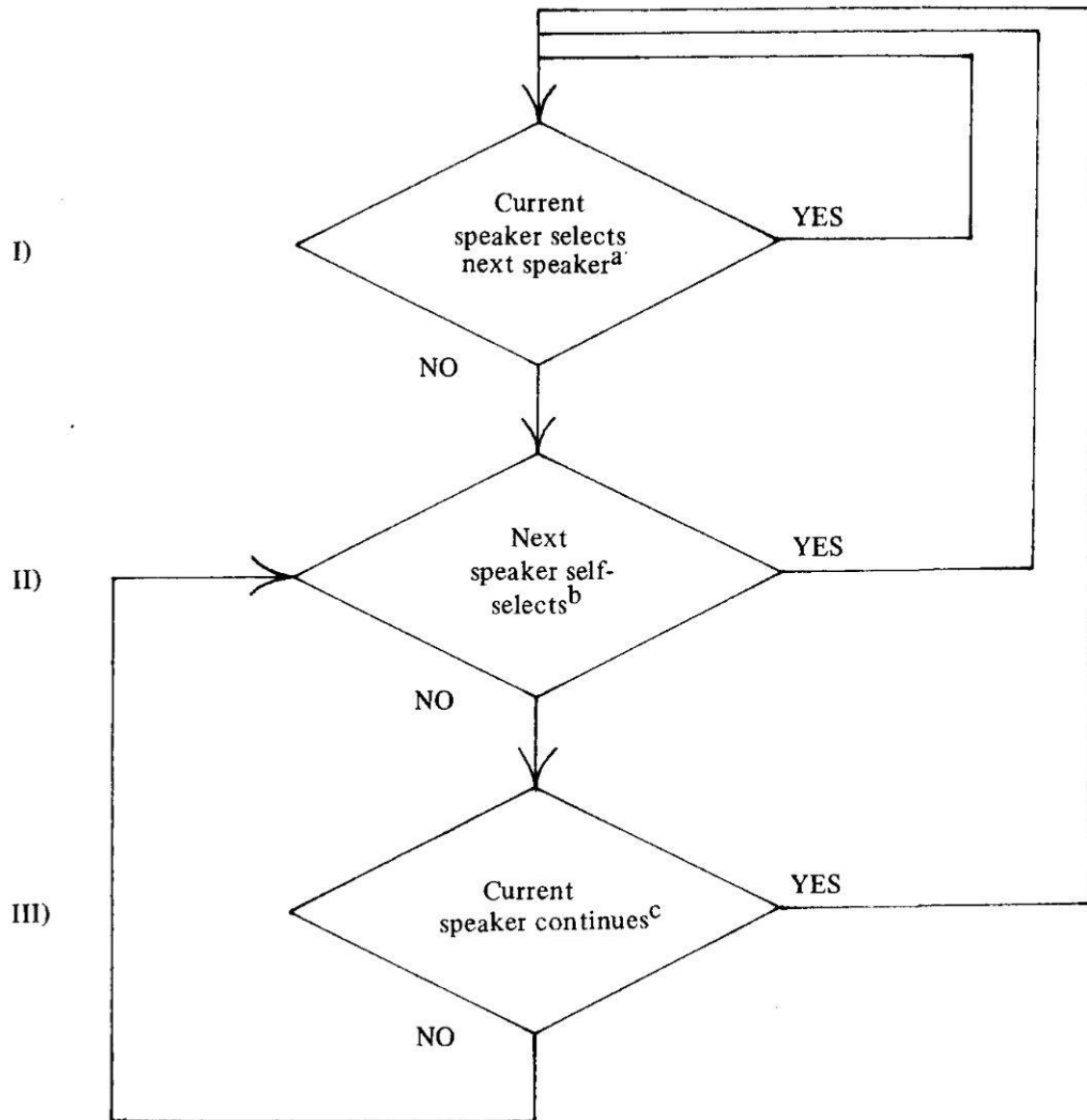
## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Turn-taking Model**

In the turn-taking model, speech and conversations are conducted on a turn-by-turn basis and are organized by sets of rules that are varied by the amount and size of a

turn. Strenstrom (1994), as referenced by Abdelrahilm (2006), provides a concise and specific definition of a turn by interpreting it as “every thing a speaker says before the next speaker takes over. Some turns are very short and consist of a single word, other turns are very long and resemble short monologues.” Strenstrom’s definition, among others, is referenced because it captures the difference in turn sizes, where one turn may last a duration of one word or even mirror a monologue. Within turn-taking, conversations contain two or more speakers. The current speaker, once they finish their turn, will decide if they want to continue speaking or choose the next speaker. This model was developed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) to describe the rules, properties, and organization of conversation that interlocutors take part in. They describe this model with two basic components: the turn construction unit (TCU) and the transition relevant point (TRP). A TCU is a turn, as mentioned earlier, constructed of phrases, single words, clauses, or sentences. A TRP is a legitimate transitioning point between the current speaker to the next at the end of the first speaker’s turn (Sacks et. al, 1974). A simplistic visual of the model is shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The turn-taking model by Sack et al (1974)



As can be extrapolated from Figure 1, the turn-taking model allows the current speaker to select the next speaker, granting them the right to speak and floor, where the floor gives legitimacy to the person speaking and no one else should negate their turn either by interrupting or overlapping, two definitions which will be elaborated more on later. As described by Zimmerman and West (1975), the first section (I) of the figure begins with the current speaker holding the floor, and if they decide to select the next speaker, either by addressing the next speaker's name or direct a question towards them, the cycle then repeats to the beginning. The second section (II) begins if the current speaker does not select, which further allows for anyone to gain the floor by self-

selecting themselves. Once the new current speaker self-selects, the cycle once again restarts back at (I). If self-selection does not occur, then the third section (III) occurs where the current speaker from (I) has the option, but does not need, to hold the floor and continue speaking. Thus, the cycle restarts at (I) until another speaker decides to speak.

## 2.2 Gendered Linguistics and Turn-taking Behavior

There is a parallel between the power of language and its interaction with discourse between males and females. Studies have shown that there is a close link between gender and how gender-specific speaking styles are reflected in language. Men and women tend to use different discourse strategies when communicating. Although this paper is more focused on turn-taking and the analysis of the violations of turn-taking qualities in *Stranger Things*, it is important to take note of specific speaking qualities found in gendered linguistic research.

Robin Lakoff (1973) postulated a revolutionary idea that there was an exclusive language for women. She claims in her research that women are taught to speak differently from men from birth to fit the social role of a “lady.” Due to this circumstance, they become unassertive and more passive in conversation and therefore tend to use hedges, or filler words that contribute no substantial information to the conversation, and tag questions, which is when the speaker lacks confidence in a statement and relies on a question to iterate their idea although already partially knowing the outcome of the question (Lakoff, 1973). Lakoff’s observations have been criticized against, however, because of the nonexistent data used to support her claims, in which her supporting evidence was based on personal observations of herself and her friends. Although her study wasn’t fully supported by empirical evidence, studies since then have proven that her argument that there is gender disparity in conversational speech is still relevant (Key, 1975; Maltz & Borker, 1982).

A keystone paper titled *Sex Roles, Interruptions and Silences in Conversation* by Zimmerman and West (1975) introduced and explored the notion that power and dominance, values enjoyed frequently by men, were prevalent in conversation interactions between men and women. They transcribed thirty-one conversations between two people in public places at the campus of the University of California, and then analyzed the way they spoke using the turn-taking model. Their recorded conversations were categorized into three groups: two women, two men, and one man and one woman. Zimmerman and West discovered that there were two key irregularities that broke the rules of turn-taking: interruptions and overlaps. In mix-sexed conversations, 96% of males interrupted the current speaker, whereas only 4% of females did (Zimmerman and West, 1975). Women also did not use any overlaps, or instances where two speakers speak at the same time, during the conversation, suggesting that they are more mindful of waiting until the male speaker has finished their turn. In same-sex interactions, however, interruptions were fairly distributed between speakers. The idea of dominance can be extrapolated with this data; males tend to be more aggressive, a trait associated with interruptions. Zimmerman and West believe that the high number of interruptions by males could potentially reveal the

relationship of enduring power and dominance in social life. These findings reflect the idea that there are differences between both same-sex conversations and mix-sex conversations, as shown through the irregularities of overlapping and interrupting. The idea of differences in mix-sex interactions brought interest among the linguist community and other studies have since affirmed the works of Zimmerman and West. Fishman (1983) conducted a study on three heterosexual couples' conversations and found similar results to Zimmerman's and West's. Men were more inclined to interrupt their partner through interruptions and silences, and make declarative sentences (Fishman, 1983). Women, on the other hand, aptly attempted to keep the conversation flowing by using more hedges, tag questions, and listening cues (eg. *mmhm*) similarly to what Lakoff (1974) found, putting them in the "support" role of the relationship (Abderrahim, 2006). From these similarly continual findings, there is a correlation between the speaking patterns of men and women and how they partake in conversations.

One limitation to Zimmerman's and West's research is that the definition of "interruption" and gender connotations attached have been highly contested. The definition of interruption that Zimmerman and West (1975) provides insinuates that men exhibit dominance and masculinity. They claim that because men had a higher frequency of interrupting, interruptions demonstrate a speaker's exercise of power and control in a conversation, which violates the current speaker's turn and therefore can not be considered a legitimate transition between speakers (Zimmerman and West, 1975, 1983). On the other hand, Tannen expands on the idea of overlaps and interrupts as being two-fold: overlaps can either be cooperative or competitive by nature (Tannen, 1992, 1994). Speakers may speak on top of another speaker to gain control of the floor or be cooperative by making a sound of interest to confirm that they are listening to the current speaker. Coates also has similar findings as Tannen, and through analyzing conversations of a group of women, discovered that women interrupted each other to built upon each others' ideas rather than to steal the current speaker's floor (Coates, 1989). Essentially, both Coates and Tannen argue the idea that some types of interrupts do not infringe the right of other speakers, but instead support each other. As such, there is not a general consensus on one universal definition of interruption.

According to Fei's (2011) paper, there are three types of interruptions that diverge from the initial oversimplified definition that associated interruptions with dominance and power, which can be seen in Figure 2.

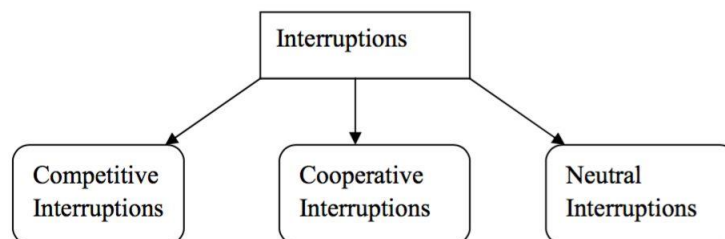




Figure 2. Three types of interruptions (Fei, 2011).

Competitive interruptions are when speakers try to dominate the floor by controlling the conversation topic and are, in turn, causing disruption (Kollock et. al, 1985). This definition is very similar to the one given previously by Zimmerman and West (1975). Cooperative interruptions are when speakers interrupt a conversation to show interest and support, coined “rapport-talk” by Tannen (1993). Neutral interruptions are neither rapport nor do not violate turn-taking rules, but can be used to clarify a miscommunication (James & Clarke, 1993). These classifications provide insight on a character's personality, whether they're more supportive or tend to disrupt the flow of conversation. These three classifications of interruptions reflect a more nuanced discussion towards linguistics and conversations, and should be taken into account of when explaining differences in turn-taking behavior.

There has been a general consensus that both genders do have different speaking styles when conversing. These differences can reflect the difference in social or power status between the two speakers, and is worth noting in everyday conversation. The ideas that were found are that men tend to interrupt women more often and women tend to be more submissive when conversing.

### 2.3 The Gap

It is important to recognize if this gender difference is still apparent in modern day film, starting with *Stranger Things* as this show has garnered mass attention and critical acclaim for its representation of the 1980s Reagan-era, inducing nostalgia for many viewers, and varied cast members (Nussbaum, 2016; Kain, 2016). Stereotypes are used in television shows as an easy way to identify characters and media is a way to recreate a version of reality. However, if media continues to reflect gender roles to the general audience, bias begins to be distorted with reality, and these roles are thus reinforced. Stereotypes limit our view and decision making. Diverse characters are needed within a show to mitigate the justification of gender roles. The aim of this paper is to analyze the frequency of interruptions and overlaps in the series by comparing same-sex conversations to mix-sex conversations to then be able to identify whether the conversational styles of the main characters in *Stranger Things* diverge from past consensus of speaking styles. This identification will provide insight on if there is a change in male dominance in conversation, and if so, possibly illustrate the transforming views of men and women currently in society and more specifically within media representation. In conclusion, this paper's research question is: based off of the turn-taking model, how frequently do characters break the rules of turn-taking by overlapping and interrupting, and from the results, do they follow or diverge from their expected gender role?

### 3. Method

The framework used to organize and annotate conversations was Sack et al's turn-taking model because it easily simplifies the coding for interruptions and overlaps, which can be later used to identify and analyze the amount and frequency of gender

differences. The type of method used is a quantitative conversational analysis, which will be combined with a qualitative analysis of character conversations to further explore the reasons why a character did or did not follow the turn-taking rules. This method is like one of many papers that follow Zimmerman's and West's (1975) research. A general outline of this method, which will be elaborated on soon, follows: 1) transcribing each conversation and marking instances of interruptions and overlap, 2) categorizing each transcription, 3) calculating the percentage of interruptions and overlaps, and finally, 4), analyzing and comparing data. This mode of research is necessary to add onto previous research findings and to identify whether or not various language speaking patterns have changed in modern day television, starting with *Stranger Things*. A crucial assumption this paper takes is that all conversations follow the turn-taking method and that every speaker partakes in respecting a turn's legitimacy. To begin, rewatching the series was necessary to fully understand the overarching plot of the series to then be able to smoothly analyze conversations and understanding a character's context. For the first part of this method, I watched *Stranger Things* and transcribed every conversation that occurred during all eight episodes, as both mediums, visual and auditory, are needed to be able to fully understand the meaning of the conversations and intentions of the speakers. I looked out for indications of interruptions and overlaps so that I could mark each instance in my transcription. I followed a simplified version of Sack et al's (1974) notation system for turn-taking, using a bracket ( [ ] ) to indicate overlap of multiple speakers and two obliques ( // ) to indicate interruptions. Sack et. al's full notation system was not needed because the other notations do not focus on the primary intent of this paper, which is to analyze the interruptions and overlaps in mix-sex and same-sex conversations. The transcription will look like the following example:

*NANCY: Steve, [listen to me.*

*STEVE: [Hey. Nancy, what //*

*NANCY: //You need to leave.*

Example 1. A shortened transcription of one scene in episode 8 of *Stranger Things*. Both Nancy and Steve overlap as they say "listen to me" and "hey. Nancy, what," respectively. Steve then gets interrupted by Nancy, leaving him to never finishing his utterance.

A mixed definition of overlap and interruption was used to ensure an accurate transcription. Zimmerman's and West's (1975) definition of overlap and interruption was used when transcribing, but, as discussed with Tannen and Coates earlier, the assumption regarded with interruptions, which was that interruptions signified a hostile



act by the speaker, was negated. Interruptions are when a second speaker begins speaking in the duration of the first speaker at which can not be regarded as a legitimate transitioning point between speakers (Zimmerman and West, 1975). More specifically, interruptions, as defined by Coates (2003), are when a speaker begins to speak at the same moment as the current speaker, and the point at which they were interrupted could not be defined as a proper transitioning point (or TRP). Overlaps, on the other hand, are instances of simultaneous talk between two or more speakers (Zimmerman & West, 1983).

After the transcription and identification of each episode was completed, I categorized the interruptions and overlaps into to three different groups: male-male, female-female, male-female. As can be seen, there are two same-sex categories and a mix-sex category. It is important to note that having same-sex and mix-sex conversations are vital to conducting this kind of research because the same-sex conversations act as the control group, whereas the mix-sex conversations indicate any outlier when compared to the control group. Once completed, I analyzed the data collected and linked it to Zimmerman’s and West’s conclusion of their turn-taking data to examine if the idea of dominance is still linked with masculinity within this television series by seeing who is more likely to be interrupted between the speakers. All character conversations will be transcribed to get as accurate as a result as possible. By using all of the dialogue between both minor and major characters, the data collected will be more accurate as an authentic representation of conversation will be represented.

#### 4. Data and Analysis

##### 4.1. Turn-taking irregularities in Conversation

A conversational analysis will be provided based off of the amount of times the speakers interrupt and overlap with each other, which are violations of the turn-taking method.

Table 1: Overlaps and interruptions between male-only conversations

<b>Same-Sex Speakers (Males)</b>	<b>1st Speaker</b>	<b>2nd Speaker</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Overlaps</b>	39% (13)	61% (20)	100% (33)
<b>Interruptions</b>	28% (10)	77% (33)	100% (43)

Table 2: Overlaps and interruptions between female-only conversations

Same-Sex Speakers (Females)	1st Speaker	2nd Speaker	Total
Overlaps	50% (2)	50% (2)	100% (4)
Interruptions	13% (2)	87% (13)	100% (15)

The above tables represent the amount of interruptions and overlap that occurred between male-only speakers (Table 1) and female-only (Table 2) in all of the conversations that happened in all eight episodes of *Stranger Things*. The first column titled “1st speaker” represents the amount of times the first speaker in the conversation overlapped or interrupted another person in conversation. The first speaker does not have to be the first person to initiate conversation, but was given the title if they spoke first. The numbers in the parentheses represent each instance a speaker did either of the two irregularities.

A general trend with same-sex male speakers based off of Table 1 is that the second speaker is more likely to interrupt and overlap with the first speaker in conversation than the first speaker. 77% of the time the second male speaker interrupted, leaving only 28% of the first speaker to interrupt. The same trend of interruptions can be seen in all female-female conversations, with 87% of the second speaker interrupting the first speaker. Overlaps in female-female conversations, however, had an equal distribution of the first and second speaker overlapping. One issue with this data is that there are more male-male data points logged than female-female data points. This is due to the fact that there are more male characters in the series than female characters, resulting in more interactions between male characters.

In another perspective, male speakers are more likely to interrupt and overlap than female speakers in same-sex conversations. From Table 1 and Table 2, males had 43 cases of initiated interruption and 33 cases of overlap, whereas females had 4 cases of overlap and 15 cases of interruptions.

KAREN: You lied to the police!

NANCY: I didn't lie!

KAREN: How naive do you think I am? You and Steve were just talking?

NANCY: We slept together! Is that what you want to know? It doesn't matt//

KAREN: //It does matter!

NANCY: No! It is all bullshit! It has nothing to do with Barb and she's missing. And something terrible happened to her. I know it. I know it! And no one is listening to me!

KAREN: Sweetie, sweetie, I'm listening. [I'm listening to you.

NANCY: [No!

NANCY: You're not!

KAREN: Nancy. Nancy!

NANCY: Just leave me alone!

Example 2. A transcription of a conversation between Karen and Nancy in episode 4.

An example of a female-female conversation shown above is between Karen and Nancy (Example 2). Karen is the mother of teenagers Nancy and Michael Wheeler, who live in a fairly well-off, middle-class suburban household. Nancy is a teenage girl who was just interrogated by the police in this episode after the disappearance of her best friend, Barbara. This example shows a divergence from the general understanding that women are more passive by showing little interrupt and overlap in conversations. Karen interrupts Nancy by saying "it does matter." This instance shows Karen trying to neglect Nancy's right to speak, trying to gain the floor for herself.

Nancy overlaps Karen by exclaiming "no" and gained her right to speak. These instances of overlap and interrupt could potentially be due to the extreme circumstance that both Karen and Nancy are in. Karen is a mother trying to care for their children in the midst of cases of missing people. Nancy, on the other hand, is anxious about her missing best friend, Barbara, who she ignored rudely hours before her disappearance. These two explanations of both of their circumstances could possibly explain how both of them are breaking turn-taking behavior and legitimize their overlaps and interrupts. This instance also provides a counterclaim to Lakoff's findings, as mentioned previously, where women tended to be more passive and unassertive in conversation compared to their male counterpart (Lakoff, 1973). Furthermore, in this same-sex female interaction,

both Karen and Nancy are breaking turn-taking rules, which reveals a divergence from their expected gender role of being submissive and supportive in conversation.

Table 3: Overlaps and interruptions between female and male speakers

Mix-Sex Speakers	Female Speakers	Male Speakers	Total
Overlaps	39% (16)	61% (25)	100% (41)
Interruptions	42% (36)	58% (50)	100% (86)

Table 3 describes the amount of interrupts and overlaps initiated by females or males in mix-sex conversations. In mix-sexed conversations, more male speakers are more likely to overlap than female speakers, as seen from Table 3.

The intriguing point in these results is that the frequency of interruptions is more or less even between female and male speakers. This data contradicts the consensus that male speakers are more likely to interrupt female speakers, as mentioned earlier (Zimmerman & West, 1975). In Zimmerman's and West's research, 96% of males interrupted, whereas only 4% of females did in mix-sex conversations. However, the results that I found show that males only interrupt females slightly more than females interrupt males, with 58% of male speakers interrupting and 42% of female speakers interrupting. It, therefore, is interesting to see that these results reflect the opposite of Zimmerman's and West's findings.

Previous works have identified that men have longed for power and are regarded to have a higher social status than that of females (James & Clarke, 1993; Coates, 2004). These ideals have been shown through results reflecting a higher percentage of interrupts initiated by males than females in mix-sex conversations to express male dominance and control for the floor, neglecting others' rights turn and right to speak in the process, as Zimmerman and West (1975) and others have found. Women, in contrast, are supposed to be seen as more feminine, idle and passive by avoiding possession of the floor. Based off of my findings in *Stranger Things*, there is a symmetry of interruptions in mix-sex conversations between males and females. My results, as shown from table 4, do not parallel the general trends, as there is more of an even distribution of interruptions initiated by both men and women.

JONATHAN: Remember//

NANCY: //Straight into Will's room. And//

JONATHAN: //Don't step on the trap.

NANCY: Wait for the yo-yo to move.

JONATHAN: Then. All right. You ready?

NANCY: Ready.

JONATHAN: On three. One two... You don't have to do this//

NANCY: //Jonathan, stop talking.

JONATHAN: I'm just saying, you don't have to//

NANCY: //Three.

Example 3. A mix-sex conversation between Jonathan and Nancy in episode 8.

Example 3 involves a mix-sex conversation between Nancy and Jonathan. In this scene, the pair is currently reviewing their plan that involves killing the monster that took Barbara and Will and they are about to initiate it. This example is one that goes against the idea that interruptions are mainly used by males to exert power and dominance. This type of interruption shows that interruptions are not necessarily associated with males and can be used to show rapport, a type of interruption Tannen (1993) identified, instead. Jonathan follows up Nancy's first line with "don't step on the trap" after Nancy states one part of the plan. Nancy then continues her turn with reciting the next step of the plan. This particular instance between Nancy and Jonathan shows that they are helping each other and building a cohesive idea. This example also shows two instances of competitive interruption all made by Nancy instead of Jonathan, the male speaker. Zimmerman and West (1975) and other studies have determined that interruptions were mainly made by male speakers in mix-sex conversations. However, in this instance, it is the female speaker who initiates the interrupt. It is not only Nancy who interrupts, but Joyce Byers, the frantic mother of Will Byers, is also shown to competitively interrupt as well, which can be seen in Example 4.



JOYCE: It didn't have a face

HOPPER: Joyce, listen to me. Listen to me. After Sarah I saw her, too. And I heard her. I didn't know what was real. And then I figured out that it was in my mind. And I had to pack all that away. Otherwise, I was gonna fall down a hole that I couldn't get out of.

JOYCE: No, you're you're talking about grief. This is different.

HOPPER: I'm just saying that you//

JOYCE: //No, I know what you're saying, Hop. I swear to you, I know what I saw. And I'm not crazy.

HOPPER: I'm not saying that you're crazy.

JOYCE: No. You are. And I understand, but God, I I need you to believe me. Please. Please.

HOPPER: Listen I think you should go to the morgue tomorrow and see him for yourself. It'll give you the answers that you need.

HOPPER: But tonight //

JOYCE: //Oh, God.

Example 4. A mix-sex conversation between Hopper and Joyce in episode 4 with every interruption initiated by Joyce.

## 5. Conclusion

This study contains some limitations that may hinder the credibility of the data analysis section for same-sex speakers. First, there was a small pool of female speakers present in the study; therefore, there were more instances of interruptions and overlaps in same-sex male conversations than in same-sex female conversations because of the greater amount of male characters in the series. It was difficult to make any comparisons between the two categories due to the higher frequency of male-male data. I, instead, focused on the percentage of interrupts and overlaps rather than the amount of times each sex interrupted or overlaps because percentages provide an equal comparison field. Another possible source of error is the possible inaccuracy in determining interruptions during transcription, or human error. Some interruptions were placed at the end of the first speaker's utterance that seemed as if it could count as a



completed turn rather than a violation of turn-taking. There were only three instances where I found uncertainties in identification, and therefore did not include those points in data collection. The limited sources *Stranger Things* has is another drawback within my research. Because my research is so focused on conversational aspects of gender, there has been no such conducted research, which prompted me to conduct research on this new television show.

Future research on conversation and linguistics should continue to be conducted. Identifying irregularities in turn-taking conversations are important, whether it's to analyze relationships between speakers or to identify the general treatment of people through conversation. It is important to understand all of the terminology and rules that define turn-taking before beginning to transcribe conversations to keep a consistent marking of data. Future researchers should focus more on interruptions, as these components reflect multiple facets about the speaker. Although this paper focuses on one television show, future research should include other studies on conversations in real life and television shows to gain a better understanding of current linguistics and social structures. It is also noteworthy to investigate whether other current television series share the same sentiment as *Stranger Things*.

The main aim of this paper was to determine the general speaking patterns of conversations and see if they diverged from other well-received findings. The main takeaway from this research is that in mix-sex interactions, there is an even distribution of interruptions initiated by both males and females. These results refute the findings of Zimmerman and West. This even distribution in interruptions could show an increase in social awareness of today's society and stance on equality and gender. The previous findings were recorded in the seventies and eighties, so these results identify a departure from old, traditional speaking styles of male assertiveness and female passiveness in conversation. If anything, women are shown to be diverging from their previous gender role counterpart and expectations of being reserved and soft-spoken, at least in traditional media. More research must be done collectively on other television shows to see if this finding is not only reflected in *Stranger Things*, but is also representative of changing perceptions of gender.

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