

## **Types of Interruptions in TV Political Debates**

Prof. Rafi' M. Hussein Al-Mahdawi  
MA candidate Yasameen Marwan Al-Satori  
College of Education for Humanities-University of Anbar

### **Abstract**

Being goal-oriented, TV political debate genre is a purposive institutionalized communicative event between the interviewer and one or two interviewees which has a schematic structure. To attend the purpose of the debate, a restricted structure has to be followed by participants as they take turns to achieve a smooth and successful communication.

However, being restricted did not save this type of encounter from been breached by the emergence of interruption. To clarify the functionality of interruption in attending the aim of the TV political debates, samples of various types of interruption along with their linguistic explanation and analysis would be presented hoping to clarify their effect on the evolvement of the main topic of the debate.

Interruption, being a series of embedded conversational acts, is an institutionalized strategy by itself used functionally to attend the aim in the dramatically structured televised political debates. As a breach of turn-taking system, interruption occurs intentionally and unintentionally depending on how interruptees interpret each type of interruption as being an aggressive or supportive and on the intention of the interrupter himself determined by the context and the setting these types emerge in.

The interviewer is a goal-oriented participant as he masterminds the flow of communication to attend the preplanned goal intended to be achieved depending on the policy of the

channel. All types of interruption used by him aids in reaching to the climax between the interviewees.

**Keywords:** Interruptions, political debates, genre, turn-taking, interviewer, interviewee.

### المستخلص

كونها ذات نوع من التقابل ذو هدف محدد، تُعتبر المناظرة السياسية المُتلفزة من المناظرات ذات البنية التخطيطية التي تكون ذات غرض مؤسسي يُحدّد طبيعة العلاقة بين مُقدّم البرنامج والمتحاورين لاحتواءه على هيكل تخطيطي منظم. ولكي يتحقّق غرض المناظرة، يتوجّب على المتشاركين اتباع هيكل مُقيّد عند الشروع في تبادل الحديث للحصول على تواصل ناجح وسلسل بين الاطراف المتحاوره.

مع ذلك، فان كون المناظرة السياسية مُقيّدة بهيكل تخطيطي مؤسسي لا يحميها من ان تكون عُرضة لعوائق التواصل الخطابي كما هو الحال في ظهور التقاطع في الحديث. ولكي يتم توضيح وظيفة التقاطع في تحقيق هدف المناظرة السياسية المُتلفزة، يتم عرض عينات مُحددة من انواع التقاطعات مع التركيز على وظائف هذه الانواع جنبا الى جنب مع تحليلها اللغوي ودور كل منها في تحقيق الهدف المرجو من المناظرة السياسية المُتلفزة والمُتمثّلة بتطور الموضوع الرئيسي للجدال.

باعتبارها إستراتيجية تُنظّم وفق سلسلة من الصيغ الخطابية المُدمجة التي تُستخدم وظيفياً في المناظرة السياسية المُتلفزة ذات الهيكل الدرامي عالي التركيب، تُعتبر التقاطعات بمختلف أنواعها إستراتيجية وظيفية ومؤسسية بحد ذاتها. كونها عائق من عوائق التبادل الخطابي، يظهر التقاطع في الحديث بشكل مُتعهد او غير مُتعهد ويُفسّر اعتماداً على تفسير الشخص الذي تمت مقاطعته لهذه الانواع كنوع عدواني او تساندي وعلى نية الشخص الذي قام بالتقاطع مُعتمداً في ذلك على السياق الذي ظهرت فيه هذه الانواع.

إنّ مُقدم البرنامج هو احد المُشاركين في المناظرة الذي له توجّه واضح نحو هدف معين ويُعتبر العقل المُدبّر الذي يوجه سياق التواصل في المناظرات السياسية وذلك لتحقيق هدف خُطِط له مُسبقاً والذي يُحدّد وفقاً لسياسة القناة، حيث أنّ كل الانواع التي تمّ استخدامها من قبّله ساعدت على تحفيز الصراع بين المتحاورين وصولاً الى ذروة الصراع.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** التقاطعات، المناظرات السياسية، النوع، تبادل الخطاب ، مُقدم البرنامج، المتحاور.

## 1. Introductory Points

TV political debate (henceforth PD) is a type of genre which requires face-to-face encounter between debaters in real life situation. It differs from other types of TV genre; talk show debates and audience debates, in settings and purposes. This type of debate is held in the studios of TV channels. Almost all PDs depend on TV studios and stations to be broadcasted.

TV PD is an institutionalized debate which occurs in institutional setting through which terms of social interaction, social roles and social statues along with the content, style and the duration of the whole event within the TV setting are maintained (Scannell, 1991: 2). The participants, interviewers (henceforth IRs) and interviewees (henceforth IEs), have to be specialized in the politic field. As for IRs, they have to be professional journalists in this type of field. While, IEs have to be predominant

political and prominent public figures, such as presidents, politicians, leaders of political parties and so on. The relationship between the social actors (the journalist or IR and the politician or IE) in TV PD is of “asymmetrical” nature. That is, “the institutional power to organize the talk is held by the interviewer [IR] in the first frame interaction” (Johansson, 2006:140). The IR controls and directs the conversation flow by asking the IEs challenging questions. He manages the turns by referring to opening and closing of the debate time. Whereas, the two or more IEs have to take-turns in discussing their ideas and thoughts, their roles are to answer these questions, using many strategies to persuade the audience (Kozubikova Sandova, 2010:41). It also depends on the question-answer type of structure of talk.

TV PDs are considered as political institutions since all participants are believed to be a part of the political process. They all follow normative rules and patterns of behaviour that is believed to be political in nature and content, since both IR and IE have their reserved rights into the ongoing verbal interaction (Chilton, 2004: 90).

In such type of talk, turns are distributed between participants in a way that any violation will be unacceptable and the behaviour will be regarded impolite act (e.g., interruption).

## **2. Interruption**

Simultaneous speech is likely to occur in every conversation. Specifically a speaker, to converse, starts talking whereas another converse is in progress meanwhile. To some extent, interruption characterizes such discursal phenomenon to be eventuated as natural. Everyday conversation being local, televised or the like, incorporate discursal interruption, now and then, for variety of functional reasons. Debates are reasonably preplanned to manipulate contours via a spectrum of means, interruption is to excel. Notably, in artificial formal speeches, e.g. classrooms simultaneous speech interruption is banned or curbed by politeness rules, let alone other ethics. Being strictly rule-laden, participants are to observe these formal principles.

Simply, interruption occurs because participants do not follow the turn-taking (henceforth TT) mechanism. Interruption may hinder the process of communication between participants since it prevents the first speaker from completing his speech. It may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Generally, interruption is regarded as a rude strategy despite of that there is a cooperative type of interruption presented by one of the participants to support each other. Mainly, it will hinder the process of smooth flow of conversation, it may result a cutting off of the topic and as a result, a failure in interpreting the message to be conveyed by the participant being interrupted.

Interruption refers to a linguistic phenomenon whereby a cross or crisscross speech move is to cut into another's speech move to attend specific discursual objectives; or to deviate from an on-going speech exchange or discard some conception. Emotedly, it is an act of manipulation. An influx of expressions will be used counterly to cause a discursual mishap for the con-participant. Thus, smooth flow of communication would be resulted from lack of occurrence of interruption in conversation. Nevertheless, interruption occurrence in conversation has a great function on the interrupter side since it panes the lane to the interrupter to attend his goals from the whole debate.

Sacks (2004:41) state that interruption “involves a start that is projected to occur within another's turn, [and] does not have the minimization of gaps as a basis or justification for its occurrence”. While, Cerny (2010:2-3) defines interruption as “an initiation of simultaneous speech which intrudes deeply into the internal structure of a current speaker's utterances, with the intent of disrupting the topic” trying to claim “the floor of interaction or manifesting cooperation and support, does not matter if it results in successful interrupting the speech flow or failure”(ibid).

The occurrence of this type of simultaneous speech, interruption, also can be interpreted according to the intention of the interrupter to take the floor or/and to change the topic of the

conversation which is in itself an act of dominance and control from the interruptee's part.

“Turns are both continuous and exclusive” (Okamoto et al, 2002: 41), which means one person is allowed to speak at a time. That is why; interruption is the violation of the speaker rights. The purpose behind using interruption by speakers is mostly to disrupt the other's turn such as to shift topics or imposing someone's ideas. Interruption intends to disrupt the turns and disorganize the flow of conversational topics. Besides, it violates the current speaker's right in engaging in speaking. As such, interruption can be regarded negatively and associated with dominance and power (Lu and Huang, 2006: 2-3). By violating the general setting of TT, interruption is viewed as a sign of conversational dominance, a bias control of the floor; or topic detours of interaction. Yet, it also depends on the type of interruption used by interrupter to determine the main purpose of interruption whether a supportive or a dominant, disruptive one.

### **3. Types of Interruptions in TV Political Debates**

Depending on a variety of factors such as the intention of the interrupter and the interpretation of the interruption itself, each type of interruption has certain function which serves, to some extent, the aims of interruption in PD. The following types are the most used types in PDs. These types will be illustrated with

examples to show their function and the extent they can serve the aims of interruption.

### 3.1 The Power-Oriented Interruption

This type is an impolite, disruptive, intrusive and inappropriate act, in which the interrupter is being aggressive and rude towards other participants. “They are concomitantly treated as an act of conflict or non-involvement, they are off-topic or re-introductory topics, which contain few (if any) coherent-cohesive ties with the interrupted utterance” (Goldberg, 1990:896). As such it causes a change in the previous topic between participants. The following example which is taken from the Opposite Direction (OD) TV PD will illustrate this type:

*(I) OQ: (Continuing) all these regions have witnessed the demonstrations...*

*RA: What you are talking about has nothing to do with reality...*

*FQ: (power-oriented interruption) One minute, just stop here.*

*We have done with that. It has already been settled.  
(Debate 1)*

In this exchange, Faisal al-Qassem (henceforth FQ), the IR, interrupts the IEs Omar al-Qarai (henceforth OQ) and Rabie Abdel Atti (henceforth RA) in the middle of their heated discussion. This type of interruption is disruptive and aggressive since FQ does not interrupt them politely by using words such

as ‘please, will you, etc.’ He abruptly cuts into their turns and directly orders them to shut up preventing them from continuing the topic they were discussing. This type is an off-topic since it changes the previous topic as FQ makes it clear that he wants to depart from the previous theme. IR FQ uses his power as the controlling hand of the debate to deprive IEs from their heated discussion. Although IEs keeps trying to continue, they eventually are beaten by IR FQ as he has the floor again. The IR interrupted the IEs aggressively as he ordered them to shut up. This type of interruption deviates the focus of the themes of the topic of debate as it cause a cut of the topic by using aggressive manner to make IEs go back to the main topic if it was by IR so he could easifies the process to the conflict of the debate. It also serves in blocking the beat of the IE being interrupted. It shows how the IR is the most powerful member among the participants. To put simply, it serves the aims of the interrupter himself.

### **3.2 The Rapport-Oriented Interruption**

To show solidarity, empathy and interest between the interrupter and the interruptee about what the other speaker is saying, the interrupter uses this type of interruption. This act of interruption is regarded as an act of collaboration since it encourages the interruptee by immediate feedback which will help in developing the themes of talk. It is also helpful in filling in

gaps, elaborating on the topic, giving evaluative comments or asking the speaker for supplying more remarks. This type is known for holding moves and staying on topic (ibid). It is used mainly by the IR as he is the only one who can support and take sides since the other two IEs are opponents. The following example from the previous debate will illustrate this type:

(2) **RA:** ...when we say that we intend to establish a new constitution; this is in the light of the current circumstances [in Sudan] after the separation of the south.

So, I think, now, more than 97%...

**FQ: (Rapport-oriented interruption)** Good. So, [making new constitution] has

nothing to do with what is happening?

**RA:** Yes, 97% of the Sudanese are Muslims now.

**FQ:** Good.

**RA:** Thus, it is different when the South was part of the North.

**FQ: (Rapport-oriented interruption)** Good, it's reasonable... (Debate 1).

In the above excerpt, the IR, FQ, interrupted the IR, RA, twice. The first interruption is to give RA a supportive feedback to show him that he is interested in what the IE is saying. The second one “it’s reasonable” is to give him an evaluative comment to encourage him to proceed. They stay on the same topic, so it is not an off-topic type of interruption.

### **3.3 The Neutral Interruption**

This type addresses “the immediate needs of the communicative situations” (ibid) to repeat or elicit, repair or clarify the utterance of the current speaker being interrupted. Or they ask for the immediate attention in some situations which require that. What distinguishes this type of interruption is that once interruption is completed, speakers go back to their state before this interruption, to the state of pre-interruptive. So, the interrupter will allow the interruptee to continue where he\she left off (ibid). The neutral type of interruption is considered as a justified type of interruption. The common example on this case is when someone interrupts because there is problem in communication. Thus, he\she interrupts by asking questions for clarifications to understand what the other participant is saying. The same thing is true for some situations which require an immediate speech, like: ‘Fire’ and so on. Similarly, in a situation like when A is explaining something to B and before A has finished his talk, B gets A’s point. As a result, A interrupts B to declare that he\she understands what he\she has told. This is also regarded as an appropriate type of interruption (ibid: 4)

Most of the examples of this type of interruption in which the interrupter seeks clarification by asking questions do not add that much to the aims of interruption except for elaborating on the topic and sometimes veiling or unveiling a shortcoming. This type

of interruption occurs mostly within the expository stage in the dramatized TV PD, the OD.

(3) *MM*: .... *It opens up the door to everyone who...*

*FQ*: (*Neutral interruption*) *Who is responsible for that?*

*MM*: *The political conflict which exists in Libya. In fact, this political conflict has a great role indeed. (Debate 2).*

(4) *AA*: 16. ....*So, we relate this failure to a certain person, to the tyrant...*

*FQ*: 17. (*Neutral interruption*) *As in the case of al-Gaddafi in Libya?*

*AA*: 18. *Yes. (Continuing) and this proves the mental illness and morbidity that the revolutions are built upon... (Debate 2).*

In the first example, the IR, FQ, interrupted the IE, MM to ask question to clarify what the IE is trying to say. In the second example, the FQ interrupted the IE AA to finish his statement that he is going to say. While in (4), IR FQ interrupts IE-b AA to to readjust to make sure of what he has concluded from IE-b's speech. In both cases, the IE goes back to speaking again since this type of interruption does not disrupt his turn.

### 3.4 The Post-Continuations Interruption

This type occurs when “the current speaker has given the indication that he wishes to carry on speaking following a possible completion” (Hutchby, 1992:86).

(5)*OQ*: 110. ....*If all what have happened were for the benefits of the citizens,*

*it is ok then.*

**RA:** 111. *Yes, I ...*

**OQ:** 112. *(Continuing) If the hospitals contain medicine...*

**RA:** 113. *Yes, it...*

**OQ:** 114. *It will be ok...(Debate 1)*

**(6)AA:** 71. *... Whenever we have disasters, we will always blame him, in his life*

*in his death. He is always present....*

**FQ:** 72. *Where did the new regime fail?*

**AA:** 73. *(Continuing) Why do not you stop this story (to MM)? Why do not you*

*stop the myth of Gaddafi? Why do not you speak about now? (Debate 2).*

**(7)WS:** 9. *I understand from what was said that civilization according to the*

*professor is man...*

**IK:** 10. *Not true...*

**WS:** 11. *A simple comparison between....*

**IK:** 12. *I did not say that... (Debate 3).*

The interruptee in the above examples gives a clear indication that he wishes to complete his speech even if he stops at a possible completion point. So, in example (5), (6) and (7), the IEs have finished their turns, yet they continue talking after reaching a completion point. IE-a tries to interrupt the IE-b, but IE-a carries on speaking which indicates that he wants to continue even if he reaches a clear completion point at which the turn of the current speaker is perceived to be finished. He was unveiling a shortcoming about the current regime. This type of interruption serves the use of prolongation strategy as it makes the speaker

being interrupted resumes his turn and keeps talking as a long-winded turn holder.

### 3.5 The Post-Response-Initiation Interruption

The post-response-initiation interruption is regarded as a “pattern of interruption, which seeks to deal with unfavourable response and to press towards a favourable one” (ibid), in order to make the current speaker go back to the topic being discussed. The following example will give a clear explanation:

*(8). RA: 123. If we compare Sudan in the past and Sudan now, we will conclude that what you (to FQ) and Dr. Omar have just said make nonsense. In 1989 ...*

*FQ: 124. Do not go back to the past...*

*RA: 125. No, no, not the past about now...*

*FQ: 126. Let us speak about now. The present state of Sudan is our main concern...*

*RA: 127. The average of the individual's salary was...*

*FQ: 128. Oh man! Does it make sense that a government boasted of building some roads and bridges! ... (Debate 1).*

*(9). MM: 30. The very strange irony [he is talking about] is that, if we talk about...*

*FQ:31. Oh man! Before a while you were rumbling and puffing [defending angrily]. Now you are lecturing us about making academies. Oh man, defend Libya! (Debate 2).*

To keep track with the topic at hand, IR FQ has interrupted both IE-as (RA and MM) when they deviate from the focus of the main topic. In both examples, IR FQ finds the IEs' responses irrelevant and unfavourable as they do not have any benefits in

evolving the topic. Thus, he redirects the flow of debate towards the main topic, the current state of Sudan and Libya, respectively. It is obvious that this type serves the aim of interruption in PD as it enforces deviation of focusing on irrelevant topics to keep the unity of the topic of the episode.

### **3.6 The Interruptive Interruption**

Interruptive interruption means “any verbal (or exceptionally nonverbal) action that obstructs the development of a current speaker’s ongoing turn” (Marteniz, 2000:119) as in the following examples:

*(10) MM: 32. The strange Irony is that Muammar Gaddafi is an excellent Israeli product....*

*FQ: 33. We are not intending to make an academy. (Debate 2).*

In this example the current speaker’s turn get blocked by IR FQ to prevent him from developing a new topic. So, it serves the aim of interruption to block a beat.

### **3.7 The Successful Interruption**

It is, as Roger et al (1988) clarify that if the interruptive interruption attempted by the interrupter is “fruitful”, which means the interrupter succeeded in breaking “the continuity of the current speaker’s utterance” (ibid) and if he “manages to finish his turn, the interruption is [then] successful”(ibid). So, the

interrupter finishes his turn. Beattie (1952:100) explains that what makes a successful interruption is “the initiator of the attempted speaker-switch gains the floor”. This type occurs at all three debates cited in OD. The most successful interrupter who gained the floor after initiating interruption is the IR FQ himself although the IEs also have succeeded to have the floor, but they did not exceed him in that.

*(11)RA:47. ...Not the person, I mean the ideology...*

*FQ:48. Man! He [OQ] has told you that...*

*RA:49. The ideology that he believes in evoking him to criticize the regime in Sudan.*

*FQ:50. Doctor! (To RA) Let us talk about it point by point.... (Debate 1).*

*(12)MM: 34.... a very mean project because of which half of the Libyans had been killed. In spite of that, the Libyans had killed 120 thousand Italians...*

*FQ:35. Now, go back to [our subject] the situation now. How would that effect [on the current state of Libya]? (Debate 2).*

*(13)IK:29. No this is important, a starting point from which to depart....*

*FQ:30. Good, now we departed from it. Doctor [to WS], now let's get started:....(Debate 3).*

The IR has succeeded to take the floor and redirect the flow of debating from topic to another one. The opposite of this type of interruption is called the unsuccessful interruption in which the interrupter fails to have the floor. IEs failed more than the IR in having the floor as it has been shown in the previous examples.

### 3.8 The Single and Complex Interruption

These types simply refer to the number of attempts the same interrupter tries to take the floor of the current speaker. Single interruption means only one attempt, as in the following example:

**(14)AA:** *....and the Demons of their country who are collaborators with Americans...*

**FQ: (single interruption)** *But, you did not answer my question, yet. (Debate 2).*

*Complex Interruption:*

**(15)MM:** *The main problem is that we are suffering from upheavals. The Arab countries that have Arab Spring are suffering now....*

**FQ:** *Go back to Libya...*

**MM:** *Including Libya...*

**FQ: (Complex Interruption)** *Go back to Libya...*

**MM:** *The godfather of...*

**FQ: (Complex Interruption)** *No, no. Wait a minute...*

**MM:** *The godfather of them...*

**FQ: (Complex Interruption)** *I want to go back to our topic. The man has told you that you really give us a headache by your endless mentioning of that tyrant (Debate 2).*

**(16)WS:89.** *.... I am not a Christian, nor a Muslim, nor a Jew; I am a secular human being and I do not believe in the supernatural...*

**IK: 90.** *An atheist? ...*

**WS: 91.** *But I respect the right of others to believe...*

**IK: 92. (Complex Interruption)** *You mean an atheist? ...*

**WS: 93.** *You can say what you wish...*

**IK: 94.(Complex Interruption)** *I am asking you...(Debate 3).*

IR FQ, here, gained the floor in a single attempt. While in the second example he tries several times to finally get the floor. The difference between this type and the successive interruption is that in the former, the same interrupter keeps trying to have the floor while in the later one or more interrupters try to do so.

### 3.9 Successive Interruption

The current speaker in this type has been interrupted by several attempts, one after another. But this type is not necessarily a complex one. The difference between complex and successive interruption is that, in complex interruption the same interrupter tries to take the current speaker's turn, while in successive interruption, it could be that more than one interrupter tries to break the continuity of the current speaker. So, successive interruption can be a single one since it is possible that "the current speaker's turn is interrupted by different interlocutors in sequence, it will be counted as a successive interruption, and not as a complex one" (Marteniz, 2000: 121):

(17) **OQ:** *...If you have al- Sadiq al-Mahdi's fans and all those who are on your side, then why there are demonstrations [either]...*

**RA:** *(Successive interruption) Which demonstration! Which demonstration you are talking...*

**OQ:** *Shut up and listen! ...*

**FQ:** *(Successive interruption) One minute...*

**OQ:** *Just listen, will you ... (Debate 1).*

The example illustrates how both IE RA and IR FQ try to interrupt IE OQ. IE RA tries to debate with IE OQ by stating that what he is talking about is not true, while IR FQ tries to interrupt IE OQ to change the flow of discussion to another theme of the topic. This type of interruption is successive since more than one interrupter tries to take the floor.

### **3.10 The Simple and Overlap Interruption**

Beattie (1952:101-102) illustrates how in simple interruption there is simultaneous speech, while the current speaker's turn seems incomplete. While Overlap interruption is identical to simple interruption when two or more participants speaking at the same time except for that overlap reach completion in turn. The following excerpts will clarify both types:

*(18)OQ: Oh man! Which fantasies?! There are many demonstrations [in Sudan nowadays], In Cooper ....*

*RA: (Simple interruption)This is not.....*

*OQ: in Anbara and in Mabeed ....*

*RA: No, this is not the .... (Debate 1).*

*(19)AA: 37. What is your proof on what you have said?*

*MM: 38. This is true. It has been proved in 1983...*

*AA: 39. What is your proof?*

*MM:40. The man [oppositionist] who was living in Morocco and...*

*AA: 41. Prove it...*

*FQ: 42. Ok. This is not our topic ...*

*AA: 43. (Simple interruption)Prove ...*

*FQ: 44. Ok. This is not our topic... (Debate 2).*

*(20)WS:11. (Continuing) A simple comparison between....*

*IK:12. I did not say that ....*

*WS:13. Islamic societies....*

*IK:14. that is not what I said...*

*WS:15. (Simple interruption) He said ... (Debate 3).*

These examples illustrate how simultaneous speech occurs leaving current speaker's turn incomplete. The same is true in debate 2 and 3. This type of interruption serves the aim of interruption which causes conflict and catalyzes the occurrence of the climax in PD.

*(21)FQ: ..... The president's own town has rebelled against him!*

*RA: (overlap interruption) I did not see that...*

*FQ: Oh man! What could you (the government) see either!*

*RA: These words can be written by anyone on Facebook...*

*OQ: (overlap interruption) This cannot be denied....*

*RA: This is not the reality ... (Debate 1).*

*(22)AA: 61. (Continuing) I do not defend Gaddafi...*

*FQ: 62. (overlap interruption) Ok.*

*AA:63. Nor I defend the revolutions, whether they are leftist revolutions or Islamic ones...*

*FQ: 64. (overlap interruption) How do you respond to my words?... (Debate 2).*

*(23)IK:18. No no, do not put words in my mouth....*

*FQ: 19. (overlap interruption) Ok, he did not say that...*

*WS: 20. (overlap interruption) Then what is civilization ... (Debate 3).*

All participants in these examples have reached their completion points although they overlap with each other. Their turns are understandable completed sentences which what distinguish them from the simple type of interruption. Overlapping is regarded as one of the most fasteners to reach the climax of the dramatized PD as the peak of the participants' conflict occurs when they all talk at the same time.

Some scholars did not regard overlapping as a type of interruption. Lakoff (1990), for example, differentiates between the two by regarding interruption as the strategy in speaking that speakers use when one speaker did not finish his turn of talk and another one cuts into this turn to prevent the current speaker from finishing his turn, while overlapping means only that two or more speakers speak at the same time (Yemenici, 2001: 307). But, in fact, the attempt to overlap with the current speaker's turn requires an attempt to interrupt the current speaker first, since the interrupter will cut into the current speaker's turn in his\her attempt to overlap. As a result overlap is a type of interruption.

### **3.11 Butting-in Interruption**

In this type of interruption there is no turn exchange, only simultaneous speech is still there (Beattie, 1952: 102). This type of interruption occurs as a result of an unsuccessful interruption been attempted. In this type “the interrupter stops before gaining

control of the floor” (Ferencik, 2009: 157) as in the following excerpt:

(24) **IK:** *No, no. Do not put words in my mouth...*

**FQ:** *OK, he did not say that...*

**WS:** (**Butting-in interruption**) *Then what is civilization...*

**FQ:** *Proceed.*

**IK:** *So that my ideas my ideas are not sabotaged... (Debate 3).*

In this example, the IE WS does not succeed in interrupting the IE IK. The only result is a simultaneous speech without an actual exchange between the IEs (IK and WS) since IK ignored her and continued his turn with the help of IR FQ. So that, WS stops trying to gain the floor.

### **3.12 Interrupted and Non-Interrupted Interruption**

Interrupted interruption occurs when “the interrupter prevents the current speaker from finishing his turn but fails to complete his own because the interrupter’s interruption is in turn aborted by the interruptee”(Marteniz, 2000:125).

(25)**RA:** *These hostilities and accusations that are directed towards Sudan are undeniable. Only sticklers could deny it. This talk is...*

**FQ:** *Speaking of justice, the Sudanese ask....*

**RA:** *In addition to now... (Debate 1).*

IR FQ’s attempt to interrupt IE-a RA got interrupted by IE-a RA himself. Here, IE’s interruption blocks a beat for the IR to

have the floor as he uses long-winded strategy to keep his turn. The opposite is true in non-interrupted interruption; as the interrupter manages to keep his turn after interrupting the current speaker. The result will be that the current speaker fails in having his/her turn back:

*(26)RA: All these are lies and have nothing to do with reality....*

*OQ: And why are you annoyed then!*

*RA: (Continuing) And I can assure you...*

*OQ: Actually you are annoyed. In fact, the words that I am trying to say are very simple and clear [and not annoying] (Debate 1).*

### 3.13 Simultaneous Interruption

The current speaker in this type seems to give away his turn to another speaker before he completes it. But according to Ferguson (1977)'s classification, simultaneous interruption occurs as a result of simultaneous speech occurring at TRP and the one of the participants' turn left unfinished (ibid: 127). The following excerpt will give a clear demonstration:

*(27) OQ: Dr. Hassan Abdallah al-Turabi is the leader of the Islamic Movement....*

*RA: (Simultaneous interruption)(Continuing) those who have no existence or impact in reality...*

*OQ: Ok, as you like. Leave it....*

*RA: (Simultaneous interruption) (Continuing) there is disapproval....*

*OQ: leave it....*

*RA: (Simultaneous interruption) (Continuing) and contempt to this idea...*

*(Debate 1).*

The current speaker, IE OQ, has given up on his turn before he completes it ‘ok, as you like. Leave it’, and letting the interrupter IE RA take the floor after his simultaneous interruption.

## **5. Conclusion**

All in all, such categories depend on how interruptees see each type of them, as supportive or disruptive, along with interpreting the interrupter’s real purpose and intention behind interrupting the current speaker, which is interpreted as polite or aggressive, impolite act. So, to identify interruption or to know how interruptees interpret interruption depends on some factors such as, context, topic, interactional response, etc. It is the situation in which interruption occurs will decide how to interpret a particular type of interruption as a display of dominance or cooperation not only depending on the purpose of the interrupter. It is the current speaker’s reaction to each type of the above categories that determines the functionality of each one. These reactions will not be determined in isolation from context.

Thus, it has concluded that interruption and its types have a communicative value in igniting the inciting point to start the conflict between the participants in PD. The IR FQ was the most active interrupter; he almost used all the types of interruption to

dominate the debate by guiding each stage to the next one. He always manages to rescue his turn by using strategies like prolongation and rudeness when any IE tries to deprive him from it so as not to lose control on the situation. Most of the types of interruption are used to keep the flow of debating on track with the main topic of the debate. In a sense, the inciting point or the main conflict between IEs themselves or between IEs and IR is raised mainly by disagreement between these participants. As a result, they will use interruption strategy to show it.

### **Bibliography**

Beattie, Geoffrey W. (1952) “Turn-taking and Interruption in Political Interviews:

Margaret Thatcher and Jim Callaghan Compared and Contrasted.”

Semiotica, 39: 93-114.

Černý, Miroslav. (2010). “Interruption and Overlaps in Doctor-Patient

Communication, Revisited”.Linguistica. Ostrava: Ostravská Univerzita.

Retrieved December 20<sup>th</sup> 2013,

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/cerny/cer-002.pdf>

Chilton, P. (2004). Analysing Political Discourse, Theory and Practice. London:

Routledge.

Ferencik, M. (2009). “‘Doing Interrupting’ as a Discursive Tactic in

Argumentation: A Post-Pragmatic Politeness Theory Perspective.” Brno

Studies in English. 35(2): 145-163. Retrieved on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014 from,

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/plonedata/wkaa/BSE/BSE>

Ferguson, N. (1977) “Simultaneous speech, interruptions and dominance”. British

Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology 16 (4): 295-302.

Goldberg, J. (1990). “Interrupting the discourse on interruptions: An analysis in

terms of relationally neutral, power and rapport oriented acts”. Journal of

Pragmatics, 14: 883–903.

Hutchby, I. (1992) “Confrontation talk: Aspects of ‘interruption’ in argument

sequences on talk radio”. Text 12(3): 343–371.

Johansson, M. (2006). “Constructing Objects of Discourse in the Broadcast

Political Interview.” Journal of Pragmatics, 38: 216-229.

Kozubíková Šandová, J. (2010). Speaker’s Involvement in Political Interviews.

A qualification (thesis) Brno: Masarykova Univerzita Press.

Lakoff, R. (1990). Talking Power: The Politics of Language. USA: Basic Books.

Lu, P. and C. Huang. (July, 2006). "Interruption in Mandarin Mother- Child

Conversation", Concentric: Studies in Linguistics, 32(2): 1-31.

Martinez, R. (2000). "Political Interviews, Talk Show Interviews, and Debates on

British TV: A Contrastive Study of the Interactional Organisation of

Three Broadcast Genres." Alicante : Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de

Cervantes, 2001. Universidad de Santiago de Compostela. Retrieved

March 8<sup>th</sup> , 2015,

<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmczp425>

Meph . (2006). [www.aqoul.com](http://www.aqoul.com), Al-Jazzerz Channel.

Okamoto, G., S. Rashotte, and L. Smith-Lovin. (2002). "Measuring Interruption:

Syntactic and Contextual Methods of Coding Conversation", Social

Psychological Quarterly.65(1), 38-55.

Roger, D., P. Bull, and S. Smith. (1988). "The development of a comprehensive

system for classifying interruptions." Journal of Language and Social

Psychology.7(1):27-34.

Sacks, H. (2004). "An initial characterization of the organization of speaker

turn-taking in conversation". In: Lerner, Gene H. (ed.)  
Conversation

Analysis. Studies from the First Generation. Amsterdam and Philadelphia:

John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp 35–42.

Scannell, Paddy .(1991). Broadcast Talk. UK: Sage.

Yemenici, A.(2001). "Analysis of Use of Politeness Maxims in Interruptions in Turkish Political Debates". In Bayraktaroglu Arin and Maria Sifianou.(Eds). Linguistics Politeness Across Boundaries: the Case of Greek and Turkish. USA: John Benjamins B. V., pp307-339.

[www.aljazeera.net](http://www.aljazeera.net)

[www.webcache.googleusercontent.com](http://www.webcache.googleusercontent.com)