

A COMPARISON OF OVERLAPPING AND TURN TAKING PATTERNS OF PERSIAN AND ENGLISH POLITICAL DISCOURSES

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with two specific features of discourse analysis, namely, overlapping talk and turn taking. The study addressed the following research questions:

- a) Whether the political discourses of the two languages of Persian and American English are different in terms of the frequency and placement of overlaps, backchannels and interruptions, and
- b) Whether there is a correlation between the frequency of overlaps and the frequency of the turns between the political discourses of the two languages.

To achieve this end, 5 English and 5 Persian political debates were recorded, the last 10 minutes of each debate were transcribed, typed and given to three bilingual examiners to demonstrate overlap and turn frequencies. The Mann Whitney U test was employed to determine the significance of the difference, if any, between the political discourses of the two languages. Furthermore, the Pearson Correlation formula was employed to investigate the possible correlation between the two variables of overlap and turn taking frequencies. The findings of the study indicated considerable variation between the political figures of the two languages in both frequency and placement of overlaps. The correlation between turn frequencies among the political discourses of the two languages was also significant. Thus, it lends support to the systematicity of language in conversational levels theory.

KEYWORDS : Conversation Analysis, Overlap, Backchannel and Political Discourse