to appear in: Koole, T., Nortier, J. & Tahitu, B. (eds.) (2006). Sociolinguïstische Conferentie. Delft: Eburon.

Gendered interaction strategies in televised panel interviews

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1. Introduction[1]

In the past decades, women have gradually established a strong presence in the political leadership in the Netherlands, but they are still underrepresented in top-level leadership functions in the public and private sectors. The representation of women in parliament and government is fairly high, with 58 women among the 150 members of parliament (39%) and nine women in the current cabinet (35% of the 26 ministers and state secretaries). By contrast, women's share in top-level governmental management functions is still rather slim. Between 2000 and 2003, the number of women in 900 top-level functions rose from 58 to 115, that is, from 9% to 13% (http://www.algemenebestuursdienst.nl/). More generally, women hold less than 25% of higher leadership functions in the country (*Elsevier* 4 April 2005).

This paper reports some preliminary results of a project intended to investigate if and how gendered interactional strategies in public debates may be contributing to the continuing difficulties women experience in entering and succeeding in top-level leadership functions. I will try to determine if and how gender is a relevant category in shaping politicians' and experts' interactions in televised panel interviews.

Politicians and experts participating in panel interviews tend to compete for speaking time and for influence on the direction the discussion takes, as such public appearances are important vehicles to promote both one's personal image and ideas. They employ interruptions, comments, and floor-holding strategies, and establish dominance, for instance through humor and through 'lecturing' (Kotthoff 1997). In discussions between men and women, men have often been found to dominate the floor (Holmes 1995). Men have been found to violate the formal rules of debate more often than women (e.g., Shaw 2000) and use status-enhancing 'put-down' irony generally eschewed by women (Baron 2001). Gender differences tend to be particularly pronounced in formal/public genres and in groups of three or more participants (Anderson & Leaper 1998). It thus seems very likely that gender is a relevant factor in televised group discussions and panel interviews. In this paper, I will investigate this expectation with respect to turn taking and the use of backchannels.

2. Method

2.1 Data

The data for this project come from panel interviews in the interview and discussion program *Buitenhof* on Dutch public television. Panel interviews with two to four interviewees are a regular feature in *Buitenhof*. They are conducted by one of the three male interviewers who take turns presenting the program, and generally include at least one politician and at least one academic or executive expert. Participation of women is relatively rare; most panels are made up exclusively of men. The interactional style varies from rather interviewer-directed group interviews to involved debates among the panelists that are more or less effectively moderated by the interviewer (this variation is also observed by Clayman & Heritage 2002: 299ff).

For the present study, four panel interviews with at least one female participant were collected, one of which included only women, while the others had two men and one or two

women present (see table 1). Each panel included at least one politician and at least one expert or leader who is not a politician. Panel 1 was interviewed by Paul Witteman, Panels 2, 3 and 4 by Rob Trip.[2]

Table 1: Panel interviews used in this study

	Date	Length		Panelists' Sex and Occupation
Panel 1:	26 Oct 2003	31 min	6,845 words	2 male experts, 2 female politicians
Panel 2:	13 Mar 2005	24 min	5,050 words	1 male + 1 female expert, 1 male politician
Panel 3:	12 June 2005	17 min	4,192 words	1 female expert, 1 male + 1 female politician
Panel 4:	26 Sept 2004	18 min	4,502 words	2 female experts, 1 female politician
Totals:		1h 30 min	20,589 words	4 m + 3 f experts, 2 m + 4 f politicians

As the stills in figure (1) below show, experts are usually seated on the right side of the table and politicians on the left. In panel 1, for instance, the two professors are facing two members of parliament from the government parties CDA and VVD. Panel 3 is an exception with Agnes Kant from the Socialist Party (opposition) seated across from Frans Weekers from the government party VVD. These seating arrangements may have influenced the interaction patterns, with participants sitting next to each other interacting less with each other than participants who face each other across the table (cf. Krauss & Glucksberg 1977).

Figure 1: Stills from the four panels (MP = Member of Parliament, IR = interviewer)

Panel 1: de Pater (MP), Griffith (MP), Witteman (IR), Crombag (professor), Y. Buruma (professor)

Panel 2: Çörüz (MP), Trip (IR), de Vries (youth inspector), A. van Dantzig (psychiatrist)

Panel 3: Weekers (MP), Trip (IR), Kant (MP), Bolsius (city council Rotterdam)

Panel 4: Jorritsma (ex-MP),Trip (IR), Roobeek (professor), Sijmons (CEO)

2.2 Method of analysis

The main focus of the analysis is the occurrence of overlaps, continuers, assessments, and various kinds of interruptions as defined by Roger, Bull and Smith (1988) and applied, for instance, in Redeker and Maes (1996). *Overlaps* in this system are defined as simultaneous, non-interruptive talk near the end of a speaker's turn. Apart from content and syntax, an

approaching end of turn is signaled by prosody and non-verbal signals, especially gaze. Under these conditions, the second speaker can be said to seize the opportunity to take the floor or to anticipate a direct turn-assignment, thereby displaying engaged participation, but also pre-empting other speakers' taking the floor. Overlaps thus are mainly indicators of high involvement, but may also be related to interactional dominance.

Continuers (Dutch *ja, (m)hm, uhu*) can have various functions depending mainly on intonation and non-verbal accompaniment. While the basic function is the signaling of listener participation, continuers in multi-party talk are often used as prefaces to a turn claim. No attempt was made to sub-classify these cases, as the video usually focuses on the current speaker and thus very rarely gives access to the listener's gaze and facial expression and only occasionally captures (part of) a listener's gesture. What is relevant to this analysis is the fact that *continuers* assert participation during another speaker's talk and thus highten the participant's perceived presence.

Continuers have to be distinguished from *assessments*, that is, interjected short evaluations like Dutch *precies! (right!), eens ((I) agree), nee (no)* or *dat klopt niet! (that's not true!)*. Negative evaluations have an obvious competitive connotation. But even positive evaluation can be seen as asserting status, either by positing the speaker's evaluative authority or by creating an alignment between the evaluating and the evaluated speaker that strengthens their position vis-à-vis the other participants.

Other categories of non-interruptive simultaneous talk in Roger *et al.* (1988) are false starts and parallel talk, both of which occur very rarely in the panel interviews and will be excluded from this presentation.

The coding system further distinguishes a range of categories of simultaneous talk where the second speaker interrupts or tries to interrupt the first one (single/complex, successful/unsuccessful, 'silent' and hesitation interruptions, interjections, snatch backs). For the purposes of this paper, I will reduce these distinctions to the dichotomy of *successful versus unsuccessful interruptions*, where interjections are counted as 'successful interruptions', even if the first speaker's continuation does not show clear signs of being affected by the interjection. The difference between the latter case and an unsuccessful interruption is that the second speaker completes the interjection and goes on the conversational record as having completed his utterance.

For the distributional analysis of these features, the counts are converted to indices. For overlaps, the most appropriate reference is the number of turns: what percentage of a speaker's turns was acquired by overlapping the previous speaker? A turn here is defined as a continuous stretch of talk by one speaker that may be overlapped by backchannels, interjections, or unsuccessful interruption attempts from other participants. For interruptions, an obvious index is the success percentage. To quantify the 'density' of backchannels and interruptions, the counts are related to the number of words uttered by the other participants, that is, the amount of talk a particular speaker had available to act on with backchannels or interruptions. This quantification is admittedly a bit crude, as backchannels cannot occur just anywhere in an utterance; but I know of no valid and reliable method for identifying all opportunities where a backchannel might have been produced.

The distributional analyses will be reported with respect to differences between male versus female panelists and experts versus politicians. The all-female panel will be considered separately from the mixed-sex panels and the interviewers will at all times be kept separate from the panelists. I will always report first on differences between experts and politicians and then on gender differences. For the latter, all combinations of the sex of the first and the second speaker are considered separately.

3. Results

3.1 Amount of talk, number of turns and turn length

In determining a panelist's share in the amount of talk produced, the length of the discussion and the number of participants have to be taken into account. This is done by computing the ratio of the panelist's share to the expected share, that is, 25% in the interview with four panelists, 33.3% in the interviews with three panelists (note that the interviewer and the talk he produced are left out of consideration here). According to this indicator of proportionality, the male experts produced an over-proportional and female experts an under-proportional share of the talk (1.2, as compared to 0.8 for the women). No such difference is found for the politicians; there is even a slight trend in the opposite direction, resulting in an overall ratio of 1.1 for the men and 0.9 for the women (see table 2).

Table 2: Words spoken by panelists, number of turns, and average words per turn

	Men					Women				
	N	words	prop*	turns	w/turn	N	words	prop*	turns	w/turn
Experts	4	5,936	1.2	134	44.3	3	2,905	0.8	67	43.4
Politicians	2	2,207	0.9	34	64.9	4	5,082	1.0	134	37.9
Total	6	8,143	1.1	168	48.5	7	7,987	0.9	201	39.7

* average of ratio's of each panelist's percentage of words to equal share (25% or 33.3%)

In interpreting these results it should be kept in mind that differences might not (or not only) be caused by the panelists: the interviewers might not always have been evenhanded in the way they assigned turns or cut speakers off. Other observations, however, (see section 3.2) suggest that any bias of the interviewers probably was in the direction of counteracting inequalities in participation.

In addition to taking a slightly larger share of the talk, the men also tended to produce longer turns, averaging 48.5 words per turn as compared to 39.7 words for the women. Looking at experts and politicians separately reveals that the difference in turn length is almost entirely due to the two male politicians with 50.8 and 85.1 words per turn (mean 64.9). It is striking that these two politicians seem to be profiling an expert status (a predominantly male strategy according to Kotthoff 1997). This is evidenced not only in very long turns, but also in one case (Weekers in panel 3) by a rather 'lecturing' key, marked by phrases like "*Nou is het natuurlijk zo dat..*" *(Now it is of course the case that ..), "U moet natuurlijk wel kijken waarom..*" *(You must of course find out why ..)*, and in the other, Çörüz in Panel 2, by vehement denial of Professor van Dantzig's statements, for instance as in (1) (ungrammaticalities in the translation are intentional to reflect the speaker's errors):

(1) *ja maar uhm de koppeling die uh de heer Dantzig maakt, dat geld (.) dat zou hebben geresultaat uh zou hebben geresulteerd tot dit uh vreselijke gebeurtenis, die werp ik echt uh ver van me, want het IS NIET alleen een kwestie van geld,* (... 10 lines ...) *dus dat gaat me ECHT te ver om-*

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yes but uhm the link mister Dantzig is making, that money (.) that should have results uh should have resulted to these uh terrible event, I really reject that, because it IS NOT only a question of money, (… 10 lines …) *so that's REALLY going too far to-*

3.2 Overlapping turns

Turns that begin near the end of the previous speaker's turn are classified as *overlaps*. For comparison, the number of overlaps is taken relative to the speakers' total number of turns (see table 3). The women started almost one in four turns with an overlap (47 out of 201 turns, that is, 23.4%), the men only 14.9% (25 out of 168). The seven experts produced 15.9% overlapping turns and the six politicians 23.8%. There is a striking interaction: Male experts show extremely few overlaps (10.4%), while female experts and male politicians started, respectively, 26.9% and 32.4% of their turns with overlaps (caveat: the percentage for male politicians is based on only 34 turns from two speakers). This pattern might be an indication that experts and politicians come from speech communities with different perception and realizations of gender.

Table 3: Overlaps by male/female expert/politician panelists (% of panelist's turns)

	Men			Women			Total		
	overlaps	turns	% turns	overlaps	turns	% turns	overlaps	turns	% turns
Experts	14	134	10.4 %	18	67	26.9 %	32	201	15.9 %
Politicians	11	34	32.4 %	29	134	21.6 %	40	168	23.8 %
Total	25	168	14.9 %	47	201	23.4 %	72	369	19.5 %

In table 3, all overlaps by panelists were added up without consideration of the panel composition or the speakers whose turn was overlapped. For a closer inspection, the counts are separated according to the speaker whose turn was overlapped (see table 4), as overlaps of the interviewer's turns can be seen as response moves and often anticipate a turn assignment, whereas overlaps of panelists' turns are more likely to be discussion moves. Also, the three mixed-sex panels are kept separate from the all-female panel. Please note (in table 4 and further on) that the combination of female first and second speakers was only possible in one of the mixed panels (the other two had only one woman present), whereas all three mixed panels allowed male-male combinations.

Table 4: Overlaps by panelists and interviewers

Speaker2	Men		Women		Interviewer	
Speaker1	overlaps	% turns	overlaps	% turns	overlaps	% turns
Men in Mixed Panels	4	2.4 %	7	6.4 %	16	9.9 %
Women in Mixed Panels	6	3.6 %	0	0.0 %	11	6.8 %
Women in All-Female Panel	-	-	12	13.2 %	14	8.6 %
Interviewer in Mixed Panels	15	8.9 %	15	16.5 %	-	-
Interviewer in All-Female Panel	-	-	13	13.6 %	-	-
Total	25	14.9 %	47	22.5 %	41	19.6 %

In the all-female panel, the panelists overlapped each other twice as often as in the mixed panels (12 of 91 turns, i.e. 13.2 %), with slightly fewer overlaps of the interviewer's turns (13.6 % against 16.5 %), but still more than the men in the mixed panels (8.9 %). The interviewers, by contrast, overlapped the panelists' turns much more frequently in the mixed panels (27 of 162 interviewer turns, i.e. 16.7 %, compared to 14 out of 47, i.e. 8.6 %). Interestingly, the male panelists tended to overlap female panelists slightly more often than male panelists (4 versus 6), while the interviewers show the opposite tendency (16 versus 11). This might be an indication of compensatory interviewer behavior, as overlapping a panelist gives the interviewer control to steer the interview and possibly assign the turn to another panelist.

3.3 Backchannels

For continuers and assessments, the frequency indices are computed as follows: For each speaker, the count is taken relative to the number of words of the other panelists. These indices are then averaged across speakers to yield group averages.

The results across all panels are presented in table 5. In line with expectations from the literature, the female panelists produced a higher density of continuers and assessments during the interlocutors' talk than the male panelists (1.3 continuers and 1.3 assessments per 1,000 interlocutor words, versus 0.6 and 0.9 for the male panelists). For continuers, this difference holds for experts and politicians alike, but for assessments is holds only for the politicians. Assessments are used much more often by female than by male politicians (1.8 versus 0.6), while the experts show a (smaller) difference in the opposite direction (1.1 versus 0.6). The overall rate of assessments is somewhat higher for the politicians than for the experts (1.4 versus 0.9), due to a considerable difference between the female experts and the female politicians (0.6 versus 1.8).

Table 5: Continuers and assessments by male/female expert/politician panelists

	Men			Women			Total		
	N	count	freq*	N	count	freq*	N	count	freq*
Continuers	*6*	*16*	*0.6*	*7*	*33*	*1.3*	*13*	*49*	*1.0*
Experts	4	12	0.7	3	19	1.8	7	31	1.1
Politicians	2	4	0.6	4	14	1.0	6	18	0.9
Assessments	*6*	*25*	*0.9*	*7*	*32*	*1.3*	*13*	*57*	*1.1*
Experts	4	21	1.1	3	6	0.6	7	27	0.9
Politicians	2	4	0.6	4	26	1.8	6	30	1.4

* average frequencies per 1,000 interlocutor words

For the more detailed analysis, the frequencies were computed relative to the relevant set of interlocutors (male or female panelists or interviewer) and averages were again kept separate for the mixed-sex and all-female panels (see table 6). In the mixed panels, the women produced fewer continuers than the men (0.3 and 0.4 versus 0.6 per 1,000 interlocutor words), but in the all-female panel the density of continuers is much higher (2.1, see table 6). The panelists in the all-female panel also produced frequent continuers during the interviewer's talk (3.9 per 1,000 interviewer words, as compared to 0.5 by the men and 0.9 by the women in the mixed panels). The interviewer reciprocated with a very high 6.7 continuers per 1,000 panelist words in that interview.

Table 6: Continuers among panelists and interviewers

Speaker2	Men		Women		Interviewer	
Speaker1	count	freq*	count	freq*	count	freq*
Men in Mixed Panels	5	0.6	3	0.3	15	1.9
Women in Mixed Panels	7	0.6	1	0.4	3	0.4
Women in All-Female Panel	-	-	14	2.1	24	6.7
Interviewer in Mixed Panels	4	0.5	4	0.9	-	-
Interviewer in All-Female Panel	-	-	11	3.9	-	-

* frequencies per 1,000 interlocutor words

Evaluative backchannel responses (*assessments*, see table 7) were most frequent during the interviewers' talk: In the mixed panels, male panelists produced 1.2 and female panelists even

2.0 assessments per 1,000 interviewer words. In the all-female panel the panelists evaluated both each other's and the interviewer's talk rather frequently (1.8 and 1.4 times per 1,000 interlocutor words). As was to be expected given their role and journalistic responsibility, the interviewers did not often accompany panelists' talk with assessment backchannels (the total count is 9).

Table 7: Assessments by panelists and interviewers

Speaker2	Men		Women		Interviewer	
Speaker1	count	freq*	count	freq*	count	freq*
Men in Mixed Panels	4	0.4	6	0.6	5	0.6
Women in Mixed Panels	12	1.0	0	0	3	0.4
Women in All-Female Panel	-	-	12	1.8	1	0.3
Interviewer in Mixed Panels	9	1.2	10	2.0	-	-
Interviewer in All-Female Panel	-	-	4	1.4	-	-

* frequencies per 1,000 interlocutor words

3.4 Interruptions

Interruptions are defined as attempts to take the floor, even temporarily, while the current speaker is not signaling an end of turn. This definition excludes backchannels (which are not claims to the floor), but includes interjections. The overall analysis shows differences between male and female panelists (1.8 versus 2.2 interruptions per 1,000 interlocutor words) and between experts and politicians (1.8 versus 2.2; see table 8). We also once again see an interaction with opposite sex differences for experts and politicians. Male experts produced more interruptions than female experts (2.1 versus 1.4 per 1,000 interlocutor words), while male politicians scored much lower than their female counterparts (1.1 versus 2.7).

Table 8: Interruptions by male/female expert/politician panelists

	Men			Women			Total		
	N	count	freq*	N	count	freq*	N	count	freq*
Experts	4	32	2.1	3	15	1.4	7	47	1.8
Politicians	2	8	1.1	4	44	2.7	6	52	2.2
Total	6	40	1.8	7	59	2.2	13	99	2.0

* average frequencies per 1,000 interlocutor words

Let us once again look at the interrupted speakers and consider the mixed panels and the all-female panel separately (see table 9). In the all-female panel, the panelists produced far more interruptions than either the men or the women in the mixed panels, 3.3 per 1,000 words of the other panelists and 3.5 per 1,000 words during the interviewer's talk. In the mixed panels, the women interrupted male and female panelists and the interviewer equally often (1.5 times per 1,000 of the respective interlocutors' words). The men interrupted the interviewer 2.4 times per 1,000 of his words and male interlocutors 1.8 times per 1,000 of their words, but female panelists only 1.1 times per 1,000 of their words. The interviewer interrupted men and women very frequently in the mixed-panel interviews (4.0 and 5.1 times per 1,000 of their words, respectively), but produced only 2.2 interruptions per 1,000 participant words in the all-female panel.

Table 9: Interruptions by panelists and interviewers

Speaker2	Men		Women		Interviewer	
Speaker1	count	freq*	count	freq*	count	freq*
Men in Mixed Panels	13	1.8	15	1.5	32	4.0
Women in Mixed Panels	13	1.1	4	1.5	27	5.1
Women in All-Female Panel	-	-	22	3.3	8	2.2
Interviewer in Mixed Panels	14	2.4	22	1.5	-	-
Interviewer in All-Female Panel	-	-	10	3.5	-	-

* frequencies per 1,000 interlocutor words

The success rate of interruptions was higher for experts than for politicians (77% versus 65%, see table 10). The percentage seems especially high for female experts (87% success); this score is not very reliable, however, as one of the three female experts did not produce any interruptions and a second one produced only two, so that this percentage depends almost entirely on the third one, who interrupted 13 times. There is no overall gender difference.

Table 10: Success of panelists' interruptions

	Men			Women			Total		
	total	success	%success	total	success	%success	total	success	%success
Experts	32	23	72 %	15	13	87 %	47	36	77 %
Politicians	8	5	63 %	44	29	66 %	52	34	65 %
Total	40	28	70 %	59	42	71 %	99	70	71 %

Women's interruptions were very successful in the all-female panel (success rate: 95% against other panelists and 60% against the interviewer; see table 11). In the mixed-sex panel, their success rate was 73% against male and 50% against female panelists, and only 9% against the interviewer. The men in the mixed panels were slightly more successful in interrupting female panelists (77%) than interrupting male panelists (69%) or the interviewer (64%).

Table 11: Success of panelists' interruptions

Speaker2	Men			Women		
Speaker1	total	success	% success	total	success	% success
Men in Mixed Panels	13	9	69 %	15	11	73 %
Women in Mixed Panels	13	10	77 %	4	2	50 %
Women in All-Female Panel	–	–	–	22	21	95 %
Interviewer in Mixed Panels	14	9	64 %	22	2	9 %
Interviewer in All-Female Panel	–	–	–	10	6	60 %

The interviewers were quite successful in their interruption attempts in the mixed panels, with little difference between male and female panelists (88% versus 83%). The success rate in the all-female panel seems lower (63%), but there are too few attempts for a reliable estimate.

Table 12: Success of interviewers' interruptions

Speaker2	Interviewer		
Speaker1	total	success	% success
Men in Mixed Panels	32	28	88 %
Women in Mixed Panels	27	24	83 %
Women in All-Female Panel	8	5	63 %
Totals	67	57	85 %

4. Conclusions and discussion

The most striking result of the distributional analyses of overlaps, backchannels and interruptions is the consistently different nature of the interview with the all-female panel as compared to the three mixed-sex panels. In the mixed-sex panels, the women were producing more overlaps, slightly more assessments and were quite unsuccessful in interrupting the interviewer, while the men had more continuers and were more successful in interrupting the interviewer. The women in the all-female panel showed much higher rates of overlaps, backchannels and interruptions, a very high success rate in interrupting each other and as much success in interrupting the interviewer as the men had in the mixed-sex panels.

This suggests a much more engaged, less competitive style among the women in the all-female discussion. In fact, one of the participants in this panel starts out by commenting on the preceding, quite competitive interview with two men (not included in this study) as typically male *cock fighting* (in Dutch: *haantjesgedrag).* Some of the women's parallel talk in the all-female panel involves 'chiming in', i.e., the joint completion of an utterance (not analyzed in this paper). They also occasionally offer formulations, as AR does in example (2). This fragment also illustrates how the women in this panel are often more oriented toward each other than toward the interviewer. IR's interjection in (2) refers to an exchange earlier in the interview, where AR contested AJ's view that the cabinet had presented a policy ("visie"). AJ argued that the presentation and debate had focused too much on the individual measures.

(2) *MS: (…) dan weet ik één ding, dan heb ik morgen en overmorgen is er niemand meer die voor Content wil werken,*
AJ: eh het boeiende is dat ik nu zo'n beetje de verdediger van het kabinetsprobleem/ beleid moet zijn. Ik zit er NIET in, ik zit op een afstand te kijken, [en <u>ik</u> vind (.) ik vind het veel- ik vind het] een groot stuk onhandigheid
IR: [maar <u>u</u> zei ik zie de visie wel, u heeft de stukken gelezen] hm hm
AJ: met alle respect eh ik vind de ruzies die gemaakt worden, zijn vaak gebaseerd op niks ehh[hm
AR: [°onprofessioneel°
AJ: dat vind ik BIJNA onprofessioneel, daar ben ik het niet mee oneens, (...)
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MS: (…) then I know ONE thing, then tomorrow and the day after I'll have there won't be anyone wanting to work for Content anymore,
AJ: uh it's funny how I now sort of have to be the defender of the cabinet problem/ policy. I'm NOT in it, I am looking on from a distance, [and <u>I</u> find (.) I find it much- I find it] a big piece of awkwardness
IR: [but <u>you</u> said I do see the idea, you have read the documents] hm hm
AJ: with all respect uh I find the fighting that is going on, is often based on nothing uhh[hm
AR: [°unprofessional°
AJ: I find that ALMOST unprofessional, I don't disagree with that, (…)

The interviewer's (IR) interjection results in a prolonged stretch of parallel talk, after which AJ continues without acknowledging his remark. When she then hesitates, apparently looking for a word, AR offers "*unprofessional*", which AJ accepts and acknowledges. Both, IR's and AR's turns are coded as interjections and counted as successful in the current analysis. Once the corpus has grown larger, yielding a more substantial number of cases, sub-classifications

of interjections and overlaps and a classification of response moves can be attempted (see Dickerson 2001 and Lauerbach 2004 for discussions).

The unexpectedly large differences between the mixed panels and the all-female panel strongly suggest that the further extension of the corpus should include all-male panels. Mixed panels should preferably have equal numbers of men and women or at least include panels with more than one woman. In my *Buitenhof* collection (since 2003), panel 1 unfortunately is the only panel of this kind. Another inherent limitation of the available material is the fact that there are only three interviewers and all three are male. This limits the possibilities for investigating influences of the interviewer's gender and personal style.

The gender differences in this study interact in complex ways with the distinction between experts and politicians, suggesting that gender may be enacted differently in business and administrative contexts on the one hand and the parliamentary discourse community on the other (for arguments how talk from political interviews can be related to communities of practice, see Kotthoff 1997 and Shaw 2000). This hypothesis will need to be supported with qualitative analyses, with data from more speakers to better control for individual idiosyncrasies, and, obviously, with studies of interactions situated within those communities.

Notes

[1] I wish to thank Marca Schasfoort, whose thorough critical comments have been very helpful.

[2] Panel 1 was analyzed in Wagenaar (2004). Transcript and analysis are used with the author's permission.

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