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Men's gossip

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MEN'S GOSSIP

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
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by
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ABSTRACT

Sociolinguists have studied the differences in the speech patterns of women and men for years. Also, anthropologists and psychologists have become seriously interested in the speech activity of gossip as language behavior. Researchers of both issues have studied the functions and features of gossip in women's social circles. Only recently have researchers begun studying the notion of gossip in men's speech. Not only has this research broken down the age-old stereotype that 'men don't gossip,' but these studies also claim to have found that men gossip differently from women in content and in style.

These studies, however, have left room for further research for two reasons: Although researchers generally agree as to what the definition of gossip is, studies on men's gossip have presented conversations that don't fit that definition, and therefore, shouldn't be considered actual studies on gossip, per se; second, the men in some of the studies were from a much lower socio-economic/educational background from the women, and their conversations also took place in very different environments from the women, factors that may have had a significant effect on the results of the studies.

This paper presents seven conversations of men from a variety of backgrounds, in a variety of environments. I
analyze the discussions to determine if they can be characterized as typical gossip, and to compare their interaction styles to the men and women of past studies on gossip.
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Gossip as language behavior has become a serious area of interest to sociolinguists and anthropologists alike. Studying such speech activities gives insight to the critical role discourse structures play in social organization. For example, Labov (1972) studied the speech activity of 'narratives of personal experience' to show that they can be the most effective form of language when translated into dramatic form. Johnstone (1987) studied storytellers who recreated dialogues and demonstrated how their use of verb tense alternation captures the status relations between authority figures and subordinates. In the same way, the speech activity of gossiping can also be analyzed to demonstrate some sort of social organization among the participants and subjects. Dunbar (1996), for example, suggests that gossip can create a primal bond, which expresses friendship and loyalty among human beings.

Many researchers have examined this bond in women's interaction. Some of their findings may appear to be nothing more than society's pre-existing stereotypes of women's gossip, although they analyze the concept from deeper perspectives. Coates (1989), for example, concludes that the purpose of all-female conversation is to maintain good social relationships. Saunders (1994) analyzed the
gossip of women over 65 and illustrated its function of building and maintaining their friendships. Tannen (1990) focuses on women's interest in the details of personal lives as compared to men's interest in the details of politics, news and sports. She discusses how this type of interaction helps develop relationships within the respective groups because it creates a bonding. She didn't, however, focus on men's gossip as much as women's.

Researchers, in fact, are just beginning to examine gossip in the spontaneous speech of men. Johnson & Finlay (1997) analyzed the interactions of male participants on a weekly football television program and found that talking about sports is a way of creating a sense of in-group solidarity among some men. They noted that the purpose of women's gossip is similar, but where women's gossip tends to be about private issues, men's gossip involves more public topics. Similarly, Pilkington (1992) found that both the men and women in her study seek solidarity and membership in their groups through gossip. However, she pointed out that the difference lies not in the topic of conversation, as Tannen and Johnson & Finlay asserted, but in the conversational style of the participants. She found that the women she studied exhibited what she calls "cooperative talk." In other words, they were more involved in a group conversation, actively supporting the
development of the speaker's topic with encouraging feedback such as agreement, laughter, questions, comments and minimal responses like "mhm" and "yeah". The male subjects, on the other hand, were found to display what Pilkington calls "uncooperative talk." She observes long pauses and silences between turns, slow responses, no responses, long monologues, direct disagreement, adversarial behavior, and questions unrelated to others' utterances.

These studies, however, have left room for further research on men's gossip. For example, the women in Pilkington's study were from a somewhat different socio-economic/educational background than that of the men. The women were all academics, whereas the men had left school after the 6th or 7th form. Other factors that may have made a difference in the interaction styles are the locations of the conversations and the relationships between the participants. In other words, the women in her data were at home with close friends, whereas the men were at work with their colleagues.

Another reason further research on men's gossip may be necessary is that many of the previous studies present data of discussions that don't really resemble gossip as it is commonly understood by people in general, or as it is typically described by researchers on the subject.
Webster's Dictionary defines gossip as "idle talk about other people's affairs... to go about telling idle tales about others." The American Heritage Dictionary defines it as "trivial talk, often involving personal or sensational rumors." Most researchers' definitions closely resemble Levin & Arluke's (1987) characterization of gossip, which describes it as "talk about the public or private lives of other people - both negative and positive, bad and good - especially when those other people aren't around to hear it" (p.7). While the women's conversations, in many studies, seem to fit all of these descriptions, the men's discussions do not. Johnson & Finlay (1997) and Pilkington (1992), for example, label their men's data as "gossip," even though it doesn't reflect the characteristics of the term, as described by most researchers. The men in Johnson & Finlay's study talk about sports, and the men in Pilkington's study talk about TV ads, fish, machinery, crates, and beer. The question that I raise here, then, is: If the men's interaction does not fit the description of what is commonly known as gossip, can they really be said to be engaged in gossip? Would it be more accurate to label their discussions under a different category of conversation, and not gossip, per se? If so, then these studies seem to imply that men do not really "gossip" at all.
What I present in this study is an examination of naturally occurring interaction among males in order to explore whether or not men gossip, as it is commonly understood, and how they accomplish this speech activity. I analyze the content of their discussion and the interaction style of the participants to determine if the findings of the previous studies are consistent with what I find in my data. Before my analysis, I provide detailed background information as a foundation for my study. First, in chapter 1, I present information on the definition of gossip, including an etymology of the word, interpretations of the term, and various criteria as to what has been constituted as gossip. In chapter 2, I consider the significance of gossip, including its influence on society and its historical effects. In Chapter 3, I present the various functions that gossip serves. In chapter 4, I present some general points made by researchers concerning gender issues, briefly review some empirical research done on men's gossip and further illustrate in more detail why additional research may be enlightening in this area. I then carry out a study of seven different conversations. In chapter 5, I give a description of the subjects and methodology used in the analysis. In chapter 6, I present the results and discussion of my analysis. Finally, in the conclusion, I
discuss my interpretation of the results and its implications.

Terminology

As with any concept discussed or examined, an important starting point is to present, consider and affirm suitable definition of terminology. The term "gossip" may spark various ideas in different people's minds, and what one person perceives as gossip may not be gossip at all to someone else. Therefore, considering common understandings and typical definitions from various sources is very necessary to this study.

Before considering the current definition of the word, a look at its etymology may be of use. "Gossip" comes from the Old English expression, "god sib," which was a noun that referred to a person who was a close friend of a family. Much like a "godparent," a god sib (a clipped form of "god-sibling") was considered to be included in the private affairs of the family, such as births, funerals, celebrations, etc. It implied one's access to a close social unit. The term maintained the same basic implications up until around the 19th century, but had changed a little to refer to male drinking companions, and to their camaraderie. It also referred to female companions who assisted in childbirth.

Today, the word has been extended to include speech
acts. Looking at the evolution of the meaning, we can see the connection made between close-knit relationships, private issues, and the talk that takes place within those circles. Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language defines gossip as "idle talk or rumor, esp. about the personal or private affairs of others." It also describes it as "light chat" which is "usually more or less malicious."

Most of the researchers' proposed notions of gossip are quite similar to this definition, although many agree that trying to establish an absolute, fixed definition of gossip would be somewhat troublesome. For example, Ben-Ze'ev (1994) explores gossip and admits, "There is no single essence that is a necessary and sufficient condition for all instances of gossip and no simple way of describing them." Therefore, he asserts that his characterization of gossip "...concerns typical rather than all cases" (p. 11). Holland (1996) agrees with Ben-Ze'ev, saying, "one cannot cite necessary and sufficient conditions in order to define gossip. However, one can describe what is typical of gossip" (p. 199). Ayim (1994) also acknowledges limitations by stating, "I shall not defend a particular definition of gossip here... Instead, I shall provide a loose characterization of the concept that I believe is widely accepted" (p. 86). Taylor (1994) sums up these feelings by
saying "Definitions of gossip will always be complex and controversial" (p.34). Since it would be somewhat troublesome to attempt a precise rendering of the concept, most researchers have established certain criteria that construct proto-typical characterizations of gossip - not fixed definitions. These criteria are conditions which researchers believe need to exist in order for gossip to take place. For the most part, there is a high degree of agreement among the researchers that these conditions are necessary to constitute typical gossip. I will now briefly consider some of these conditions.

Criteria for Gossip

(1) The size of the group of gossipers makes a difference on how much the talk can be considered gossip. Ben-Ze'ev (1994) says, "whereas active gossips often convey intimate information to many people, they usually do so not by addressing a large audience but through series of conversations with individuals or small groups" (p.17). Spacks (1986) adds to this, saying, "As a group expands, the level of its gossip usually deteriorates: no more than two or possibly three at a time can engage in what I call 'serious' gossip" (p.4). In other words, the more people there are gossiping in a group, the less it becomes gossip.

(2) The discussion has to be about people, not things or concepts. As Morreall (1994) explains, "Gossip is about
people—we can't gossip about carburetors or the weather" (p. 58). Holland (1996) agrees that gossip may be "discussing someone's style of dress or other aspects of physical appearance," but it can't be about fashion itself (p. 198). In other words, one may gossip about mathematicians but not mathematics, or sports players but not sports.

(3) In order to be considered gossip, a discussion must be about other people who are absent, and not about oneself. Nevo, Nevo & Derech-Zehavi (1994) note, "We exclude from the category of gossip discussions about one's own affairs, since it seems to us that gossip implies a third person as its object" (p. 183). This third person, of course, has to be absent for there to be gossip, too. As Holland (1996) points out, "The absence of the person who is being discussed is not merely accidental; the conversation would change in tone, if not in substance, were its subject to enter" (p. 198). Therefore, if the subject of the gossip is present, it is no longer gossip.

(4) The gossippers must all be fairly acquainted with each other (and with the person about whom they are gossiping) or at least have shared information. Emler (1994) explains that the closer the participants are to each other, the more likely they are to know what would be considered interesting and new. Also, not only would a
close friend be less likely to mislead one with false
gossip, but less likely to take one's disclosures too far.
So, acquaintanceship among gossipers is necessary because
it aids the interest and value of the topic, and the trust
of the relationship.

In addition, the gossipers must be acquainted with the
gossipee. As Bergmann (1993) explains, this can be a
reciprocal relationship, in which the gossipers and
gossipee know each other equally, or it can be a
relationship where the gossipers know the gossipee but not
vice-versa, a situation which Bergmann calls "gossip about
well-known persons" (p. 51). In either case, the gossipers
must all have familiar knowledge of the gossipee.

(5) Gossip must be considered "idle talk." In other
words, it is non-professional, without a serious purpose or
special goal. Ben-Ze'ev (1994) agrees that gossip is
nothing more than light chat, adding, "When people are
involved in serious, practical, and purposive talk, they
are not gossiping" (p. 13). This belief, that gossip has no
conscious, dedicated purpose, is also supported by Thomas
(1994), who insists, "gossip does not exist when the point
of a conversation is to find a way to cope with an
individual's unacceptable behavior" (p. 50). Therefore, a
discussion about someone may or may not be considered
gossip, depending on the intention or purpose of the
participants.

(6) Gossip can only be about private issues and the personal details of individual lives. Schoeman distinguishes gossip by saying, "What differentiates gossip norms from social news? Much that we gossip about we would not think right to reveal 'publicly.' We may gossip about things we may not broadcast to the world at large" (p. 80). Ayim (1994) points out that "There is a sense of illicitness connected with the activity of gossip, and, hence, participants often engage in it covertly" (p. 86). Thomas (1994) agrees, saying, "conveying public information does not constitute gossip," and adds, "Otherwise, a person would be gossiping if he merely conveyed the contents of a newspaper to someone who had not read it" (p. 52). Morreall supports these ideas, giving examples of what private and public information are, saying, "Gossip is focused on the personal details of people's lives, like their sexual relationships and their virtues and vices. A discussion of whether Marcia plays trumpet or trombone in the band is not gossip" (p. 58). As Holland (1996) notes in her article, this sense of privacy in gossip can be linked to the word's original meaning of close, exclusive social circles and the talk that takes place within them.

(7) Gossip usually involves the (explicit or implicit) evaluation of someone's character. Morreall (1994) states,
"Gossip is concerned with aspects of people's lives that can be morally evaluated," and adds that "The evaluation in gossip, furthermore, is usually negative and can be mean-spirited" (p. 59). Bergmann (1993) lists some common topics of typical gossip as "suspected stories about personal qualities and idiosyncrasies... character flaws, discrepancies between actual behavior and moral claims... socially unaccepted modes of behavior." (p. 15). Holland (1996) adds, "To praise or compliment an absent person is not gossip" (p. 198). In other words, gossip is evaluative and is usually focused on one's flaws.

These seven conditions represent the basic criteria researchers on gossip share in their definitions of the term. To sum up, "doing gossip" requires a small group of participants who are fairly well acquainted with each other and the subject; the gossipee must be absent from the scene and the discussion must have no further overt purpose than merely evaluating one's character in terms of the details of his/her personal life. I use these criteria as my functioning definition of gossip and I apply them to my data analysis.

Now that a somewhat general description has been made concerning the characteristics of gossip, we can consider the significance of the concept. In the next section I will discuss the historical effects, the pervasiveness, and
the significance of gossip as a whole.
CHAPTER TWO
Gossip's Influence on Society

Like other speech genres that have been studied, gossip is very influential and has had a strong impact on society. As Thomas (1994) observes, "gossiping is an activity that just about everyone engages in to some extent, including many who disapprove of it" (p.47). Emler (1994) found that people spend an average of about six to twelve hours a day in conversational interaction, and that most of the content of that interaction is gossip-oriented. He found that "People are far less likely to talk about art, literature, cuisine, religion, ideas, politics, or events in the national news than they are about specific names and known individuals" (p.131). He says that this talk about people forms about 80 to 90 percent of natural conversational interaction. He further shows that about one-third of these "person-specific" conversations refer to third parties known personally to the participants (the other two-thirds refer to the participants themselves).

Dunbar (1996) also studies the fascination human beings have with gossip. In research done on the talk of people in cafes and bars, he discovered that "around two-thirds of their conversation is taken up with matters of social import," which he describes as "who is doing what with whom, and whether it's a good or a bad thing; who is
in and who is out, and why..."(p.4-5). He also refers to literature to demonstrate people's fascination with others' private lives. He found that two-thirds of the books in stores are fiction, and that romantic fiction is what sells the best. He also points to biographies, which make up a good portion of non-fiction sales, as an example of human fascination with "the private lives of our heroes or those who have become as familiar to us as our own families"(p.6). He claims that the reason we read these biographies is that "we want the intimate details, the gossip, their innermost thoughts and feelings, not detailed technical analysis of method acting or parliamentary procedure"(p.6). In addition, Dunbar points to the daily newspaper as a record of our craving for gossip. Analyzing an issue of the London Times, he found that only 57 percent of the paper's main news section was devoted to political and technical news. He notes, "43 per cent was devoted to human interest stories (interviews, news stories of a more salacious kind, and so on)"(p.6). Dunbar even presents the fact that the O.J. Simpson trial attracted more viewers than the deliberations of the US congressional committees, even though the latter would have more of an impact on our future than the former.

Despite its seemingly unimportant nature, the general public enjoys gossip. One only has to turn on the TV to
see the many shows such as *Jerry Springer* and *Ricky Lake*, that exploit the private lives of willing participants. Referring to such shows as *A Current Affair* and *Nightline*, Westen (1996) notes, "there's no arguing that the media are ablaze with gossip" and "we're inundated with dirt. Scooping has become a national pastime" (p. 81). Judging from the success of these programs, books, and periodicals, gossip has truly become an American pastime.

Not only has it become a national pastime, but also it apparently isn't as insignificant and trivial as it may sound. Although it is described as "idle talk" and "light chat," gossip can greatly affect our lives. As Bergmann (1993) notes, "gossip itself possesses a chaotic aspect. It disrupts order, disdains social boundaries, and entices the actors to neglect their social duties" (p. 135). In addition to these disruptions caused by gossip, Ayim (1994) says that "the details of people's lives revealed by investigative gossip are often sufficiently important to make the average person very nervous about the content of gossip centering on oneself" (p. 95). People become uneasy when gossip is focused on or around their own proximity for obvious reasons. Even if they have nothing to hide, most people are understandably protective of their right to privacy.

Another reason people fear gossip is that it is very
possible for gossip to turn into rumor. Holland (1996) makes a distinction between gossip and rumor, saying that rumors are usually unsubstantiated, whereas "the information gossip conveys is often known to be true" (p. 199). Levin & Arluke (1987) also offer their own distinction, saying that rumor "takes a bit of gossip and reshapes it, modifies it in some way, and passes it along from individual to individual in different ways" (p. 42). Following these descriptions, it is not difficult to see why people would not want discussions about themselves to get out of control.

For this very reason, many companies have taken measures to insure that gossip doesn't disrupt the workplace. Emler (1994) offers an example of a hospital "whose administrators placed a ban on gossip among the staff" (p. 118). According to an article in Psychology Today (1996), five other hospitals were visited by a team of students conducting an undercover research on hospital gossip. The students focused on the discussions that took place in the elevators and found that much of this unprofessional gossip caused many hospitals to install signs warning employees against it. Referring to the discussions that take place in psychologists' staff meetings, Nevo, Nevo & Derech-Zehavi (1994) note, "whenever a discussion strays from professional seriousness, someone
is bound to say something like, 'Well, let's not gossip'"(p.180). I, too, can remember working in a warehouse in which the supervisor explicitly warned workers against gossiping about issues such as why an employee got fired, etc., threatening to take drastic measures against anyone caught discussing such topics.

This acknowledgment of gossip's injurious capacity is nothing new, and not specific to western culture, either. Even religious laws have been written against it. For example, in 1873 Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, generally known as the Chofetz Chayim (1975), wrote 31 commandments relating to "Loshon Hora," meaning "evil speech." These commandments warned against such sins as talebearing and repeating private information, crimes punishable by inflections such as leprosy.

Schein (1994) also cites religious admonishments against gossip in The Bible. She points to such verses as Proverbs 20:19, which says, "A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much." Schein also researched the prevalence of gossip in medieval society, indicating that because it was such a "close" society, "these conditions fostered gossip, created a propensity to believe it...and contributed to its power"(p.139). This power, no doubt, went on to bring about prohibitions against it.

Emler (1994) describes some of these precautions, or
punishments, created to curb gossip in the fourteenth to eighteenth century British society. He mentions that iron masks, "duking stools and stocks were also used to chastise gossips" (p.119). This kind of deterrence is also described as being used in various other societies. Levin & Arluke (1987) mention the West African Ashanti tribe that cuts off the lips of anyone who gossips about a tribal leader. They also allude to the Seminole Indians of North America, who warn each other, "gossiping Indians will lose their place in 'Big Ghost City' after they die" (p.3). They point out that this tense apprehension of being charged with gossip is also shared by many other cultures around the world.

Considering this schismatic relationship of fear and fascination connected to gossip, a reasonable question is posed: Why do people gossip? Although it has been noted that people who gossip usually have no conscious purpose or obvious intentions, it must be understood that gossiping does, in fact, serve numerous functions, whether they are consciously acknowledged by the gossipers or not. The next chapter will deal with those functions.
CHAPTER THREE
Functions of Gossip

The following outline illustrates the eight main functions of gossip, as found in the literature:

(1) Gossip can be a therapeutic device, which allows one to vent his/her feelings about someone else, in turn, helping the gossiper to let off some steam. Spacks (1986) says, "one can say what he thinks of the people with whom he associates, can give vent to his thoughts" and that interaction between gossipers is "a relationship allowing the expression of thoughts and feeling about others, one releasing people from the prison of their own thoughts" (p.43). Holland (1996) illustrates this medium of expression, saying, "my dislike of someone or resentment about how he or she has treated me may be vented though gossiping" (p.201). Levin & Arluke explain how this channel of frustration can turn to malice, noting, "under such conditions, gossip can become negative, even vicious, being a convenient method for attacking those we despise or seek revenge against" (p.22). Therefore, it can be psychologically advantageous for those who just want to 'get something off their chests.'

(2) Gossip is a form of social control. Nevo, Nevo, & Derech-Zehavi (1994) assert that gossip ensures "the enforcement of group norms and values" (p.183). Westen
(1996) agrees that gossip "communicates a group's moral code" (p. 46). Spacks gives an example of how gossip can inhibit people from breaking the moral rules of their society. On a visit to China, she learned that there was no problem with adolescent pregnancy, and discovered that it was due to an effective means of social control. One of the socially acceptable duties of retired people was "watching and discussing individual activities of neighbors, to forestall as well as to criticize impermissible deviation" (p. x). Opportunities for breaking these social norms are constrained because of the 'spies' that keep tabs on deviant individuals.

(3) Gossip can also serve to further one's self-interests in life. Spacks explains, "manipulations of reputation can further political or social ambitions by damaging competitors or enemies" (p. 4). Levin & Arluke (1987) agree, saying, "individuals try to manage the information spread about them through gossip by transmitting flattering news about themselves and critical news about their opponents" (p. 40). Not only does the content of gossip influence one's social standing, but the mere act of gossiping can even raise one's status in some circles. Levin & Arluke note, "because gossip often places people at the center of attention, it also, at least temporarily, enhances their status with others" (p. 16).
They add that some people need to gain "esteem in the eyes of their friends and associates, and to have the 'inside scoop'" (p.14). Holland (1996) agrees, saying "appearing to be 'in-the-know' and being the first to tell interesting news provide part of the pleasure of, and motivation for, gossiping" (p.200). Therefore, people can make themselves look good not only by what they say, but by being the ones to say it.

(4) One may simply enjoy gossiping for the mere pleasure of satisfying curiosity or voyeuristic gratification. In other words, it's fun. Holland notes, "most people find it entertaining, relaxing, and fun" (p.200). Levin & Arluke add that "for listeners, gossip is also an important source of entertainment and relaxation" (p.27). Ben-Ze'ev (1994) explains that the reason gossip provides entertainment is that "really good gossip is usually not just a piece of information but an anecdote, a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end" and that "the pleasure derived is often that of a good story" (p.16). Ayim (1994) makes the point that, besides the interesting content of gossip, the mere act of gossiping also provides a kind of guilty pleasure. She observes, "the danger of being caught enhances the excitement of the endeavor" (p.99). This could be why Spacks describes the atmosphere of gossip as "erotic
titillation" (p. 11). Gossip, then, can just be seen as a fun activity.

(5) Gossip provides information that may be useful to us in life. It gives us advice on how to live day to day; what to do and what not to do. Levin & Arluke suggest that this process of survival is even practiced by children, pointing out that gossip "provides a way for preadolescents to learn 'the facts of life and the ways of the world' that they will later experience firsthand" (p. 39). By talking about events such as what happened on a date, and who "chickened out" of a fight, kids are made privy to information that will be useful to them. Similarly, adults can use information from gossip to help them survive in the workforce. Levin & Arluke describe this information as "what to expect from the boss...which co-workers should be avoided...who would stick up for them when work fell behind schedule...the likelihood of being promoted or fired" (p. 24).

Emler (1994) points out that gossip information also helps in our general adult life by providing such advice as "to whom can we safely lend our garden tools...to whom should we turn for the best advice about buying a new car...with whom should we form partnerships, whether business or marriage.." (p. 134). He contends that a person who stays informed by gossiping extensively is less likely
to experience life's misfortunes.

(6) Gossip also helps people feel better about themselves. Hearing about someone's misery, immorality, or foolhardiness allows gossipers to realize how fortunate, upstanding, and smart they are in comparison to the gossipees. Nevo, Nevo, & Derech-Zehavi (1994) point out that "These comparisons enable an evaluation of one's own achievements and abilities and the development of a sense of self and self-esteem" (p.182). Morreall (1994) asserts that "an overall function of gossip is to allow us to arrange in our own minds...how we stand in relation to those we are gossiping about" (p.59). Willimon (1990) admits, "I welcome news of the sins of others because it makes my sins appear more normal. Misery loves company" (p.995). Levin & Arluke agree, adding that "gossip about those who are considered 'immoral' or 'inferior' serves to enhance our own feelings of respectability and self-worth" (p.34). They also point out that much of our fascination with celebrities has to do with their weaknesses, shortcomings, and mishaps. They argue that "a little 'dirt' makes an unapproachable idol into a flesh-and-blood human being with frailties just like the rest of us" (p.32). Therefore, even if we don't pass on the gossip that we hear, it can make us silently feel good about ourselves.
(7) Gossip creates an intimate bond among the participants. As Ben-Ze'ev (1994) puts it, "the sharing of intimate and personal information and the intimate manner of conveying this information contribute to the formation of an exclusive group with intimate and affectionate ties" (p. 15). Holland (1996) agrees, saying, "the intimate atmosphere created by gossip can contribute to establishing bonds among the participants and many serve as a step in forming friendships" (p. 201). Levin & Arluke give an example of this friendship formation, saying, "someone who moves into a new neighborhood where he is initially a stranger to all will feel accepted when he gets the neighborhood 'dirt'" (p. 25). An article on 'boss bashing' in Psychology Today shows how gossiping about superiors "strengthens bonds among colleagues" and how it helps to "build friendships with other coworkers" because it creates an "'us against them' scenario" (p. 11). In the workplace or in a social circle, gossip creates an intimacy that forms a bond among its participants.

(8) Gossip can also be the result of a genuine concern for another's problems. Schein (1994) says gossip is "often motivated by a keen and healthy interest in one's neighbors or friends" (p. 146). If someone realizes that his or her friend has a problem and doesn't know quite how to approach that person about it, he may turn to another
friend who may also be worried about that person's welfare. Whether the participants are seeking a solution or not, gossip provides a way for the friends to express their concern for the third party. William H. Willimon, the dean of the chapel and professor of Christian ministry at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, claims that "the gossip of the church family...is sanctified. Gossip, as a church activity without malice, may well be...a primary means of congregational bonding" (p. 996). He believes that it is the duty of the members to know the personal lives of one another in order to give help when help is needed. This differs from social control in that the interest is not in communicating and enforcing moral values, but in the welfare of a friend with such issues as financial difficulties or family problems.

It must be made clear that these functions of gossip are not necessarily conscious purposes or goals of gossipers. As Spacks (1986) points out, "we mostly don't expect to affect the course of people's lives by talking about them-or we don't consciously acknowledge any such expectation" (p. 11). Holland (1996) also reminds us that gossipers are usually uninterested in, or unaware of, the functions of gossip. She writes:

In discussing motives for gossip, I do not mean to suggest that one is necessarily conscious of any particular
motive when one gossips, only that the motives I have mentioned are the sort that drive gossiping. For the most part, one simply enjoys gossiping and no more examines one's motives in doing so than one reflects upon the underlying norms on which gossips evaluations are based. (p. 201)

Gossip, then, serves any of the eight functions suggested, even though the participants may not be conscious of them.

There are studies, however, that suggest that gossip functions differently for men than for women. In the following chapter, I will approach the gender issues surrounding the concept of gossip.
CHAPTER FOUR

Gender Issues

Traditional Views

An observation made by Spacks (1986) may be a good starting point here. She describes a comic strip from a newspaper in which a man leaning against a woman's desk says, "Say, did you hear about Shirley? They say she's got something going with that guy from..." The woman responds, "I've got to run, Ralph...I'm afraid I don't have time to gossip." The man says, "Gossip? Men don't gossip! I was merely analyzing her shortcomings" (p.38). The connection between women and gossip is just as old as the disassociation between men and this "idle chat." Writing about the Middle Ages and Medieval society, Schein (1994) reports, "It was commonly believed that women were more apt to spend their time gossiping than men" (p.148). Referring to the late 19th century, Levin & Arluke (1987) also note, "gossip was also more and more regarded as a female activity" (p.6). Why has gossip always been customarily connected to women?

Spacks presents three explanations why gossip is traditionally associated with women. One explanation is the seventeenth century 'scientific' reasoning that women were only capable of small talk. Spacks illustrates these ideas that suggested "the natural weakness of women's
minds," and "The Difficulty they have to give a serious Attention to any thing abstracted and above the Senses..." (p.41). Another explanation Spacks presents is one that alludes to the many women with time on their hands. This idea proposed that "women gossip because they have nothing better to do, lacking good education and meaningful occupation..." (p.41). Spacks also suggests that the story of Eve in the Bible has led many to accept the belief that the first woman on Earth brought sin upon humanity because of her idle conversations. Spacks explains, "Christian denunciation implicitly assumes that Eve, a woman, brought sin into the world by unwise speaking and unwise listening; women's propensity for foolish talk declares their ancestry" (p.41).

Bergmann (1993) also presents some explanations suggested in the scientific context. He points out authors that describe women as being weak, therefore more vindictive, and consequently more apt to gossip. These traditional ideas have helped to perpetuate the notion that women are typically the ones who gossip.

Modern Perspectives

Modern researchers, however, have found that women and men are equally disposed to gossip. In a study of university students and members of a kibbutz in northern Israel, Nevo, Nevo, & Derech-Zehavi (1994) found that, "it
would be safe to say that the two sexes engage in more or less the same amount of gossip" (p. 188). Ben-Ze'ev (1994) writes, "Research indicates that both women and men spend a similar amount of time in idle conversation." (p. 20). Bergmann agrees, "from the present investigations that contain findings on the factual participation of the sexes in gossip, we can draw the conclusion that gossip is by no means the sole province of women" (p. 60). From a study done on a college campus, Levin & Arluke (1987) also conclude, "women were no more likely than men to gossip" (p. 20). These studies clearly refute the traditional notion that gossip is confined to females.

Differences between men and women's style and topics of gossip have been noted. Pilkington (1992), for example, found that women gossip in a manner that emphasizes cooperation within the group. They support each other's ideas, encourage members' comments and show involvement by laughing, asking questions, and responding immediately to what has been said. She found that the men in the study, however, gossiped in a different manner. If they responded at all to each other's comments, they responded very slowly; they disagreed with each other directly and aggressively; and there were a lot of long monologues and long silences between turns. She concluded, "from the data that I have gathered I have argued that men and women in
same-sex interaction behave very differently when they gossip" (p. 268). Therefore, her research suggests that men and women both gossip equally, but with different interactional styles.

As far as content is concerned, contrasts between men and women's gossip have also been reported. Nevo, Nevo, & Derech-Zehavi (1994), for instance, conclude, "it appears, therefore, that both sexes engage in gossip, but that content differs" (p. 188). For example, they found that women tend to gossip about physical appearance more than men do. Levin & Arluke (1987) found this difference to be that "women focus more on their close relationships...Men, in contrast, maintain their psychological distance by discussing strangers, acquaintances, and media celebrities" (p. 21). Ben-Ze'ev (1994) goes further to conclude, "women tend to talk more about other people, whereas men dwell on sports, politics, and weather" (p. 20). Tannen (1990) also acknowledges that men "tend to talk about political rather than personal relationships" (p. 101). In addition, Johnson & Finlay (1997) conducted a study of men on a TV sports talk show, in which men 'gossiped' about football. They found that "whereas women's gossip arguably reflects an inherent concern with the personal lives of individuals...men's talking about football provides a marked contrast." Referring to their findings on men's
gossip, in comparison to women's, they acknowledge, "whilst we can observe a similar preoccupation with the lives of certain individual characters, what we are dealing with are aspects of professional, not personal, lives" (p.138).

These studies all appear to come to more or less the same conclusion in terms of what men and women talk about: Men do, in fact, gossip, but they gossip about sports, politics, and weather; and when they do gossip about people, it is about strangers or people's professional lives. Concerning interactive style, researchers conclude that men appear more uncooperative in gossip conversations than women.

In the following analysis I will consider seven conversations involving men, and I will do two things: 1) I will look for signs of gossip as it is commonly known and as it is described by the established criteria; and 2) analyze the interactional styles to see how they compare to past studies on men's gossip.
CHAPTER FIVE

Subjects and Methodology

Seven different groups of men were recorded and used in this analysis. Seven groups were chosen in order to present a variety of participants and situations involved in the conversations. As noted, these seven conversations are presented in an attempt to offer examples of men engaged in common gossip. I analyze the discussions to determine if they meet the criteria for gossip and to examine the content of the conversations. I also analyze the discussions to examine the interactive styles of the participants. The methods by which I analyze the conversations in relation to these issues are further explained in the sections following the present one. The present section describes the subjects, or participants, in each group.

Group #1: Guys at Home

Group #1, "Guys at home," consists of five males. The recorded conversation is four minutes and twelve seconds long. All participants were students at different community colleges in Southern California; they met each other through mutual friends and at church, and had known one another for a few years. Their ages ranged from 18-21. I was not present at the recording, nor did I prompt it. One of the young men owned a video camera and the guys had
been using it just for fun and were doing so at the time the data was produced. They were aware of the camera, but had become quite comfortable with it being in their presence for the past few weeks. The recording was done at one of the fellows' house, on a Saturday, as they ate around the dinner table.

Group #2: Guys in Car

The subjects in the second group, "Guys in Car," are all close friends who live in the same neighborhood, and were on the volleyball and track team together in high school. The subject referred to in this present study as "A," is twenty-two years of age, and a senior in college. Subject "B" is twenty years of age, with no college experience. "C" is twenty-one years of age, with a year and a half experience in junior college. The data was collected by "A," as the three friends were driving in "B's" truck, on the way to play tennis. The conversation is divided into three segments, which total two minutes and forty-three seconds.

Group #3: Supper

The third group's conversation is entitled, "Supper." It was recorded by a colleague of mine for the purpose of this study. It involves two brothers and a male friend of the family, all in their twenties, and all in college. The recording was done as the guys ate supper at home. It is
also divided into three segments, totaling two minutes and fifty-five seconds.

Group #4: BBQ

Group #4, "BBQ," includes two male cousins, age twenty-six and thirty. One is a graduate from a two-year college, the other is a junior at a university. The recording was done as they sat around the backyard at a Memorial Day barbecue. The two segments of the conversation that were used last a total of one minute and forty seconds.

Group #5: Mechanics on the Job

Group #5, "Mechanics on the Job," consists of two auto mechanics as they work on cars in a repair shop. Both are described as males in their thirties and forties. The recording was done by one of the men, described as subject "A". Divided into two segments, it lasts one minute and forty seconds.

Group #6: Dinner Conversation

The interaction of Group #6 is entitled, "Dinner Conversation," and it involves a mixed-gender group of subjects. Two are male, described as "M1" and "M2," and two are female, described "F1" and "F2." The recording was done by a member of one of the couples as they ate dinner. It was divided into three segments and totals four minutes and forty-eight seconds. Although this conversation
involves mixed-genders, only the men's side of the interactions will be analyzed, for the purpose of this study.

Group #7: After-Work Chat

The last conversation involves one male and one female as they sat around the kitchen after work. As with the previous conversation, only the male's side of the interaction will be analyzed. Divided into three segments, it lasts two minutes and fifty-five seconds.

Methods of Conversation Analysis

The data was transcribed using methods of conversation analysis, which involves listening to audiocassettes and examining detailed features of conversation. Hutchby & Wooffitt (1998) describe the process of transcribing data as "writing down in as close detail as possible such features of the recorded interaction as the precise beginning and end points of turns, the duration of pauses, audible sounds which are not words (such as breathiness and laughter)" (p. 75). In capturing these detailed features on paper, a transcript can appear quite confusing. For this reason, transcription conventions are provided. The following transcription conventions are based on those developed by Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974).

Transcription Conventions

Speaker identification is justified with left margin,
and the conversation progresses chronologically from the top of the page to the bottom.

[ ] Brackets are used to indicate overlapping utterances. Left brackets note beginning of the overlap, and right brackets "close" or end the overlap.

Example:  

O: ay is that thing recording?  
D: yeah  
[ ]  
A: yeah

= The equal sign indicates that two utterances are immediately continuous but not overlapping.

Underlining indicates stress/emphasis.

↑ Up arrow precedes an upward shift in pitch.

↓ Down arrow follows the end of the upward shift in pitch.

? Question mark indicates rising inflection, not necessarily a question.

Example: Bob: I saw this guy yesterday?  
Joe: where.  
Bob: uhm, at the gym?  
Joe: oh.

. Period indicates falling inflection, not necessarily at the end of an utterance or sentence.

, Comma indicates a continuing intonation, that is, a slight stretching of sound with a very small upward or
downward intonation-contour.

(.6) Single parentheses enclosing numbers indicate pause lengths in seconds and tenths-of-seconds. Very short pauses shown by (.)

Example: A: where’re you gonna watch the game at (.6)

B: ahh I think I hafta go ta Hemmit.

: Colon indicates the extension (stretching) of the sound it follows.

- Hyphen following a sound indicates a cut-off, a definite stopping of the sound.

(()) Double parentheses enclose transcribers' descriptive remarks.

hhh h's indicates audible out-breaths, sighing, hearable as unvoiced laughter.

(h) h in parentheses indicates explosive aspiration, sometimes laughter.

Example: A: hhh s(h)enior c(h)itizen day(h)hh

.h Period preceding h indicates audible in-breath.

( ) Single parentheses indicate hearings which are in doubt.

Analyzing Criteria and Content

In analyzing the conversations, I considered the seven criteria for gossip established in chapter one. I looked to see if each criterion (five of which deal with content
of conversation) was present in the interaction, in order to determine whether the conversation is "gossip," as it is commonly known. As a reminder, the seven criteria of gossip are as follows:

1) The gossipee is a person - not a thing or concept.
2) The gossipee is absent.
3) The discussion has no conscious, practical purpose or specific goal.
4) The discussion is evaluative, mostly focusing on flaws or problems.
5) The discussion deals with private issues or personal details of individual lives.
6) A smaller group of participants enhances the level of candor.
7) The more acquainted the participants are with themselves and with the gossipee, the more potential there is for gossip to take place.

I determined whether the seven criteria were present by the following method:

1) To ascertain if the subject of the conversation was a person, I looked to see if a name, nickname, pronoun or any other terms of reference to a person were used. For example, the men in Group #1 make references to six different people throughout their conversation, one of whom
is only referred to by a nickname.

2) To determine references to absent people, I simply ruled out all references made to the participants involved in the discussion.

3) To establish whether the discussion was idle and without a specific goal, I looked for clues such as how the topic changes from one to another. For example, the men in Group #2 comment on a dead animal they spot as they are driving. This leads to the discussion of food. They then talk about a certain fast-food restaurant, which reminds one of the guys of a job he had at the mentioned establishment, at which point the conversation turns to his ex-boss. Suddenly, they argue about lids of tennis ball containers, which somehow lead them to discuss a co-worker. The way they switch from subject to subject is shown in examples (1) and (2):

(1) C: ah, dude that was roadkill.
    (.4)
A: road pizza
    (.1)
C: don’t say anything with food, I’m starving.
    (.)
B: (h)hehh
    (1.2)
A: dude, we went to (hang out- we went) to Carl’s
Junior

(2) C: I worked there the first day everything was cool
the second day I came in an' she was bein' a
bitch, so I left=

(3) C: hah hah hah .hhh .hh(.)she was pressin' her luck
(.4)
A: (h)hhh
C: heh
B: ( )press your luck, bitch,
C: hey why- why- why you're the only one who loses
your lid, Tito,

The constant and drastic change of topics demonstrates the
idleness of the conversation and shows that they have no
conscious goal to accomplish other than merely discussing
for discussion's sake.

4) To ascertain whether the participants are
evaluating their subject, I looked for remarks and comments
that directly or indirectly judge one's character,
personality, physical appearance or any other personal
attribute. For instance, in the following examples the
subjects of the gossip are all being evaluated in some way.
The men are not just talking about the subjects, but they
are judging their physical appearance, hygiene, character,
and misfortunes. Many of these evaluations involve
physical appearance, as illustrated in examples (4)-(14):
(4) O: she looks like a weeble wobble but you can't fall down?=

(5) O: with a big- HU:GE chin, though.
R: hu:ge chin (.4) trap jaw.

(6) D: I did notice that about halitosis, how- the way her knees are- turns in.

(7) O: =she's too tall, man, she looks like a BEANpole.

(8) O: she is too skinny, man.

(9) R: she looks like Jasmine, anyway.

(.2)
S: she ain't that bad, man.
R: well, her eyes are like Jasmine

(10) R: she's big, man

(11) A: yeah, he was there, I'm like(.) and he had a fine ol' girlfriend, dude,

(12) A: =yeah, Goody got it goin' on

(13) A: little skinny guy(.).old guy he's the- (the one that)

(14) M1: I mean he was six seven 'bout three hundred pounds so he didn't have much to

In addition to evaluating physical appearance, the guys also judge their subjects' characters, directly and indirectly. Example (15) of Group #1 shows an indirect character evaluation of two girls at the same time. "R" warns "S" that if he brings a certain girl to church, she
will eventually act like Jasmine, another girl he previously brought to church. "R's" remark about Jasmine suggests that she has become bothersome and annoying since she started hanging around their group of friends:

(15) R: ( )Scott, bring her to the church, man(.4) now, for YOU, mang(.) she'll come every Saturday(.) she'll becon another Jasmine an' all dat(.) she looks like Jasmine, anyway.

All the participants can gather, from "R's" tone and attitude, that he doesn't approve of Jasmine's presence, and he perceives the new girl to be the same way. Therefore, he makes a somewhat indirect judgment of both girls' characters, which demonstrates evaluation.

5) Judging the level of privacy of a topic and its personal nature presents the most difficulty, since one's idea of privacy may differ from another's. In any case, I assumed a topic to be personal if it didn't deal with the person's professional, public life, but with her/his home-life, romantic relationships, virtues and vices. I also determine how private an issue is by considering whether or not one would normally discuss it in a public setting without expecting a surprised reaction. For instance, example (16) shows the guys in Group #1 discussing a girl who they nickname "Halitosis," referring to her chronic bad breath:
(16) D: (h)they straight call (h)her (h)halitosis hhh

They even get more personal when they discuss another
girl's chest, in examples (17) and (18):
(17) O: =eh she got nothin' up here?
(18) A: she got NO(.)tits.=

Although these examples illustrate topics that involve
personal issues, some of the topics that the fellows
discuss may or may not be considered very private to
everyone. The level of privacy involved in a topic can be
argued, and what someone considers very personal may not be
considered too secretive by another. For instance, in
Group #1, "R" reveals some possibly secret information
about one of the girls they're discussing. He tells them
that she disclosed her feelings about the guys, her
thoughts of changing her religion, and her desire to get
baptized. This information may not seem very private to
some people. However, one can sufficiently judge the
privacy of a topic by the manner in which it is discussed.
For example, as "R" begins to discuss this particular
topic, he starts by saying, "I couldn't believe she told me
that." This comment not only suggests that perhaps the
information was told to him in confidence, but that it has
some sensationalistic value. This sensationalism is also
revealed by "A" and "D's" surprised reactions. This is all
illustrated in examples (19) and (20):
(19) R: ( )> I couldn't believe she told me that< she said- she said, I would like to get baptized.

(.4)

A: is that right?

(.2)

D: Kiki said that?

R: she told me, (I'm possibly changing my religion)

(20) R: and she was tellin me like- she said, yeah, you guys are nice, and stuff she said I'd like to( )

"R's" introductory comment and "A" and "D's" reactions suggest that this topic does, in fact, have secretive and sensationalistic value. The sensationalism is also displayed in examples (21), (22), and (23), where "O", "D", and "R" joke about the illicitness and danger of their gossip:

(21) O: don't- ay, don't show this to Ehhrica, mehh heh heh I'm gonna be mackin' tomorrow I can't say nu'n 'bout weeble-wobble.=

(22) D: you know this tape gon' get out one day.

(23) R: he's gonna use it against us, man,=

As noted before, there's a sense of illicitness and danger involved in gossip, which adds excitement to the endeavor, and the fellows' comments in the previous examples manifest that feeling. I looked for instances such as these when determining the privacy or personal nature of a topic.
6) The size of the group involved in the discussion is established in the "Subjects and Methodology" section.

7) The acquaintanceship between the participants of the discussion is described in the "Subjects and Methodology" section, although I also determine their level of closeness by considering certain clues such as the manner in which they act toward one another. For example, the participants in Group #1 are very close friends and are obviously comfortable enough with each other to engage in real gossip. One can sense this closeness in example (24), where "O", very loudly and openly, tells "D" that he has some food on his face:

(24) O: wipe your lip off, Del,

R: an- an-

D: what?

O: your lip- right there in the corner

Aside from their acquaintanceship with each other, I determine the participants' acquaintanceship with the gossipee by their own expressed knowledge of her/him in the course of the discussion. For example, the men in Group #1 demonstrate their familiarity with the subjects of their gossip. Example (25) shows the friends distinguishing between two girls with the same name, making sure everyone in the group is sufficiently familiar with the person about whom they are gossiping:
They affirm their familiarity with the subject by describing her physical appearance in comparison to the other girl with the same name.

I considered all seven of these criteria and used these described methods in my analysis of the data.

Analyzing Interaction Styles

In analyzing the interactive style of the
participants, I consider eight different features, described in Pilkington’s (1992) and Coates’ (1996) studies on women’s interaction, to determine whether they are present in my study on men’s interaction, or if they are in fact absent or otherwise minimal. A description of each feature and an explanation of how I analyze them follow:

1) Hedging – Coates describes this feature as a strategy that helps to avoid conflict among participants in a discussion. In the following example, from Group #1, “R” makes a statement that a certain girl (Kiki) looks like another girl (Jasmine). “S” indirectly disagrees at first:

(26) R: dat(.3)she looks like Jasmine, anyway.
   (.2)

   S: she ain't that bad, man.

“R” takes note of “S's” disagreement and, in an effort to avoid conflict, makes an attempt to soften his own opinion, with the hedge, “well,” in example (27):

(27) R: well, her eyes are like Jasmine

This avoidance of conflict allows the conversation to move on. As Coates explains, “Hedges... help to preserve openness and to avoid closure and conflict” (p.265). In my analysis I look to see if the men in the conversations utilize this strategy and if so, how often.

2) Direct Agreement – Just like hedging, agreement is used to maintain solidarity and avoid conflict. As noted,
this is important to keep the conversation open. This is shown in example (28), from Group #1, where “R” claims that two girls have similar eyes, and “A” and “D” both agree, which may help to create solidarity:

(28) R: well, her eyes are like Jasmine

   (.2)

   A: I know

   [    ]

   D: similar, huh.=

Pilkington noted that her men’s data exhibited much more direct and hostile disagreement than agreement. I analyzed my data to see if the same was true of the men in my study.

3) Tag questions - Coates states that a tag question “switches the utterance from being a statement to being a question” (p.175). She also notes that tag questions are used to “invite other speakers to participate, to draw them into conversation” (p.192) or to “check the taken-for-granted-ness of what is being said, to confirm the shared world of the participants” (p.194). The following are some examples she gives (the tags are italicized):

(29) Liz: it’s strange, isn’t it? the life some people lead

(30) Claire: but they’re so stupid right? cos then- cos Nina

(31) Becky: well we were in the library right? and we
An example from Group #1 of my data shows "R" using the tag "you know what I'm saying?", to confirm the shared world of the participants and to invite other speakers to participate. He and "S" are arguing an issue and he uses the tag three times, seeking someone else's opinion. "A", who is obviously involved in another conversation with "O", finally accepts "R's" invitation and gives his opinion on the matter (again, the tags are italicized):

(32) S: bring her to church?,
R: uh-huh
S: just bring her to church?,
R: but that's hard to bring her to church every
\underline{Saturday} man that's a lot of work, mang,
\[ \]
S: not every- not\underline{every-} just \underline{this} week
R: but den I can't do dat (just bring her once )
\[ \]
O: ay, Scott,
this thing's out of focus- how d'you work it?
S: I'll- I'll pick her up in like a couple weeks.
R: \underline{know} wh'I'm sayin?=
O: =oh it's automatic focus.
A: it's auto focus.

D: yeah, it's automatic focus.

R: know wh'I'm sayin, (when you bring)

O: ah, trip- I'm looking through the wrong eye- I'm sorry,

D: ehhhhh hah heh

R: (for the first couple of weeks)

O: no, I ain't got my glasses on.

A: =hhhah hah hah hhh

R: know wh'I'm sayin'?(.when you bring a girl to church, you don't just bring her one time and leaver her (two weeks)

S: naw, just bring her two weeks?(.first two weeks.

A: you try to convince her in the first two weeks(.and if you can't, you just say, well look, um,

I looked for instances such as this to identify tag
questions.

4) Information-seeking questions - Coates asserts that a major function of questions in conversations is "to invite friends to tell stories" (p.265). In other words, questions help to prompt gossip. Example (33) shows subject "B", in Group #3, using a question to encourage subject "A's" gossip:

(33) A: well Jim's not a big fan of Jennifer (either) (.9)

   B: how come (1.8)

   A: she works at the (other place) Lumberjack's?

"B's" question invites "A" to explain why Jim isn't a big fan of Jennifer, prompting him to continue gossiping. These type of information-seeking questions are also exhibited by subject "M2" in examples (34) and (35), from Group #6:

(34) M1: ( )(.)yeah(.2)he was in Korea like three weeks an' got engaged.

   F2: well imagine that

   M2: to a Korean?

(35) F1: y'know? he's so old, that you don't think about that(.2)he seems like a young guy.

   M2: who

   F1: Willie Nelson
I considered utterances such as those displayed by subject “M2” as information-seeking questions, and looked to see how often the men used them. Again, these information-seeking questions demonstrate an encouraging interactive style, which prompts gossip.

5) Laughter - Pilkington views the laughter of the female participants in her study as contributing feedback (p. 257). She shows examples like (36) and (37), which exhibit the frequent and general laughter displayed by the women:

(36) Sal: Liz had visions of [you in there! (laughing)
Liz: [yes well (laughing)

(37) Sal: she’d have to go to a CHEAP [May: ohhh!] HOTEL LIKE ALL THE REST OF THE WHORES!
May: ohhh! Ohhh! Ohhh! (general laughter)

(Pilkington, p. 260)

Example (38), from Group #5 shows how Speaker “A’s” laughter encourages Speaker “B” to continue joking and gossiping about a guy named “Tim”:

(38) B: Tim wants me ta come over to his house,=
A: Tim [ ]
=oh(h)hh
heh heh heh .hhh
B: an' I don't have any desire to do that?

A: hhh heh

heh heh heh heh heh heh hhh hehhh hh heh .hhh

This type of feedback lets the speaker know that the listener is amused and that s/he should continue. Like Pilkington, I looked to see how often laughter was displayed.

6) Repetition - Pilkington shows how repetition of a speaker's utterance can indicate agreement. Example (39) is an instance where this is displayed in her women's data:

(39) May: ...and they used to go to this youth group and be all over each other in 1920 or whenever

Pam: [eugh
Sal: [eugh
May: and then um...er...then one day she was sick and so the boyfriend took it upon himself to ask her cousin out eughh

Pam: [eughh
Sal: [eughh

(Pilkington, P.261)

The men in Group #1 also repeat the speaker's utterance every now and then, showing understanding, attention and solidarity as they gossip. This is shown in example (40),
as they talk about two girls:

(40) R: the otha one.
O: cute eyes?(.)big chin?

[ ]
R: yeah, cute eyes.
O: with a big- HU:GE chin, though.
R: hu:ge chin.(.4)trap jaw.
O: looks like a trap - look like a alien.

"O" repeats "R's" statements and "R" repeats "O's". Both of them do this to show agreement and understanding.

7) Immediate minimal responses - Minimal responses, such as "yeah" and "mm-hmm" are prevalent in Pilkington's female data (p.260), and she points out how encouraging and supporting they can be. Example (41) shows the women in Pilkington's data displaying this:

(41) Sal: like Roz's mother, one of the times that oh that
time I went to Himitangi [with the family and she
May: [yeah

(Pilkington, p.260)

This type of response also appears in the men's data, as shown in examples (42)-(44), from Groups #1 and #3:

(42) S: bring her to church?,=
R: =uh-huh
(43) D: =like, chill, one of us'll become a politician.=
O: =yep.
R: he's gonna use it against us, man,=

(44) A: she works at the (other place) Lumberjack's?
B: uh-huh
A: and uhm she's the ( ) receptionist

Unlike the men in Pilkington's study, who exhibited delayed minimal responses (p.262), example (42) shows "R" immediately responding to "S's" utterance. "O" also supports "D's" comment in example (43), with an immediate minimal response, encouraging further comments, which "R" supplies. These immediate responses display active involvement, which keeps the conversation going and allows for more gossip. Pilkington observes that this feature of interaction style was virtually non-existent in her men's data, and I was interested in seeing if it was present in mine.

8) Joint development - Pilkington shows how the women in her study actively contribute to the development of the speaker's story or narrative by adding to it and joining in on the production, illustrating shared involvement by building on the topic. They are shown building on each other's utterances in example (45):

(45) Sal: perhaps next time I see B I'll PUMP him for information [so B tell me
May: [the goss
Sal: [I know it's about six years old but
May: [ (laugh) but I'd forgotten it

(Pilkington, p. 259)

Like the women in Pilkington's study, the men in my data also build on each other's utterances, showing understanding and agreement. This is displayed in example (46), where the guys mimic the poetry of a mutual friend, Jimmy, who is not present:

(46) A: naw, don't let Jimmy write the letter, dude, I mean Jimmy a homey and

D: hhh heh heh
A: everything, but don't let him

R: Jimmy
A: write the letter, dude,
D: hhhhh hhe

R: if you were my girl(.1) you remind me of a gla:ss.
A: ehhhhHAH HAH HAH

(.)
R: sometimes of a ba:ss.=

[ ]
A: not j- =not just any glass, a nice rounded coke bottle
D: now I need to kill myself.

(.1)

A: (h) heh .hhh heh

[   ]

D: now I need to kill myself

A: hh hah hah hh hhh

[   ]

R: and float down the river

"A" starts by making a comment, which "R" supports with a joke. "A" adds to "R's" joke, "D" takes "A's" joke a step further, and "R" continues with what "D" has said. We can see that the guys are not just expressing their own individual ideas, but they are taking turns building upon each other's ideas. They contribute jokes that acknowledge and extend the previous speaker's jokes, working together to make the immediate topic even more entertaining. I will look for instances such as this when analyzing my data for joint development.
CHAPTER SIX
Analysis of Data

This chapter presents tables that describe the findings of the analysis of all seven conversations. The tables show which criterion of gossip was met by each group and compares the extent to which each aspect of gossip was exhibited. The tables also show which features of style were observed in each conversation and how much each feature was used.

Table A shows the time of each segment of conversation. The shortest segments are from Groups #4 and #5, both lasting one minute and forty seconds each. The longest segment of conversation analyzed comes from Group six's interaction, lasting four minutes and forty eight seconds. The total time of all segments is twenty-four minutes and eight seconds.

Table A: Length of Conversations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
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<td>#3</td>
<td>#4</td>
<td>#5</td>
<td>#6</td>
<td>#7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B shows the number of absent individuals that were mentioned in each group's conversation. The participants in Group #5 mentioned the least amount of individuals, referring to two people throughout their conversation. Group three referred to nine absent
individuals, the most people mentioned in all of the groups. With all the groups combined, there were a total of forty-three absent individuals mentioned.

Table B: Absent Individuals Mentioned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group #1</th>
<th>Group #2</th>
<th>Group #3</th>
<th>Group #4</th>
<th>Group #5</th>
<th>Group #6</th>
<th>Group #7</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table C describes the type of absent individuals the participants referred to. It shows how many of the subjects of gossip were strangers to some of the participants. For example, three of the seven people mentioned in Group #6 were known to the speaker who mentioned them, but were unknown to the other participants. In all the groups, a total of eight individuals that were gossiped about were known only to the speakers. Table C also shows how many of the subjects of gossip were known to all of the participants. Thirty-five of the forty-three mentioned individuals were known to all the participants in all the groups combined. Table C also shows that out of the forty-three people referred to in all of the conversations, three were well-known, famous people (such as celebrities or notorious criminals); two were authority figures (such as bosses or teachers); seventeen were women and twenty-six were men.
Table C: Subjects of Gossip

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strangers to</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Some</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Known by All</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table D shows the number of evaluative comments each group made about the people they referred to. Groups #4 and #5 made the least amount of evaluative comments - three each, and Group #1 made the most - seventeen. The total number of evaluative comments made by all the groups combined was seventy.

Table D: Number of Evaluative Comments About Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>#2</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>#4</td>
<td>#5</td>
<td>#6</td>
<td>#7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table E displays the number of personal topics each group discussed. All of the groups discussed a total of
forty-seven personal topics in their conversations. Group #5 discussed two personal issues, which was the least amount, and Group #1 discussed twelve, which was the most.

Table E: Number of Personal Topics Discussed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>#2</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>#4</td>
<td>#5</td>
<td>#6</td>
<td>#7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables F-I show what kind of personal topics were discussed. Table F shows the amount of topics concerning people’s physical appearance. A total of ten topics concerning people’s physical appearance were discussed among all of the groups combined. Groups #4, #5, and #7 didn’t discuss any topics concerning physical appearance. Table G displays the amount of topics concerning romantic relations. It shows that the combined groups discussed a total of eleven topics concerning romantic relations. Only Group #7 did not discuss a topic of this nature. Table H shows the amount of topics that concerned people’s personal affairs, not including romantic relations (such as personal finances, personal goals, misfortunes, etc.). Only Groups #1, #3, #4, and #6 discussed issues of this nature, for a total of seven topics among all of the groups. Table I shows the amount of topics concerning one’s personality or character. Groups #1, #4, and #5 discussed one topic each of this nature, whereas groups #6 and #7 discussed three
each, Groups #2 and #3 both discussed five topics about personality and character. The total for this table was nineteen topics.

**Table F: Number of Topics Related to Physical Appearance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group #1</th>
<th>Group #2</th>
<th>Group #3</th>
<th>Group #4</th>
<th>Group #5</th>
<th>Group #6</th>
<th>Group #7</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table G: Number of Topics Related to Romantic Relations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group #1</th>
<th>Group #2</th>
<th>Group #3</th>
<th>Group #4</th>
<th>Group #5</th>
<th>Group #6</th>
<th>Group #7</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table H: Number of Topics Related to One’s (Non-Romantic) Private Affairs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group #1</th>
<th>Group #2</th>
<th>Group #3</th>
<th>Group #4</th>
<th>Group #5</th>
<th>Group #6</th>
<th>Group #7</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table I: Number of Topics Related to One’s Personality/Character**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group #1</th>
<th>Group #2</th>
<th>Group #3</th>
<th>Group #4</th>
<th>Group #5</th>
<th>Group #6</th>
<th>Group #7</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table J displays the features of interactive style that were exhibited by each group in their segments of gossip. It shows that hedges were used seventy-four times by all the groups combined. Group #7 used the most amount
of hedges, which was thirty-nine, and Group #3 used the least, which was one.

There were a total of twenty-one instances of direct agreement. Group #1 displayed the most direct agreement of all the groups, which were ten instances. There were no instances of direct agreement found in Groups #4 and #5.

There were a total of twelve tag questions and thirty information-seeking question used among all the groups. Group #6 used the most amount of information-seeking questions - fourteen, and used the least amount of tag questions - zero. Group #1 used five tag questions, the most of all the groups, and Group #4 didn't use any information-seeking questions at all.

There were a total of ninety-six occurrences of laughter. Groups #2 and #3 exhibited the most instances of laughter, both amounting to twenty-seven each. Group #7 displayed one instance of laughter.

The groups displayed a total of fifteen instances of repetition and twenty-one minimal responses. The total amount of instances of joint development for all the groups was ninety-nine. Group #1 displayed forty-six instances of joint development, which was the most, and Groups #3 and #4 both displayed three, which was the least.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedging</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Agreement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tag Questions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information-seeking Questions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughter</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Responses</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Development</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion and Conclusion

Judging the groups' conversations by the criteria established in chapter one, the men in these data were actually engaged in gossip as it is commonly understood by people in general and as it is described by researchers. They were not merely engaged in other types of conversations, as men in other studies on gossip were, but they were involved in discussions that truly represented gossip. All of the conversations contained elements that met each of the criteria.

To begin with, the discussions did, in fact, concern people. All of these men were talking about individuals at one point or another. Although they did talk about things and concepts at times, these conversations show that their discussions were not limited to those topics, but also revolved around people.

The type of people they chose to talk about was also observed. For the most part, the men gossiped more about other males than they did about females. Only Group #1 gossiped about women more than men; they talked about five girls and one guy. Only one group gossiped about authority figures, which was Group #2, who talked about their ex-boss and teacher. Only two groups discussed famous people: Group #4 alluded to the physical appearance of "Pink," a
popular R&B singer; and Group #6 discussed Michael Milliken, a notorious white-collar criminal, and the tax evasion of Willie Nelson, a popular Country & Western singer. The majority of the people who were discussed were familiar to all of the participants, making this discussion more characteristic of gossip. Only eight of the forty-three people discussed were unknown to just some of the participants.

Another element that further classifies these conversations as gossip is the fact that the people who were gossiped about were not present. In other words, they were talking behind other people's backs. Even if a discussion was about the actions of one of the participants, the gossip usually revolved around an absent individual.

What the men said about the people they discussed also characterizes their discussion as gossip. First of all, Table D shows that they made many evaluative comments. They made a total of seventy subtle and explicit judgments about the people they discussed. Tables E-I show that when they talked about these people, forty-seven of the topics were of a personal nature, including physical appearance, personality and character traits, romantic relations, and non-romantic private affairs.

Another characteristic of gossip that was displayed in
all the group's discussions was the idle and purposeless way they talked. They never made any indication that their conversations had any determined goal. Furthermore, the way the men casually switched from one topic to another within a short amount of time also suggests that the conversations were not carried out with a specific purpose in mind. As mentioned, forty-seven personal topics were discussed in a total of twenty-four minutes.

The last characteristics of these interactions that met the criteria of gossip were the size of the groups and the acquaintanceship among the participants. None of the groups had more than five participants, and they could all be considered relatively small groups, and more inclined to gossip. As noted before, the more members in a discussion, the less it can be considered serious gossip. Also, as already mentioned, all of the participants in each group were close friends and were comfortable enough with each other to engage in real gossip.

As far as style is concerned, each group exhibited very cooperative interactional styles that prompted and maintained the gossip conversations. Chart J shows the features that demonstrate supportive behavior. The feature that was least displayed by the men was tag questions, which were used a total of twelve times. As Coates (1996) points out, this is a feature that is much more typical of
woman's language. Repetition, direct agreement, minimal responses, and information-seeking questions were used somewhat more than tag questions. All of these features demonstrated some level of agreement and support for the other participants.

The feature that was displayed the most in total was joint development. Of course, there was some degree of variation among the groups. For example, Group #1 exhibited forty-six instances of joint development, whereas Groups #3 and #4 each displayed only three. This difference in numbers could very well be related to the size of the groups. In other words, Group #1 could have displayed more joint development simply because there were more participants involved. Even though Group #1 only had two more participants than Groups #3 and #4, the extra speakers could have been a factor in making the conversation more spirited, and more likely to exhibit joint development. At the same time, as noted before, any more than five participants could have lessened the overall inclination to gossip.

This variation in numbers was also found in some of the other features of style, in which some groups used a large amount of one feature and another group would hardly ever use that same feature. An example of this is the interesting fact that the men in Groups #6 and #7, which
were the only mixed-gender groups, displayed the most amount of hedges. As mentioned in chapter five, only the men's conversation in the mixed groups were analyzed, but the large amount of hedges used by the men in Groups #6 and #7 may have been prompted by the women's presence. In other words, the men in the mixed-gender groups could have utilized more hedges in their utterances because there were women present at the interaction, even though the females may have not been directly and actively involved in the immediate discussion. Groups #1 - #5, which involved only males, displayed fewer hedges in their conversations. Perhaps the need to avoid conflict or soften one's opinion with a hedge was not as strong within the same-sex groups as it was in the mixed-gender groups.

Another notable observation of the mixed-gender groups is that they displayed much less laughter than the same-sex groups. Both Groups #6 and #7, which were mixed, didn't demonstrate nearly as much laughter as Groups #1 - #5, the all-male groups. Again, perhaps the presence of the opposite sex made the gossip interaction a little more inhibited, and less inclined to joviality.

It is also interesting to note that Group #5, which had the only conversation that took place at work, discussed significantly fewer people than the other groups. The men in Pilkington's (1997) study were also observed at
work, and didn’t exhibit discussions that fit our criteria as gossip – mainly, personal discussions about people. The fact that the men in Group #5 engaged in less personal discussions than the others could suggest that men are less likely to gossip at work than in other, more social settings. The reason that men may be less inclined to gossip at work can be argued. One might claim that the work environment may appear too public for men to engage in private topics, which, as discussed, have typically been labeled as ‘women’s discussions’. Another argument could be that the men were simply too engaged in the duties around them to become too involved in topics unrelated to the tasks at hand. This is demonstrated in Group #5’s conversation, where the mechanics’ gossip is frequently interrupted by more purposeful, task-related discussions.

This study shows that men can, and do, engage in conversations that can be appropriately labeled ‘gossip’ by the common meaning of the term and by sociolinguistics researchers’ definitions. Although men’s conversations in many other studies don’t seem to meet these criteria, this current study presents data that does. Each group displayed all of the characteristics of typical gossip. These small groups of close friends idly made personal evaluations of absent individuals with whom they were familiar. They were not strangers speaking to worldwide
audiences, purposefully discussing concepts and abstract notions.

This study also demonstrates the different features of cooperative behavior being used by males in a gossip conversation. These features were associated with women's interaction in previous studies, and were found to be existent in the men's data in this study. It seems that men do use these particular strategies of support, agreement, and cooperation in gossip discussions, with evidently the same purposes as women.

The data also suggest that men may be less inclined to gossip at work than at home or in a more social setting. As noted, the only conversation in this study that took place at work displayed the least amount of gossip on a whole. The other locations (home, backyard, car) seem to be more conducive to gossip for men.

It can also be suggested from this study that the presence of women can have an effect on the male participants' style of interaction. As pointed out, the only two groups in which women were present both exhibited more hedges than the other all-male groups. The two mixed groups also displayed much less laughter than the all-male groups. One can consider the idea that men are more polite among women as a reason for the males' different behavior in the mixed groups. Also, their lack of laughter may
suggest an increase in reticence and decrease in openness of mixed-gender group conversations.

It would be interesting to compare the exact amounts of features of cooperative style used by separate groups of all-males and all-females to determine precisely how much more the women utilize these strategies than the men. One could also compare these separate, same-sex groups with mixed-gender groups to determine how drastically the interaction styles change among the participants. It would also be enlightening to study all-male group gossip only in the workplace, to ascertain how true the findings of this study were about men's workplace gossip. Further research such as these could present and provide more information and insight on the social organization within and between genders, as it is revealed by their speech activities.
APPENDIX A: Group #1: Guys at Home
O: she looks like a weeble wobble but you can't fall down?=

A: =ehh heh ^ hehhh

[ ]

D: heh heh heh ehh heh heh heh
A: .hhh .hhh he said weeble wobble hhah hah ha h h

[ ]

R: ( )

O: ay is that thing recording?
D: yeah

[ ]

A: yeah

O: don't- ay, don't show this to Ehhrica, mehh heh heh I'm gonna be mackin' tomorrow I can't say

[ ]

R: ( )

O: nu'n 'bout weeble wobble.=

D: =.hhh Ohhhh=

O: =eh she got nothin' up here?
A: she does look like a weeble wobble.

[ ]

D: ay you know this tape gon' get out
you know this tape gon' get out one day.

[ ]

A: she got NO (.tits.=

75
D: =ten years from now, Scott gon' be like=
A: =I know(.)sex- sex, lying and videotape.
    [          ]
O: =Scott gon' b-
Scott gon' be mad at us and (                   )
    [          ]
D: =alright, alright
A: sex, lying and videotapes.
    (.1)
R: =ain't no lies, though=,
D: =like chill, one of us'll become a politician.
O: yep.
R: he's gonna use it against us, man=,
D: =scott, you dirty, man, you sc- heh hhhhh
O: ( )he's got his future made=,
A: =ay let's beat him down now, man, 'cuz you know
it's gon' happen.
O: let me unscrew it real quick.
    [          ]
R: =you know what?(.).Dawn had Dawn was goin' with
Jimmy for a little bit.
    (.)
D: Dawn?
A: Dawn who=,
O: =no. Dawn is like- okay, hold up-
D: ( )
R: not halitosis,
S: naw naw naw naw naw
A: na-aw, she got KNOCK-knees.
R: not halitosis,
O: she got knock-knees.
R: the otha one.
O: cute eyes? (.) big chin?
R: yeah, cute eyes.
O: with a big- HU:GE chin, though.
R: hu:ge chin (.4) trap jaw.
O: looks like a trap- look like a alien.
R: mask=
A: =da:ha:ng: he said trap jaw.
R: her name is
O: look like one of those machines ha: tuh tuh tuh=
R: =her name is mask from now on.
D: I did notice that about halitosis, how- the way
her knees are- turns in.
O: yeh.
D: I noticed that about her.=
O: =she's too tall, man, she looks like a BEANpole.
D: (h)they straight call (h)her (h)halitosis hhh
[ ]
O: she looks like one of them poles, man, if she wore a hat with a ball on it? you could play tetherball and be like "bing, bing, bing, bing girl's skinny, man=
R: =I don't care- b- I- I=
O: =serious, man
R: If push comes to shove, man, I would- I
[ ]
O: If she was
R: would mess with Dawn, man.
[ ]
O: taking a shower she'd go down the drain pipe and stuff, man.=
R: =I would mess with Dawn.
[ ]
D: (.3)
R: I would mess with Dawn.
[ ]
D:       hhhhh heh heh heh hah heh hhh heh hhh
        [                          ]
A:       hah hah hah hah .hhh heh heh hhh
        [                          ]
O:       she is ____________ too skinny, man.
R:       I don't what I'd do, man. (.4)
O:       she'd sit in one a them plush couches, get lost
        in the creases.
R:       I don't trust myself. (.3)
O:       except for that right there( )
        [                          ]
S:       ((mouth full))( )
R:       no, 'cuz I don't write letters, man
        [                          ]
D:       ____________ Jimmy,(.)could
        [                          ]
S:       tell you
D:       write the letter.
        [                          ]
S:       what, Rog( )
        [                          ]
A:       naw, don't let Jimmy write the letter,
dude, I mean Jimmy a homey and

[       ]

D:    hhh heh heh

everything, but don’t let him

[       ]

R:    Jimmy,

A:    write the letter, dude,

D:    hhhhh hhe

[       ]

R:    if you were my girl(.1) you remind me of a gla:ss.

A:    ehhhhHAH HAH HAH

(.)

R:    sometimes of a ba:ss.=

[       ]

A:    not j-

=not just any glass, a nice rounded coke bottle

[       ]

D:    now I need to kill myself

(.1)

A:    (h) heh .hhh heh

[       ]

D:    now I need to kill myself

A:    hh hah hah hh hhh

[       ]

R:    and float down the river
A: hah hah

[  ]

R: and the universe

D: hhh heh hhh

R: but it's CO:LD

D: hhhhh

R: so cold, I wanna HO:LD.

A: ehh hah hhh

R: but I got so:ld(.2)now it's time to go

[  ]

D: ( )'^hhh heh heh hh=

A: =but if you go I do not know because if you go I
will not do d- hhh

[  ]

R: man, I felt sorry for Jimmy

[  ]

A: no
punctu(h)ation, dude, heh heh=

R: =ay, I felt sorry for Jimmy, though, man, you
know why?(.1) 'cuz Jasmine was readin' and J-

Jimmy was like this an' Jasmine was showing it to
everybody I felt sorry for Jimmy he was like

ssssss

(.5)

A: that's- it's true, though.
Jasmine only, man, not everybody that's jacked, man,

I felt sorry for him, man=

that's why I like Jimmy=

we shouldn't be critical of people.

that's why I love Jimmy, man,

ay, man, you know we're just makin jokes about

if you put in a good word for me with what's her name, I'll put in a good word for you at school everyday, mang,

alright.

not- I mean don't hound her though 'cuz I know you'll go uh

I'm ^ not-
S: >then you'll be like< ay my man Scott uh ( )
[ ]
R: Del, do I talk to- do I talk to s- Kiki at school man be honest (.4)
R: I don't- I don't talk to her [ ]
S: ( )(.)just [ ]
O: ay, this mug is out of focus
S: bring her to church?,
R: uh-huh
S: just bring her to church?,
R: but that's hard to bring her to church every Saturday man that's a lot of work, mang,
[ ]
S: not every- not every- just this week
R: but den I can't do dat (just bring her once )
[ ]
O: ay, Scott,
this thing's out of focus- how d'you work it?
S: I'll- I'll pick her up in like a couple weeks.
R: know wh'I'm sayin?=  
O: =oh it's automatic focus.
A: it's auto focus.

D: yeah, it's automatic focus.

R: know wh'I'm sayin, (when you bring( )

O: ah, trip- I'm looking through the wrong eye- I'm sorry,

D: ehhhhh hah heh

R: (for the first couple of weeks)

O: no, I ain't got my glasses on.=

A: =h hhah hah hah hhh

R: know wh'I'm sayin'?(.).when you bring a girl to church, you don't just bring her one time and leave her (two weeks( )

S: naw, just bring her two weeks?(.),'first two weeks.

A: you try to convince her in the first two weeks(.). and if you can't, you just say, well look, um,

R: 'cuz some girls are like this( )I ain't goin.
A: yeah.
S: she can get- she said she can get a ride sometime, though.
(.1)
A: she doesn't drive?
R: naw(.2)she- sometime- I dunno.
S: she said she can get a ride with- like somebody from( )
[ ]
R: ( )>I couldn't believe she told me that< she said- she said I would like to get baptized.
(.4)
A: is that right?
(.2)
D: Kiki said that?
R: she told me, (I'm possibly changing my religion)
[ ]
O: ay
wipe your lip off, Del,
R: an- an-
D: what?
O: your lip- right there in the corner
R: and she was tellin me like- she said, yeah, you guys are nice and stuff she said I'd like to ( )
[ ]
O: didn't get it(.) there you go.

R: Scott, bring her to the church, man(.) now, for YOU, mang(.) she'll come every Saturday(.) she'll become another Jasmine and all dat(.) she looks like Jasmine, anyway.

S: she ain't that bad, man.

R: well, her eyes are like Jasmine

A: I know

D: similar, huh.=

S: =man, she don't look nu'n like Jasmine

R: naw, she looks=

D: =^how old is Jasmine, man?

R: like twelve

(.4)

A: ahh haa ha ha

D: hhh heh heh

[ ]

R: she's big, man
APPENDIX B: Group #2 - Guys in Car
(Segment 1)

A: I was at the Renaissance Fair? man, I saw (Shane Corrigan).
B: nu-uh,
A: yeah, he was there, I'm like(.) and he had a fine ol' girlfriend, dude,
   (1.1)
A: I was jus' like, hoo(.)(h)hhh heh heh .hhh(h)heh
   (.2)
B: ha ha ha
   (.4)
B: (Corrigan.(.)stand back)(h)heh heh

   [    ]
A: heh heh heh heh
   (.3)
A: no, but uhm(.2)(    )(.3)'cuz I guess he's an
   electrician an' shit now.
C: oh yeh?
A: yeah,
   (.3)
A: 's (even) like,(.)y'know it's like someone else we
   either can play volleyball with or do something, dude,
C: yep=
B: =(ah what th' heck is that)
C: ah, dude that was roadkill.
A: road pizza

C: don't say anything with food, I'm starving.

B: (h)hehh

A: dude, we went to (hang out- we went ) to Carl's Junior

C: ( )

A: this morning? for breakfast? With those y'know ( )

C: ( )

A: those're good, man,

B: eughh

C: eughh

B: I hate those things.

A: grub, man,

B: it's that syrup's all hot?

A: 'spose to be it's ( )
B: I didn’t like it.

C: I used to work there too, I didn’t like that either.

A: >hheh heh heh heh heh heh heh hhh<

B: you worked there for a day, motherfucker,=

A: =(h)(a da(h)y),

C: TWO DAYS.

B: my bad,

A: I (wouldn’t even) remember, du(h)ude, heh eh heh .hhh

C: ( ) heh heheh

C: I worked there the first day everything was cool the second day I came in an’ she was bein’ a bitch, so I left=

B: =an’ then the third day he just didn’t show up ↑( )

A: (h)hheh heh heh

C: ( )all, okay get up ‘n go to work I’m like naw, I’m not gonna work (h)anymore(h)heh heh heh .hhh

A: (h)heh heh .h

C: that’s the only place that I just quit on.
B: overnight decision- umm? nah I don’t think I’m a work today,.3) here you go Chris,.1)((imitating ex-
boss))FIVE DO:LLA ‡hheh heh heh heh heh .hhh .hhh
A: heh heh hahh hah hah
[     ]
C: heh heh heh he
A: she (   )
[     ]
B: (hheh heh heh heh
C: yeah she did, but she (  ) six bucks
A: oh hah heh heh heh .hhh
[     ]
C: heh heh heh
(1.9)
A: you’re gonna make your money on the week(ends)
[     ]
B: (   )
A: (h)heh heh heh
[     ]
C: hah hah hah .hhh .hh(.)she was pressin’ her luck
(.4)
A: (h)hhh
C: heh
B: (  )press your luck, bitch,
C: hey why- why- why you’re the only one who loses your lid, Tito, (.3)
B: no YOU lost my lid motherfucker, 
A: (h)hheh huh .hhh hhuh huh
C: they’re your balls, (1.9)
A: huh humh
C: ( ) but y’know, (.7)
B: fuckin’-
A: heh heh hah hah
C: an’ I know you’re not( )hheh heh heh
A: heh heh hah hah
B: (pinche) Vaughn today, man,
A: what’d he do (1.2)
B: .hhh I’m in the backroom with someone( )fuckin’ then
A: uh-huh
B: Vaughn comes up to the door 'cuz( )fuckin'
pounding on the door, like( )fuckin' all hell's about
to break loose=

A: =all he hears is(.)(h)hah hah hah hah hah hah
    [            ]
C:    huh huh huh

B: ((imitating))(we gotta go we gotta go)(.)(    )I opened
the door, an' Vaughn's like-gimme all your money,
motherfucker, aw you fuckin'(.)piece of(    )crap
    (    )
    [    ]
C: (    )'s jus' tryin' to get laid,(.)at work
(    ).

B: HAH hah .hh
    [    ]
A:    eh heh heh heh .hhh heh heh

(segment 2)

B: you guys like Goody, huh,=
C: =yehhh
    [    ]
A:    oh yeah, Goody- Goody's not a nip she's a- just a
girl to rock.
    (.3)
B: w- w- Goody got it-
    [    ]
C: (you’re not gonna look) at her face, dude,=
A: =yeah, Goody got it goin’ on

(segment 3)
A: ay park right there
 (.3)
B: park where- should I park over there or:, park right here by Vicki.
 (.5)
C: no
 [ ]
A: ↑fuck↓no. ↑park way over the↓fuck over there.  [ ]
B: ((singing))fuck the police.
 (.4)
C: you wanna do what?
B: fuck the police.=
C: =oh you’re nasty=
A: =all of ‘em?
C: oh Dave is here(.) Mr. Morrison is here.
 [ ]
A:  ( )
B: ugh, shut up, dude, don’t use that name,
APPENDIX C: Group #3 - Supper
(Segment 1)

A: (h)when me an' (Desmond) first started goin' there? (.3) there was this old guy. (.3) an' he used t- he used to pick up weights? (.3) an' jus' shake 'em

B: ha . hhh hhh (h) I re(h)member(h) that hhh . hhh

[ ]

A: he used to jus' shake 'em (.3) an' he had these uhh ankle bracelets on? (.9)

(1.3)

l- ninety years old an' he'd look like (.8)

(Spencer Fraily).

B: hhh (h) huh

A: and he'd jus' shake 'em (.3) an' there was this guy on the squat machine (.3) I mean the squat rack (.2) y' know the Smith machine or- whatever that is (.3) an' uhh he unloaded a whole side (.2) four plates (.3) unloaded all of it (.3) an' when he went to unload the other one, the wh- the whole thing (.1) you ever seen it happen?

B: mm hmm

[ ]

A: and it whipped over (.3) and came within this close

[ ]

96
B: hhh

A: of the guy. (.3) the uhh- the old guy. (.4) 
an' I thought that- an' this guy that(.) knocked it 
over- was a big guy- he went to apologize. (.4) an' he- (.4) 
the guy that was shaking those weights was like- 
started cussin' at 'im sayin'=

B: = (h)m= 

A: = ((imitating)) an' the next time you ever do that again 
I'm gonna kick your aaahhh heh heh hah hah 

[ ]

B: hhh mhh mhh mhh 

(1.9) 

A: uuookay, I thought it was funny 

[ ]

B: hhh heh 

C: hhh hmm hmm 

A: little skinny guy(.old guy he's the- (the one that(. you know who I mean) 

B: mhhhh 

[ ]

C: I've seen(.) he's the one that had, 

(2.1) 

sumthin', there's sumthin' wrong with him ah- he was
talkin' to one lady about (he had a bad)

(2.8)

D: a bad mouth

C: (h)hhh heh heh hhhexactly

[ ]

B: mhh heh heh

[ ]

A: heh heh heh hh

(.1)

C: sumthin' healthwise.

(Segment 2)

A: well Jim's not a big fan of Jennifer (either)

(.9)

B: how come

(1.8)

A: she works at the (other place) Lumberjack's?

B: uh-huh

A: and uhm she's the ( )receptionist

(.5)

and I called over there today for 'im and she answered

the phone

(.4)

an' um(.3) started acting ( )

(2.7)

'n when I talked to him(.)he's like
I'm sorry about that.

I'm like no:, I u- u- I understand (h)hh(.2)he's like next time just page me hhh(h)hh

(Segment 3)

B: Monty- third set

A: heh heh

B: ((imitating))>you guys think I should take my shirt off?<

A: (h)hhhhheh heh heh

B: say I: don't (h)care- no, don't take y- i- I didn't say nuthin'

((imitating))ta- I gotta get pumped up for this one h

HHHHH takes his shirt off, picks up the crow bar, just starts pumpin'( )

A: hhhhh heh heh

B: all these old guys are lookin' 'n(.)all the gramma are like ↑mmmm↓

A: (h)hhh huh heh huh .hhh
'cuz it was senior citizen day, you know,

heh heh heh

B: ten o'clock it's senior citizen time,

A: ehhhhh

B: you got all these eighty-year-olds in there (.)

A: did I tell you what your grandma said about my brother Dennis?

B: what's that (.4)

A: uhh after he did the (side dance)(.) uhh gramma Carol was like ((imitating))↑is that your brother?(.3) he's so: cu:te(.) ahhh I love your brother!

B: hhhhhehhh

A: an' uhh she said- she's like (.5)

↑if I was six months younger:

B: hhhhhhhh

A: he wouldn't have a chance↓
B: =(h)hhheh heh .hhh
A: I was jus' like what happened hheh heh [       ]
B: six months? Hhhheh [       ]
A: y(h)eah [       ]
C: hheh hehh
A: I was like ↑what?
C: (h)heh heh heh hee hee heehhh
B: ees funny (.4)
(Ferda)'d be like(.) (Ferda)'n(.) James(  ) fer her hand.
(3.8)
nah I don't think James'd (be interested)
A: hmmm hmmm [       ]
B: a little too old(for him)
O: this little girl kinda remind me of Pink, y’know,(.)
white girl with uhh-(.) but acts black kinda thing?
(.4)
down at the pool hall, she’s cool though.(.2) so I was
like whass(h)up Lonnie:, e’s like whassup man I said
when’d you- w(h)en’d you come in town, he’s like
(.4)
I: jus’ went for a drive an’ never sto(h)pped hhh=
D: =(h)ja(h)cked
O: .h (h)heh hehhh
D: THAT’S THE LIFE, MA:N?
O: went for a drive- he got a Infinity J thirty, y’know
D: chhhh
O: so he rolled down here he said I’ll-- he said I’ll
D: y’ mean a I thirty.
O: jus’ uhh, he said I rolled down,(.)went to the Marina
(1.1)
?: ((sneeze))
O: kicked it there for (so and so reason) an’ came out to
Colton.(.)but he’d jus’ stay at Rusty’s.
(.4)
O: so he called me up at the pool- s’we played pool up to
the,(.)to the wee hours of the night an' stuff, but
then his girl was kine a lookin' at him.(.)so y'know I
was like yeah

D: ↑it's time to go.

O: cuz' while he was shootin' I went to his girl I said
so how long you know na- Lonnie?(.)she goes, ahh, what
d(h)ay is (h)it? hhh .hhh I said that long, huh, she
goes yea(h)h hhh. (..)they probably met like two or
three days ago.(.)she was giving him the look so I
said alright, Lonnie,(.)he's like arright ma:n?

D: ( )

worked it ou:t:

O: s' like one o' clock in the morning we left

(1.1)

O: it's cool though man

(Segment 2)

O: I gotta go take that videotape back

(1.1)

O: run Lola run

(1.3)

D: run Lola run=

O: =for our video fest an' never saw it cuz', ran outta
t(h)ime
D:  hhh huh
(.3)
O:  five o’ clock in the morning we all went to go see the sunrise
(1.2)
O:  (‘cuz we we’re all) awake
(.9)
O:  Rob has a digital camera, dude
D:  hhehh
[   ]
O:  it’s like a three thousand dollar- he goes yeah I saved(.money I(.only spent seven hundred dollars
below cost
D:  thhh
O:  I’m like if cost,(.1)and you can go seven hundred
[   ]
D:  ehheh
O:  dollars below it=*
D:  =(h)ehhh
O:  even if it was seven hundred dollars he paid for it
it’s too much.(.3)which means cost’d be fourteen hundred an’ then the real price’ll be like two
[   ]
D:  (h)heheh
O:  thousand so you know the real price must be like
eight(.)grand or something I dunno what(.1)that fool's.

[    ]

D:  (h)hhh

O:  got a little money on him, though
APPENDIX E: Group #5 - Mechanics on the Job
(Segment 1)

A: so I heard Teri got married.

(.8)

B: (   )

[  ]

A: I missed out on that.

(.8)

I didn’t hear anything about that(.I)

(.5)

just happened to catch her on the phone last week,

(1.9)

B: o(h)hh

(.2)

A: what’d- did’ya hear about that?

(.1)

B: yeah(.)but before (h)everybody else did I w- I was
told to not tell anybody.

(.4)

A: r(h)eally?=

B: =but now everybody knows, so it’s okay.

[  ]

A: w(h)hy

that’s stup- that’s kine a st-(.3)stupid thing not to

[  ]

B: I dunno?
A: tell? (.3) they jus' went to Vegas an' got hitched, 

[   ]

B: well,

A: right? 

(.3)

B: I don't really know where they went. 

(1.3)

(actually?)

(.1)

A: yeah I think they just went to Vegas an' got hitched up. 

(1.8)

B: (really?)

(1.9)

B: yeah her name is ahh, (. ) Betzer.

(.1)

A: what? 

(.1)

B: Betzer? 

(.3)

A: 's that her name? Betzer? (.2) huh we'll hafta get some good jokes to go along with that? 

B: well I've already came up with one, all bets're off? 

Y'know? (  )

[   ]
A:  hhh heh heh heh heh heh heh .hhh .hhh ((cough))
    ((snort)) (h)heh heh=
B:  =I already told her that one,
    (.9)
A:  all bets’re off.
    (3.4)
B:  (   )
A:  hafta remember that(.w)ell you g-(.3)oh well(.3)it’ll-
    eventually you’ll break sump’n else an’ then (to get
    the part it’ll be) another week,
    (1.2)
    you havin’ problems, Phil?
    (Segment 2)
A:  where’re you gonna watch the game at
    (.6)
B:  ahh I think I hafta go ta Hemmit.
A:  hhh heh heh heh heh heh heh .hhh hhh heh heh
    ((cough)).hhh who’s ahh- who’s working’ on ya?
    (.9)
B:  Tim wants me ta come over to his house,=
    [   ]
A:  Tim                     =oh(h)hh heh
    heh heh .hhh
    [   ]
B:  an’ I don’t have any desire to do tha:t?
A: 

heh heh heh heh heh .hhh hehhhh hh heh .hhh

B: 

er(h)eally but I don't wanna

be rude, so(.2) anyway(.) man this thing((knocking))

A: 

(h)heh

well come on o(h)ver to our house if you wa(h)nt .hhh

we’re gonna- we’re probably gonna actually turn the

game on hhh heh heh heh heh .hhh
APPENDIX F: Group #6 - Dinner Conversation
(Segment 1)

M1: uhm(.)yeah so Aaron was showin' a picture of- of Jen an' I to his fiancé (.4)
M1: ( )engaged
    [ ]
F2: he has a fiancé?
M1: yeah=
M2: =who=
F2: =no way
    (.)
M2: who=
M1: =Aaron=
F2: = ( )
M2: (Bilko?)
M1: yes
    [ ]
F1: yes
M2: ( )
    [ ]
M1: ( .)yeah(.2)he was in Korea like three weeks an' got engaged.
F2: well imagine that
M2: to a Korean?
M1: ( )
M2: how much did he pay for her engaged in Korea.

M1: =she's a liberal.

F2: (apparently) he met an Asian woman. an' now they've been uh

M1: and uh- an' so she wants

M2: a white man

M1: yeah (I guess) she likes- she likes American- American

F2: ( )for the past five or six months
M1: whites so
   (.2)
M2: an' he wanted a geisha, so
   (.1)
M1: yeah(.1)I mean y'know he went over there lookin'.(.1)
     ( )he showed a picture of- of Jen an' I to her an'-
     an' his wife thought I was forty.
     [ ]
F2: ( )
   (.6)
F2 .hhh .hhh .hhh
     [ ]
M1: because I was losin' my hair.
     [ ]
F1: ( )
M1: an' so- n' so he showed like a picture of me but he[...
F2: ( )
M1: covered up like ( )like twenty five, twenty four
     ] [ [ ]
F2: ) .hhh .hhh .hhh
      ( )
     [ ]
M1: ( )look from the head up an he's like forty.
M2: ( )like fifty
M1: uhhh(I appreciated that)(.2)three weeks(.)got engaged.
(.3)
F2: nuthin’?
(1.3)
M1: uhm, let’s see JEN WHEN DID AARON CALL US to say he
was engaged? like a month? month an’ a half?
F1: not- yeah like a month?
(.2)
M1: four weeks(.)four weeks- five weeks

F2: (TODD)WE WERE ENGAGED FOR SIX WEEKS AN’ GOT
MARRIED.(.)arright? so I don’t see

F1: yeh but he was in a country.
F2: (h)( )hh hh

M1: ‘s weird?
F1: met somebody an’ then( )
F2: I know. we met each other (around Easter)

M1: ( )live happily ever after.
(1.1)
Aaron- Aaron’s summation of Korea(.)(

F2: we were only(.)
together for about six weeks before we got married, so

(Segment 2)

F1: y'know? he's so old, that you don't think about
    that(.2)he seems like a young guy.

M2: who

F1: Willie Nelson

[          ]

F2: Willie Nelson

M2: oh

(.4)

he(    )tax evasion himself

F1: (h)hh

(.8)

M1: hey(.)it's not tax evasion if- if you don't get caught

(.2)

M2: (h)ha ha

(1.8)

M1: it's **TRUE**(.3)when's the last time you heard about a
tax evader

(1.1)

that wasn't caught

F2: MM HMM(.)when's the last time you heard about

(1.1)
an embellisher(.2)that wasn't caught

M1: an embellisher?
(1)

F2: not-
M2: embezzler?
F2: embezzler.(.)I'm sorry,
M1: hhh eh eh ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah

[   ]    [   ]
F2: okay. Everybody says

[   ]
M2: (criminal)

embezzler( ) y'know it's our jobs.

[   ]    [   ]
M1: heh heh heh heh heh heh heh

[   ]
F2: why: do people, why do people embellish. should- er- embezh-

M1: =embezzle. (   )

[   ]    [   ]
F2: embezzle.(.)they're jus' gonna get caught(.).well here's the deal,(.)maybe we never caught the people

[   ]
M1: (   )
F2: who embezzle.

(.3)
M2: mm hmm
F2: I mean think about how many people (won).(.)e-embezzled
any(.).like(  )

[  ]

M2: (  )

M1: (  )never embezzled anything.(.)

[  ]

F2: aright, think about how many years a lot of people have-(why’re you send me this again(.1)I already did that)

(1.6)

think about how(.).many people must’ve embezzled.(.) I mean fer how many years. the people that got caught how many years were they embezzling. if they had quit the first year they woulda been millionaires ‘n(.) whatever

(2.1)

mm- how many- how many people did we miss.

[  ]

M1: .hhh .hhh

F2: think about it.

(.8)

shutup then

(.4)

M1: there was a- there was a guy I know who used to go to our chu:rch.

(.)
F2: hmm

M1: rich. I mean j- guy was just loaded
   (1.1)

M2: his name was Rich?
   (.4)

M1: Rich (Logan).

M2: Rich Loaded.

M1: Rich Loaded.(.)Rich Loaded=

M2: (h)hh =I’m loaded?

M1: Rich?(.)Loaded?(.1)uhm,
   (1.1)
   and he was- he was embezzling. He was a ah(.).ah ahm
   (2.1)
   stock keeper: book keeper fer:- fer people ( )
   has people that work for like NBC news: an’ rock stars
   an’ stuff like that
   (.4)

F2: but he must’ve got caught
   (.2)

M1: no he- he actually turned himself in which I- I quite
   haven’t figured out why he did that,
   (.4)
   uhm unless he had money in like Swiss bank accounts.
but uh

F2: what'd he feel guilty, or something?

M1: I dunno(.)he just turned himself in(.)I guess he was afraid of jail,

I mean he was six seven 'bout three hundred pounds so he didn’t have much to

w- I dunno(.)he turned himself in for whatever reason

F2: (I mean) what was he thinking(.)it’s like you got away with it what’s your problem(.)hh y’know how easy it is to get away with embe- embezzling?

M1: if you don’t get caught (maybe)

M2: even if you do get caught an’ go to prison you’ll be sent to prisons they put embezzlers in?(.3)like(.)the rich ones?

F2: no ‘cause

M2: like you see the prison they put Milliken in?

(Segment 3)

M1: yeh but I dunno- I can’t imagine she’d be happy at
Chaffey. I mean gosh- she's like i- she's got an administrative an' a: teaching role, at (Oberlin).

F2: (are you talking

M1: an' she's gonna go:(.)to Chaffey.(.3)and be happy.

F2: about )

is that(.)(  )?

(.3)

M1: no no no ahm(.)rum- rumor- rumor's been confirmed by another source that- source that it was (ol')Michael White's wife that was applying for the position of dean over at Chaffey College.

(3.8)

M2: (ol')Michael White?

(.)

F2: very interesting

(.9)

M1: yeh

(.7)

M2: okay what movie?(.2)was this song played in?
APPENDIX G: Group #7 - After-Work Chat
A: what'd you think about that(.)I mean(.)the conversation (.4)

B: Alright a- it was,- it was ni- he w- he was kinda(.)((sniff)) rattling on in a sort of uhm (.3)

A: typical Greek way

B: yeh bravado way, y'know, (1.1)

((imitating))>we could do this we could do that< but ah(.)y'know, (1.3)

every time I meet him there's some (.4)

light at the end of the tunnel. like last t- he didn't 'n- 'n the thing about Nick is (.9)

in the next conversation I have with him he never mentions what he w- the thing that was gonna save him the last time I talked to him.(.3)like the last time I

A: oh.

B: talked to him was right after we(.) (financed)our ginentech deal.(.) an' he wanted to know all the
details of how the structure( )and I asked him [ ]

A: mm hmm yeah yeah

B: why’re you so(.)interested in this. says well right now,(.) so this was uhms- first er second week in January.

(1.2)

he was about to conclude a deal with (amjen).

(1.2)

he thought.(.)they were real close, y’know, exchanging

A: ((clears throat))

B: term sheets an’ he was gonna structure very much like this, we went through(.1)page by page,(.)in the marketing section my agreement.

(1.1)

uhm,(.)and I explained him all the details of how we arrived at what we arrived at

(1.5)

and, uh he said well you pro- you shouldn’t uh m- mention anything to anybody but uh this deal we’ll close with them or somebody else within the next two months

(1.5)

well nuthin’ happened

(1.6)
an' so when I started talkin' to 'im(. ) this morning
he- he doesn't even mention it.
(1.1)

an' I said hey Nick by the way
(.6)
don't you remember we talked about that (amjen) deal
what happened he says
(.5)

((imitating))well?(. )y'know?(. )they're like a big
company?(.3)y'know?
(.4)

uh-(.3)they just uh,(. ) have committees? committees?
committees? y'know? an' you think you have a deal with
the boss? 'n no? you don't have a deal?
(.5)

uhm,
(.5)

and uhh, eventually: they wanted to market the product
all themselves.
(.6)

an' >I said no<(. )it's not- ehh >we can't do this.<
(.8)
y'know? .hh we have to send(. )(some rule in
marketing)(. )((end of imitating voice)). hhh and,
that- that *can’t* be the full story.(.1) but anyway 
that’s what he told me the full story was ‘n so . hhh 
(ämjen) walked(.2) well, 
(1.6)
you woulda given up the marketing rights. t- to ‘im t’ 
get the money(.y’know? t’ save the c(h) o mpany but . hhh 
so that h- he never gives me the full story
A: i- so you’re saying(.)that *can’t* be,
(.5)
B: *can’t* be the full story

[A: it’s such an obvious thing that- to say
(y’know?)

[B: yeah(.2) I mean
(.5)
he(.) doesn’t conclude the deal, an’ then he walks out
the door. sounds to me like he didn’t conclude the
deal an board said WHAT(.3) you did WHAT
(1.9)
an’ I think th- they asked him to(.t)ake a walk, so,

[A: ohhhh
I think (it’s been too long ‘n they’re thinkin’) 

(1.8)
you're losin' touch

(2.1)

'n he- 'n he hasn't built a strong team((sniff)) he said today that there's an announcement going out about(.) additional changes in their senior management structure? he's firing his CFO or sumthin' like that 'n(.). hhh(.) he's(.) making some other changes, to get ready for a new CEO(.). hhh(.) ahm hhh but y'know he's rolled through people like nobody's business (over the years). remember Dick Schneider worked for him?

A: he's done what(    )

[    ]

B: he's rolled through people like y'know

[    ]

A: he's

rolled through people.

B: I mean,

A: ohhh.

B: eah(.) you know(.) ah y'remember Dick Schneider now Dick

[    ]

A: yeah

B: was a l- bad guy too

A: yeah

B: no- no- I d- shouldn't say too I don't think Nick's a bad guy but
y'know there was bad judgement real bad judgement. to

[ ]

A: yeah

B: put a, (.3) first of all, (. ) I don't think he needed a
COO at that time

A: uh huh

(.4)

B: 'n to pick that guy,

(.4)

'n then take a three month vacation in Greece,

(.4)

n- (. ) bad move. (. ) (. )

[ ]

A: yeah

(.3)

B: . hhh uhm (.2) ((clears throat)) an' then

(1.1)

oh he's- he's had many people in his- (head
of) pharmaceutical formulation research that (have-)
haven't worked out, one guy that worked at (sintex)
(.2) then at ginentech that we had checked out an' he
had an incredibly bad

(.7)

reputation with managing people he hired him as his
head of(.3)pharmaceutical formulation research 'n
A: well you know w- i- I wonder- I mean somebody like
him.
(4)
y’know he’s so flamboyant.
(4)
B: yeh
A: in his personal characteristics=
B: =((sniffs))
A: do you know any other people like that
(4)
with those kind of personal characteristics(.)who were
successful at managing a company?
(2.2)
I mean he doesn’t s- y’know I mean he doesn’t strike
[
]
[ ]
B: ummm not really, no
A: you as- he doesn’t st- give me a lot of confidence.
(4)
A: it seems like it’s all:(.)external flash an’ show.
[
]
B: oh is that right? Hmm show? yeah yeah
(6)
B: .hhh †well I think th- I think there is basically his,
his fundamental personality.
130
and his Greekness.

really, uh, are, dominant but they’re *real* y’know it’s not like he’s, that’s a show-

A: yeah =right=

B: =but then,

I think he like- when he *talks* to me he feels he needs to

*talk up* the story, ‘n(.make it bigger than life, ‘n(. hhh uhm tell me, okay ((imitating))>just wait you’ll see< jus’ t- y’know >couple more years ‘n we’ll sh- we’ll show them< (.1) that we: spent more time, doing the *real* hard work(.getting our formulation *exactly* right(.an’ there’s a big deal about ( ) the product it was a very hard technical problem. >they *solved* it< (.y’know >the beautiful formulation.<

an’ that was gonna solve all their problems. ↑well↓ that was just the beginning of their problems. ‘n(. he always kinda glosses over things, so(.)that may be
where the lack of confidence comes as you—when you listen to 'im you're sayin'

(1.1)
yeah he's(. flamboyant an' y'know?(1) uhm has this Greek- this, heavy Greek accent (.5)
but(.) maybe he's- he's fundamentally (.4)
a: good guy? (.y'know(. intelligent(. y'know(. hhh
trying hard but- an' he- he was trying ver- I m- fourteen years(. the guy was- had perserverance(. the guy cared about his company?

[ ]

A: mmmmm

A: yeah

B: he founded it

A: yeah

B: ahm(. but I just think he exercised very poor judgement about people?(2). hh I think he f- he foo-
because of his bravado an' his, uh

[ ]

A: mm hmm

(.5)

B: his need to(. play things up to more than they are,
he tended to fool himself about what
it was gonna take, how much money he was gonna need=

A: mm hmm

(.5)

B: but- but I think when I look back, an' I look at the number of bad management decisions he made

(.9)

and how few pe- how eh- he doesn't have anybody in that company

(.4)

to replace him

(.3)

A: yeah but you don't have anybody to replace you

(.7)

B: well I mean somebody could,(.)I mean(.)like ahh(.)for example Arlene could.

(1.1)

ahm

(1.1)

I mean actually Elliot could.

(.9)

if he wanted to work harder b(h)h
A: (but) if you want to change his(. basic personality

B: (h)hhh heh heh heh(.)ahm (John an' them) would like to think he could but ()

[    ]

A: no.(.)eh- n- Arlene could

B: yeah.(.)Arlene definitely could.

A: yeah

B: (Lewicky) actually has the respect of people to be able to do it but he has doesn't have any(.)presence in front of the investment (committee to do it)
REFERENCES


