UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

School of Education

Gendered Discourse in Practice: An Exploration of Language and Professional
Identity in Managers in the Further Education Sector

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education

August 2014

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

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ABSTRACT

GENDERED DISCOURSE IN PRACTICE: AN EXPLORATION OF LANGUAGE AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN MANAGERS IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR

One of the most enduring issues in the area of women and management is the concept of the glass ceiling. This thesis explores whether there is still a persistence of attitudes that place women in an antithetical position to executive power, by examining how men and women construct their professional identities or representations of themselves as managers through their discourse. The research considers whether women use language differently in carrying out their management tasks, i.e., in ways that reflect their feminine social identities. Further, the study focusses on determining whether some women disqualify themselves from senior management posts by the way in which they construct their identities. The assumption underpinning the thesis is that the discourse used by managers to create their professional identities presents clues to the values, attitudes and beliefs of managers within the organisation, a further education college.

Analysis of the data revealed evidence for three main gendered discourses at play in the further education college under discussion: (1) some women downplay their authority; (2) they prefer a collaborative, team-based approach to management; and (3) they make reference to differentiating their management behaviours to demonstrate care and concern for individual circumstances.

There is evidence that some women bring valuable skills to the workplace, particularly in the areas of a potential people-focussed, supportive style that nurtures and develops staff, as well as their emotional literacy and sensitivity to the face needs of others. However, the deferential demeanour and use of mitigating language can make some women appear to be hesitant, unsure and sometimes unclear as managers; the performative identity constructed through this type of discourse is potentially one of uncertainty, and this demeanour could conceivably disadvantage some women in terms of advancement or promotion.

While the findings may not be fully transferable to other contexts, the study makes an empirical contribution to knowledge in offering the conclusions as relevant material to inform the conceptualisation of management development programmes and to develop existing managers in the further education sector.

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Jill Lueddeke, declare that the thesis entitled

Gendered Discourse in Practice: An Exploration of Language and Professional Identity in Managers in the Further Education Sector

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.

- I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Signed:

Date: 19th August 2014

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Jacky Lumby, for her unfailing encouragement and support throughout this project. Thank you for your ongoing interest, advice and generosity in sharing your knowledge and insights, as well as your 'gentleness' in guiding me back to the right track when I had strayed too far.

My husband has survived the reading of many drafts of parts of this thesis and I am, as always, indebted for the unwavering love and encouragement that he has provided throughout this lengthy process. My children and life work: Sara, Christina, Katrina, Lisa and John, as well as my grandchildren, Eva and Matthew, are all inspirational. They have persistently encouraged the completion of this work. Thank you for your humour, your insights and your teasing. You keep me very grounded.

My colleagues at Forestside College have also been a source of support; in particular, the Principal. Thank you for your ongoing, unreserved support and permission to conduct the study. Other colleagues agreed to be recorded in meetings and to be interviewed. The time that you donated, as well as your support, were very much appreciated and contributed to bringing this thesis to fruition. I believe that some of the findings have contributed to our understanding of how managers frame their talk and construct their identities.

Chapter One

Introduction

There has been much sociolinguistic research (Coates 2004; Tannen 1994, 1996, 2001; Trudgill 2000; Lakoff 1975 and 2004; Holmes et al 2003; Cameron 2008; Mullaney 2007; Priola 2004) to suggest that women use language differently from men to signal their social status. In fact, Lakoff (1975) argued that 'women were using language which reinforced their subordinate status; they were 'colluding in their own subordination' by the way they spoke' (Holmes 2013: 301). Kendall (2004:76) posits that in everyday interaction people focus on role construction rather than gender identity: 'situations in which women and men consciously choose language options to create femininity and masculinity are rare. Moreover, according to Cameron and Kulick (2003: 58)

> *The same way of speaking signifies both a professional identity and a gendered identity, and in practice these are difficult to separate.*

It is therefore conceivable that people could *unconsciously* blur the professional and gendered identities in the workplace. Using the well-researched concept that some women might be 'colluding in their own subordination' as a starting point, the study focuses upon the management language of managers as enacted in meetings and in interviews and explores the means by which both male and female managers construct their management identities *at work*, in this case, in a further education (FE) college in the post-compulsory education and training sector in the UK.

The Further Education sector is in a period of difficult, unprecedented change, and, since the mid-nineties, there has been a growing and sustained emphasis on managerialism, competition and productivity (Randle and Brady 2006: 126). According to Pollitt (1990) this 'managerialism' constitutes a style of management characterised by strict financial management, emphasis on productivity, the development of consumerism and market driven forces, accountability, performance-related pay, the assertion of managerial control and the managers' right to manage (in Randle and Brady 2006: 125). Forestside College is subject to the political and economic pressures that gave rise to the concept of 'managerialism'. For the purpose of this thesis, 'managerialism' is distinct from 'management' in that the former sets the context in which the latter operates.

Over the past ten years, successive governments have attempted to reform the further education sector. In November, 2005, Sir Andrew Foster in the Foster Report recommended a new workforce development strategy for FE, 'incorporating leadership development and succession planning' (Constantine-Simms et al 2007: 7). Further, in 2006 the then DfES in its paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances*, 'committed to support workforce development' (DfES 2006).

> *We will promote greater equality and a more diverse workforce…Too many minority groups continue to be under-represented, especially at senior levels, and face barriers to progression in the sector.* (Constantine-Simms et al 2007: 7)

The combined effect of the Foster Report and the DfES policy paper was to 'create a climate in which gender and leadership issues can be taken forward creatively' (Constantine-Simms et al 2007:7).

More recently, the Government set out its vision for additional reforms to the Further Education (FE) and Skills System in *New Challenges, New Chances* (BIS 2011: 3). This vision places students at the heart of the system and collates the need for partnership working between business, industry and FE to reform the post-16 offer in England. Other aspects of reform include strategic governance through partnership working with other stakeholders, such as Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to take the lead in developing delivery models (BIS 2011: 4).

There is thus an extremely high level of change within the FE sector: change in curriculum; change to skills-led, employer-influenced programmes; increased demand for responsiveness to market forces and changes in the way that FE providers work with government and associated agencies. All of this change must be managed, and the degree of change has placed and will continue to place significant demands on managers at all levels in the FE sector. At this time, it is more critical than ever that all management talent is available to support the College in working through the government agenda for further education.

The College

Forestside College (a pseudonym) is a further education college on the south coast of England.   The College employs 358 full-time equivalent staff and in 2010 had a total annual operating budget of approximately £23 million; in 2013/14 that budget had

been reduced to £21.8 million, thus evidencing the impact of the austerity cuts and the demands that colleges 'do more, for less'.

Over the past ten years, the College has developed its profile as a successful organisation. The quality of the College's adult learning and skills work was recognised in the Chief Inspector's Annual Report in November 2004, when the College was one of only two colleges nationally to be recognised for high quality and wide-ranging adult learning and skills provision.

Since the current Principal assumed her tenure in 2008, an on-going, whole-college development process to move the College forward from 'Good' to 'Great' has meant that everyone in the organisation has had the opportunity to convey his/her views through a series of annual initiatives to make improvements and take the organisation forward. The College senior management team encourages grassroots leadership to grow out of the expert power bases of the organisation, as evidenced by their willingness to invite individual members of staff to present on given topics at Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings, with a view to influencing both policy and practice. So far, this supportive and consultative approach appears to have worked well: the College has achieved Beacon College status and received outstanding Ofsted reports. The College's 2009 Ofsted inspection report confirmed the College's work to be of outstanding quality. All categories of inspection, including Leadership and Management, were awarded a Grade 1: Outstanding. The College is currently awaiting re-inspection to confirm this previous grading.

The College also received a significant mention in the top ten of the *The Sunday Times' 75 Best Places to Work in the Public Sector 2010,* where it was noted that staff (at 71% - the highest score among all 75 public bodies) have 'an exceptional regard for managers'. In this survey, '71% of respondents were confident in the leadership skills of their boss.'   The male/female ratio is 30:70 and there is a relatively low rate of staff turnover at 4% (Thomas 2010). This organisation, therefore, with apparently high levels of management expertise, would appear to be fertile ground for exploring management discourse to determine how managers construct their professional identities.

Since 2010 and in response to Government funding cuts and general austerity measures within the sector, there has been an increased emphasis within the College

on managing the effects of the external changes. For example, a programme of voluntary redundancy in 2012 encouraged approximately 75 members of teaching and support staff to leave the College. The introduction of a professional performance review process, which replaces the former College appraisal system, potentially signals a significant shift towards a more performance-managed approach to encourage compliance, as the tensions between reduced funding and increased demand are exacerbated.

Language and Gender in the Workplace

According to a number of researchers (Mullaney 2004; Tannen 2009; Coates 2004; Lakoff 2006), masculine speech norms are given higher value in the workplace because of the longstanding social tradition of the male as worker and breadwinner. While studies on language and gender in the workplace have previously been carried out in business or higher education contexts, this study seeks to establish whether the potential differences referred to in the literature can be observed in a further education management context.

Previous studies on language and gender in the workplace have been critiqued for over-generalising and perpetuating gender stereotypes, and workplace language is itself under-investigated (Mullany, 2004). This study seeks not to confirm outmoded stereotypes, but rather to gauge how managers construct their identities and then to analyse patterns of discourse in action to determine whether there are differences; the starting point for this investigation is the linguistic strategies of the managers.

Gender differentiation in language arises because language is closely intertwined with social attitudes and social conditioning.

> *Men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different behaviour patterns from them. If the social roles of men and women change, as indeed they are with the growing numbers of women in management, then it is likely that gender differences in language will change.* (Trudgill 2000: 80)

Further, Alvesson and Billing (1997: 98) posit that the search for legitimate social identities for women (as wife, as mother, as career woman, as daughter, and so on) cannot deviate too far from the traditional view of femininity associated with sexual attractiveness and family orientation; hence, women's use of language must

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continue to be considered to be 'feminine'. However, Holmes and Schnurr (2006:32) suggest that 'the distinction between the two types of social identity is not always easy to make, especially when particular linguistic features are associated with more than one kind of identity (e.g. masculinity and leadership, femininity and subordination/server status' (Coates and Pichler 2011: 316).

Collinson and Collinson (1997: 402) go so far as to suggest that 'women managers at all hierarchical levels will only survive if they follow the example of most of their male counterparts'; this approach could be seen to be at odds with the social expectation of women being feminine. Atwater et al (2004: 191) note that 'attitudes are becoming more positive toward female managers', suggesting some degree of change in more recent years.

A corollary of this type of statement could certainly be that women mitigate their discourse in order to accomplish their goals and objectives in enacting their management roles. An assumption underpinning this research explores whether women managers differentiate their discourse when they are in discussions with other managers to maintain congruency with their social roles, or whether, as Collinson and Collinson suggest, they 'ape' the discourse patterns of their male colleagues (1997: 402).

It was interesting to explore through this study whether the language of women managers reflected their awareness (both implicit and explicit) of the socio-economic barriers and whether their discourse perpetuated their 'caring' social roles, as identified by Trudgill (2000: 80). Do women disqualify themselves from some roles and responsibilities because they define their identities in different social roles, i.e., as wives and mothers who do a bit of teaching, rather than as professionals who happen to have caring responsibilities? Moreover, it remains to be seen whether women compete with men or whether they choose to work in a way that more closely reflects their social identities as women. Their discourse is a potential key measure of these internal attitudes.

> *Women have a confidence problem – 'men think they can do a job even when they can't'. Men can talk up their experience – women need to project and talk up as well.* (Constantine-Simms et al 2007: 45)

Certainly this statement appears to suggest a difference in how men and women use discourse to establish their identities in the workplace.

The Problem

While the number of women in management across both business and education is on the rise, Whitehead (2001; in Priola 2004: 21) notes that '…in higher education, as well as in business, men and masculine values are dominant', and it would appear that women are still somewhat behind men in terms of representation in leadership and management positions. 'Statistics show that men represent the majority of academic staff (in the UK men represent 63% of the academic staff and occupy the most senior academic and managerial positions' (Priola, 2004: 421). Unsurprisingly, 'only 7 per cent of universities worldwide' are managed by women. It is interesting that in one HE institution cited by Priola 'most of the administrative support staff are women and approximately a third of the academics are women' (Priola 2004: 422). Priola (421) also notes that 'inequalities are often revealed by numerical discrepancies between men and women in certain positions (e.g. managerial)'.

The literature and data on women managers in the post-16 sector is somewhat limited. However, the gender imbalance at the highest level is confirmed in the Further Education sector where women make up 63% of female staff in management positions, but many of these are in first and middle management. This figure is predictable, 'given that the number of female staff outnumbers male staff by nearly 2:1' (Constantine-Simms et al 2007: 11).

> *It is significant that in the post-16 sector women are found predominantly in middle and first line management, especially as programme or curriculum managers, where statistics show that they comprise 50 to 60% of this level of the workforce.* (Lifelong Learning UK, 2005; Utting, 2006, in Constantine-Simms et al 2007:8)

In general, the analysis of data supplied by the Association of Colleges (AoC) indicated, however, that women constitute a considerably higher proportion of the principals in further education than in their commercial counterparts (Constantine-Simms et al 2007:9). Nevertheless, it is also of note that the 'few sectors in which women account for 50% or more of managers are in fields of work dominated by women overall, including education, health and social services' (Constantine-Simms

et al 2007: 9).

Women are indeed making progress. Recent workforce data on the FE sector from 2009-10 (LLUK 2011: 45) reported that 41% of Principals were women, demonstrating a positive trend from 2005, when women held only 25% of Principals' posts. At second management tier (reporting to the most senior manager), 46% of postholders nationally are women (LSIS 2013: 13); however, at Forestside College, while the Principal is a woman, 100% of senior (second tier) managers are men, somewhat different from the national profile. The senior manager group is one of only two occupational groups (the other is 'technical staff') where male staff members continue to outnumber female staff (LSIS 2013: 13). Thus, while there have been improvements nationally, the trends identified below in 2007 (Constantine-Simms et al 2007: 4) are still extant at Forestside College:

- Women are over-represented in first line management roles as course co-ordinators and heads of department.
- Women continue to be under-represented at senior management levels.

Participation of women in management roles at Forestside College is mostly limited to first and middle-management roles, usually with a curriculum focus. As women continue to be under-represented at senior management level, we must ask whether there is some mechanism within the organisation that discourages women from aspiring to positions on the senior management team or that inhibits their appointment or, indeed, whether women themselves construct identities that do not signal their aspiration to become potential senior managers.

Notwithstanding the fact that representation of women in senior management roles is increasing, it is interesting to note that '50 per cent of the general FE colleges in England judged Outstanding by Ofsted are led by women and 46 per cent of the principals leading the 26 member colleges of the 157 Group[1] are women' (Women's

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[1] Note: The 157 Group was established in March, 2006, in response to the recommendations of Sir Andrew Foster in his report 'Realising the Potential'. The purpose of the group is to provide opportunity for '…a greater involvement of principals in national representation…' It was felt that 'there is a strong need for articulate FE College principals to be explaining the services they give to society and how colleges can make a significant contribution to the economy and to developing fulfilled citizens.'

Leadership Network, 2009). There is thus some evidence to suggest that women are effective in senior management roles. Arguably, in times of significant economic and legislative change and with increasingly high levels of demand placed on managers, the low representation of women on the senior management team at Forestside College could represent a loss of potential talent to the College.

Why the Lens of Language?

Considerable research has been carried out on gender stereotypes as they pertain to management, as well on the differences between the management styles or behaviours between men and women. In general, these studies have shown very few differences (Atwater et al 2004:191). However, researchers have explored attitudes that individuals hold toward women in management roles and found that although attitudes are becoming more positive toward female managers, employees are still more likely to say that they would rather work for a man (Atwater et al 2004: 191). Importantly, most traits associated with management are still generally considered to be masculine (Brenner, Tomkiewicz & Schein, 1989). Finally, men see management as more traditionally masculine in nature than do women, and men generally react less favourably to female managers than do women (Atwater et al 2001 and Atwater et al 2004).

Researchers continue to try to understand the factors that may restrict women's rise to higher management positions. From the discussion above, it can be seen that there is still persistent under-representation of women at senior management level at Forestside College. Notwithstanding the importance of language and discourse in the leadership and management arena, there are also other factors that contribute to the much-debated glass ceiling on women's progression in the workplace. As discussed in the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) report (Constantine-Simms et al 2007: 32) on gender-related factors hindering career progression:

> *Family concerns formed the biggest factor acting as a hindrance to the career progression of women followed by lack of experience. Also widely seen to be important were: lack of skills; social attitudes; lack of confidence and career breaks.*

There is a paucity of research on the mechanisms through which the under-representation of women at senior management level is enacted. Arising from the

researcher's longstanding interest in sociolinguistics and influenced by the literature, which suggests that language is one method by which people construct a professional identity, the researcher explored whether language use could be a factor in the under-representation of women at senior management level. The study adopts a critical sociolinguistic approach to analyse the relationship between the use of language and the construction of management identity and how others might interpret those identities, possibly leading to a loss of management talent. Several researchers (Connell 1995; Cameron 1997; Edley and Wetherell 1997; Johnson and Meinhof 1997; Kiesling 1998, 2004; Coates 2003; Bell and Major 2004) have examined the concept of masculinity and 'masculinities' (Holmes and Schnurr 2006: 31). There has been rather less attention paid to 'the multiplicity of femininities' (Eckert and McConell-Ginet 2003: 48), particularly the dynamic ways in which people construct different kinds of femininity in social interaction in different contexts. This research project contributes directly to this discussion by analysing some of the dynamic, discursive strategies used by managers to construct and negotiate their management identities in a college in the further education sector.

Indeed, the concept of 'femininity', has been associated with demureness, deference, and lack of power and influence (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 16, 184; Lakoff 2004).

> *Femininity invokes a stereotype, and it is a negative one for many feminists, and a problematic and uncomfortable one for many academic women*
> (Holmes and Schnurr 2006: 31)

One might ask whether women who construct their identities through their use of language in a more feminine manner might be disadvantaged through association with a negative stereotype. The concepts of demureness, deference and lack of power and influence, if enacted through language, could potentially reinforce the stereotype of femininity, rather than construct the professional female identity and thus work against a woman manager. Hence, this research project focusses on dynamic management discourse, to determine whether the language reveals aspects of femininity or femaleness in role identity.

Purpose of the Study

Evidence from gender and workplace studies suggests that the manner in which individuals use discourse to construct their identity can determine their place in an organisation. The aims of this study are multiple: (1) to discover the nature of the discourse patterns of women managers, particularly with respect to how they construct identity and enact their authority; (2) whether these discourse patterns differ significantly from those used by men in the context of post-compulsory education management; and (3) whether there are gendered discourses at play in the organisation.

Mullany (2007) concluded that the dominant discourse of hegemonic masculinity reinforces and reproduces the discourse of gender difference and actively works against women in the workplace. Given data suggesting that women are still under-represented at the highest levels of management and there is some evidence for this statement (see earlier discussion on representation), it might be beneficial for women in the further education sector to become more cognisant of how their discourse is perceived and how their use of language might support or inadvertently inhibit their enactment of their management roles.

The purpose of the research therefore is threefold: to discover the nature and style of the discourse patterns of managers in terms of constructing identity within their management roles; to determine whether these discourse patterns differ significantly between men and women in the context of post-compulsory education management; and whether there are gendered discourses operating in the organisation.

Definitions of Terms

Discourse and discourse analysis are defined on page 16.

While there are myriad definitions of leadership and management, Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989) have produced an accessible and practical response to the difficulties of defining the terms:

Management is

- About keeping the organisation functioning and on-task.
- Doing things right – a focus on systems and procedures.

Leadership is

- Looking forward and pursuing goals and aspirations.
- Doing the right things – a focus on vision and values.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is recognised that everyone in the organisation is a leader/manager in the context in which he/she works. However, the nature of the investigation focuses on the aspects of management that keep 'the organisation functioning and on-task' and the discourse employed to do so. This focus is not to minimise the aspects of leadership as there will inevitably be crossover in the roles, and, at times, discourse related to the ideas of leadership will no doubt arise and will demand discussion, but the primary aim is to reflect on how managers 'do' management and how their discourse (and the identities they construct through it) supports them in 'keeping the organisation functioning'.

A definition of and an extended discussion on the researcher's conceptualisation of social constructionism can be found on page 12.

The Conceptual Framework

This research was born as a result of the researcher's long-standing interest in language and literacy. As a trained primary school teacher with an English specialism, who has also taught in secondary schools, community colleges in Canada and further education colleges in the UK, the researcher was keenly aware of gender differences in the classroom, particularly around the acquisition, development and use of the English language. Later, as a teacher trainer with experience of training for several universities, it was observed that the feedback provided to male and female teachers required some differentiation to bring about the necessary adjustments to develop their teaching practice. Further, as a member of Forestside College internal inspection team, the author also noted that similar differentiation of feedback on lesson observations was required. There have been many interesting anecdotal examples over the years that have been gleaned from

teacher training colleagues. Since 2005, the author has taught on an undergraduate teacher training course for literacy specialists; one of the units on the course considers language, power and gender. The readings for this unit were of considerable interest and confirmed some informal observations that had been noted over a number of years. Finally, having been a College manager for the past 15 years (head of department, then curriculum middle manager and, most recently, director) and a member of the Leadership Team, with access to meetings and their discourse strategies at all levels of the organisation, the author began to consider the links between sociolinguistics and management identity. This thesis is therefore an attempt to formalise the study of language, gender and management identity and thus to distil the readings, experiences and observations into a single body of work; it is hoped that this work will then provide the foundation for further explorations of language and gender in other contexts.

The study has been somewhat difficult to situate within a philosophical framework, as its focus intersects the areas of sociolinguistics, leadership and management, gender and sociology. After considerable reading and reflection on the issues and the main area of research, the author has determined that the broader frame of sociolinguistic research should be the central lens (van Leeuwen 2005: 9) through which the work is viewed and analysed, as shown in Figure 1.1. Sociolinguistics is the thread throughout all of the author's previous experiences. Within the broad umbrella of sociolinguistics, the study adopts a social constructionist perspective, in that the author considers the use of routine language as being socially and discursively revealing of people's identities and also in that it involves 'the dynamic aspects of interaction, and the constantly changing and developing nature of social identities, social categories and group boundaries' (Holmes 2006: 12). This perspective resonates with Butler's (1990) concept of performativity and Ochs' (1992: 341) suggestion that 'linguistic features may index social meanings (stances, social acts, social activities), which in turn help to constitute gender meanings'.

The social constructionist approach, sometimes known as a dynamic approach (Coates 2004: 5), was chosen for this study because it focuses on the dynamics of social interactions, in this case the interactions involved in the processes of management. Researchers using this approach believe that 'Gender identity is seen as a social construct rather than as a 'given' social category' (Coates 2004: 6). This

approach to the study of language and gender is the most recent paradigm associated with the study of gendered language, having overtaken the deficit approach (implying that women's language is weak and deficient); the dominance approach (which interprets linguistic differences through male dominance and female oppression); and the difference approach (which implies that men and women belong to different subcultures)(Coates 2004: 6). While this study is framed through the constructionist approach, these categories are fluid and examples will be drawn from a range of sources that reflect the different societal perspectives. There is a more recent tendency to refer to 'doing gender' or as Coates suggests 'that gender is not a static, add-on characteristic of speakers, but is something that is *accomplished* in talk every time we speak' (2004: 7)[original italics].

The researcher examines dynamic interaction in real world, real time exchanges to discern whether there is evidence of gendered discourse and associated implicit gendered attitudes.

Talbot (1998: 150) suggests that the social constructionist view of gender can be perceived as a critical approach.

'There is an increasing tendency for the same theoretical canon to be drawn upon across a range of different disciplines' in the social sciences (van Leeuwen 2005: 9), i.e., the critical social theory influence of Foucault and Butler intersects all disciplines that investigate gender in the workplace and provides a framework for the ideas from outside linguistics to be drawn into the study (Mullaney 2007: 7). Therefore, the study also adopts a critical sociolinguistic approach as described by Heller (2001: 119) in that utterances made in a natural context will be critically analysed to investigate gender and management.

According to Mullaney (2007: 19),

> *The perception of gender as a performative social construct … developed as critiques of the earlier deficit, power/dominance and culture/difference approaches to language and gender studies. The term 'critical' has a two-fold meaning, referring to gender and social inequality being examined from a feminist perspective.*

Of particular importance is the concept of social constructionism in that organisational cultures contribute to and shape one's identity within that culture as

our identities are constructed and performed continuously over time (Butler 1990).

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework Underpinning Gendered Discourse Analysis

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                  ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                  │ Gendered Discourse in Management │
                  │              Roles               │
                  └─────────────────────────────────┘
                                  ▲
                  ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                  │     Sociolinguistic Paradigm     │
                  └─────────────────────────────────┘
                         ▲        ▲        ▲
          ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
          │ Critical │   │ Critical │   │ Social           │
          │ Social   │   │ Socioling│   │ Constructionism  │
          │ Theory   │   │ -uistic  │   └──────────────────┘
          └──────────┘   │ Approach │
                         └──────────┘
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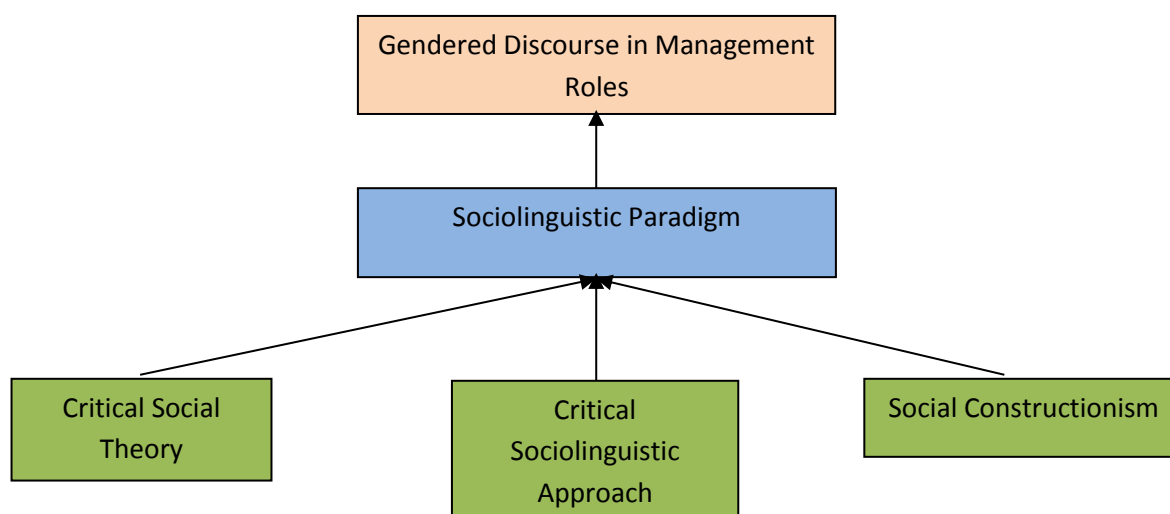
There has been much written about social constructio**nism** and social constructi**vism** in recent years, with the terms and concepts often being confused. Guba and Lincoln (2008: 259), for example, use the terms interchangeably, suggesting that 'we are ourselves social constructivists/constructionists'. For the purposes of this study, the author adopts the term 'social constructionism', as derived from the work of Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) and from Berger and Luchmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967). Mead (1964) suggested that every person is a social construction:

> *…human behaviour is social in origin, shaped by social forces, and permeated by the social even in its biological and physical aspects. Consequently, Mead wants us to 'see the world whole'. Our ability to do that is developed socially through 'entering into the most highly organized logical, ethical, and aesthetic attitudes of the community.* (Mead 1964: 337)

If we consider that a further education college is a highly organised, social community that is also subject to the disparities in the distribution of power and in which individuals 'become persons', i.e. teachers, managers, administrators, etc., it is likely that these roles are socially constructed within the confines of the established community. There is therefore some joint construction of the reality of the organisation and the roles within it. The author would argue then that 'constructionism' is a socially constructed, external representation of the individual

construct of self, as it is visible to the world, in this case the College community. Hence, the term 'social constructionism' is used in this thesis in reference to the social and political realities of the organisation and the discourse used to jointly construct the social 'self' within that organisation.

'Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, based on how power is enacted in society through means of gaining consent, refers to how power is found in 'everyday routine structures, emphasizing that the most effective form of domination is the assimilation of the wider population in one's worldview' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 43). Individuals, therefore, at any given time and in any given interaction, assume power or attribute it to others as they construct and enact their professional roles and identities. As patterns of interactional discourse become routine, through continuous performance and/or through social expectation, individuals will participate in the exchange of influence through the discursive strategies they employ. From this discursive standpoint, then, social constructionism explores how utterances 'work' and 'how utterances work is a matter of understanding social practices and analysing the rhetorical strategies at play in particular kinds of discourse' (Schwandt 2000: 197). Olsson and Walker (2003: 388) suggest that 'a social constructionist approach goes some way to explaining the persistence of attitudes that place women in an antithetical position to executive power'. One assumption underpinning such an approach is that '…the world …is constituted in one way or another as people talk it, write it, and argue it' (Schwandt 2000: 198).

As Priola (2004: 423) points out:

> *Essentially, through processes of identification with some women (and men) and differentiation from other women (and men), the construction of identities takes place in everyday relations, discourses and practices.*

Why discourse analysis?

> *Discourse is the favoured vehicle of ideology, and therefore of control by consent.* (Fairclough 2001: 37)

Discourse can be defined in two ways: Language above the level of the sentence and also as a social practice in that discourse represents the patterns of speech and thought by which people construct their roles and identities in a given social context,

in this case, the college of Further Education. Critical discourse analysis then is a method of analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (van Dijk, 2001, cited in Tannen et al: 352).   Hence, this method of data analysis is particularly suited to exploring social groups where there are inequalities of power, as might still be the case in terms of female power in male-dominated management contexts. 'Rather than merely *describe* discourse structures, it [discourse analysis] tries to *explain* them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure' (van Dijk, 2001, cited in Tannen et al: 353) and is thus fundamentally concerned with the nature of the relationship between language and the contexts of its use (McCarthy 2004).

Language therefore cannot be seen to be free of cultural influence; further, language and discourse cannot be isolated or interpreted without reference to context. Examples of talk are dependent on the context, the setting, the balance of power in the exchange, and other factors that influence purposes and interpretations of meaning. Prosodic features, such as volume, tone and pitch, and paralanguage (proximity, facial expression and gesture) can add further layers of meaning. While content analysis features frequency counts of the recurrence of particular themes in a given type of discourse, discourse analysis extends the brief to include the wider, more abstract meaning-making behaviours, such as covering the mouth, mumbling or prolonged silences. Yardley and Murray (2005: 90) explain that 'constructivist researchers regard language as actively constructing meaning through social interaction'.   Thus, human beings use language and paralanguage to characterise their identities in given contexts, as explained by van Dijk (1997: 353):

> *Analyses of discourse as a form of social interaction examine how*
> *people use language to accomplish social acts, such as*
> *constructing meanings, roles and identities.*

In the study of the discourse of managers in the FE sector, then, it is important to consider that roles, identities and authority are not fixed; they are jointly constructed and re-constructed in the different contexts in which managers work.   Discourse is therefore also an appropriate vehicle for investigating these worlds as people talk, write and argue them within organisations and for observing how individuals construct their performative identities to enact their roles in the workplace.

Further, Foucault (1972: 49) extended the definition with the idea that 'discourse is a formalised way of thinking that is manifested through language, a social boundary defining what can be said about a specific topic'. He defined discourse as 'systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak'. In the context of this study, therefore, the word 'discourse' is used to represent the talk around self as manager and the talk used to enact certain management behaviours to reflect the attitudes, beliefs and ideas that might illustrate gendered practice.

Moreover, Butler (2006:185) suggests that 'words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core of substance..... Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they or others purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means'.

In addition, Kramsch (2003: 61) notes that

> *Discourses…are more than just language, they are ways of being in the world, or forms of life that integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities.*

In summary, the approach taken in this study integrates a range of philosophical conceptions and draws on Butler's (1990) notion of performativity, Foucault's (1972; 1981) discussions of discourse and power, social constructionism (as defined above) and a critical sociolinguistic approach to explore management discourse to discover how women create management roles and identities through their patterns of linguistic discourse. In order to discern these patterns, the study is framed through the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. How do managers (both male and female) use discourse to construct their management identities?
2. Are there implicit attitudes linked to gender and management embedded in the discourse?
3. Is there evidence that gendered organisational discourses are at play?
4. How might the findings from this study inform the conceptualisation and

enactment of leadership and management development programmes?

Methodology

Given the need to collect data from naturalistic settings, an ethnographically-influenced approach to the research was taken. Much research on and about managers has used a 'self-report' methodology, leading the researcher to adopt a different approach by studying the 'live' discourse of managers in everyday contexts and interactions; therefore, data was gathered in formal meetings (including the informal social processes before and after meetings). The approach to data collection meant that the researcher taped and transcribed the meetings and identified linguistic exchanges that confirmed or refuted the literature in terms of the discourses that arose from the discussions. Cross-validation and triangulation occurred through follow-up interviews to explore the linguistic exchanges and to support/confirm the researcher's interpretation of events. A classification task, using Yukl's (1989) Taxonomy of Management Subroles was used as a basis for discussion in the second part of the interview. The rationale for the use of the Taxonomy can be found in Chapter 3. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed; data were then coded thematically, according to codes from the literature (as set out in Chapter 3). As a participant-researcher, there is a clear need for the researcher to build trust and rapport throughout the research project and to be ever-mindful of ethics in not breaching this trust (see Chapter 3 for more discussion on the role of the participant-researcher).

Conclusion

This first chapter has set out the context in which the study has taken place, introduced the concept of women potentially signalling their social status through their use of language, identified the issue of over-representation of women in first-line management roles (and under-representation in senior management roles at Forestside College), broadly drawn out the conceptual framework in which the study is situated, defined the terms and described the methodology in general terms.

Chapter Two reviews and evaluates the literature relating to language and gender in the workplace in more depth, specifically exploring the socio-cultural beliefs in relation to particular features of language and gender, as well as clarifying the

researcher's stance on gender, the influence of feminism and feminist linguistics, and discussion of the concepts of discourse and identity.

Chapter Three explains the methodology and elaborates on the research approach, while Chapter Four sets out the research findings in relation to the discursive themes. Chapter Five discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and identifies potential applications of the findings, suggestions for further research and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The aim of this literature review is to establish a contextual foundation for examining gendered discourse by considering the concepts of language and gender and their relationship to leadership and management and professional identity. The review will also define key terms and concepts, as well as setting out the parameters for the area of study.

Structurally, the chapter critically considers several fundamental, yet interrelated, dimensions that form the conceptual basis for the thesis:

- development of gendered beliefs: the cultural script

- developing an understanding of gender

- the influence of feminism and feminist linguistics: 'deficit', 'dominance' and 'difference'

- developing understandings of language: discourse and discourses

- gender and identity

- gender and management in the workplace

Development of gendered beliefs: the cultural script

There is an accumulated body of evidence describing age-old beliefs about the differences between masculine and feminine discourse and about appropriate social roles for men and women. It may be noteworthy now to summarise historical attitudes towards the language of women as some of these examples identify folkloric beliefs that are, it is argued, potentially still extant in society and in the workplace today.

Coates (2004:9) provides several examples of proverbs from a number of European countries that highlight societal assumptions or perceived truths about women and language in proverbs:

A woman's tongue wags like a lamb's tail. (England)

Foxes are all tail and women are all tongue. (England - Cheshire)

Ou femme y a, silence n'y a (where there's a woman, there's no silence). (France)

There are many other examples of proverbs from around the world that make pejorative assumptions about the nature and content of women's talk (Sunderland 2006: 3). These and other observations that originate as generalised proverbs span issues of vocabulary, grammar, verbosity and pronunciation, each of which will be reviewed briefly in the following section.

A significant body of literature suggests that women's language and women's contributions to language are frivolous and insubstantial (Tucker 1961; Jespersen 1922; Coates 2004; and Lakoff 1975). All of these authors cite examples from literature that essentially undermine women's language. Coates (2004: 12) suggests that the tendency of some male authors to dismiss some forms of language as being 'female cant' reflects the idea that male authors believe women to have 'restricted and vacuous vocabulary and [who] exert a malign influence on the language' (Coates 2004:12). Considered collectively, these examples result in women's language being represented as frivolous and inconsequential. While supporting evidence for these assertions is weak, it is plausible that many of these generalisations continue to influence interaction in today's workplace, thereby reflecting, as one example, the possible ongoing implicit assumption that women gossip and talk about insubstantial topics, while men speak when they have something of significance to say.

Cameron (2005: 449) posits that Jespersen was 'adopting a view of languages as ideally balanced between "masculine" and "feminine" elements. The natural inclinations of men are needed to give a language "variety" and "vigour", while those of women are needed to keep it within the bounds of the propriety that civilized society requires.' This may be a very insightful comment on how language acts as a mediator or plays a powerful role in 'civilising' the more extreme elements of society (or possibly simply as a perceived civilising foil for men's language), but, conceivably, it may also be a potentially pejorative stereotypical assumption that relegates women to a supporting role and subscribes to the discourses of deficit,

difference and dominance, to be reviewed later in this chapter.

Grammar

Viewed through an historical lens, women were deemed to have a weaker grasp on concepts of grammar (Coates 2004). Indeed, until fairly recently, the masculine case was the preferred grammatical case, specifying 'he' rather than the more recent 's/he' to include both genders in the written form. There was also the impression that women's utterances tended to be spontaneous and not well considered, as evidenced by half-finished sentences. It is worthy of note, however, that

> *…the sentence is the main unit of written language, but analysis of spoken discourse suggests that the sentence may not be a relevant category for speech. In other words, people don't speak in sentences, either finished or half-finished. However, since in the past men received far more education than women, it is likely that their speech was more affected by written norms; in other words, male/female differences may have reflected relative exposure to written language.* (Coates, 2004:17)

The above comment suggests that men's discourse (and therefore grammar) was based on their knowledge of the written word and superior education, while women's was based on more informal, social discussion (reflecting their relative levels of education at the time).

Table 2.1 - The linguistic domains (real and hypothesised) of parataxis and hypotaxis

	Parataxis	**Hypotaxis**
Typically found in	Anglo-Saxon prose	Renaissance and post-Renaissance Prose
	Speech	Writing
Supposed to be typical of	Restricted code Women's language	Elaborated code Men's language

Adapted from Coates (2004: 19)

In more recent years there have been links made between Jesperson's work and that of Basil Bernstein (1973), which identified restricted (RC) and elaborated (EC) codes – see Table 2.1 above (Coates 2004: 19). Bernstein claimed that the restricted code was more likely to underpin working class language use and the

elaborated code was more often associated with the language of the middle class. This class difference in language use was attributed to differences in socialisation in the home and at work. In short, the fact that elaborated code was thought to be the more sophisticated type of grammatical construction and attributed to men's language (see Table 2.1 above) is potentially yet another gendered supposition that (a) women cannot think in the complicated ways that give rise to complex subordination of ideas; and (b) that women are of a different social class from men (a concept to be explored later).

Women, therefore, through the lens of men's language, appear to be constructed as being culturally different from men and of a different social class; they are therefore expected to use different discursive strategies and to possess different communicative competencies or they may be judged harshly (Trudgill 2000: 80).

It is also worth noting that:

> *the unmarked forms of most English words … convey 'male' … We have*
> *endings, such as ess and ette, to mark words as female. Unfortunately,*
> *marking words for female also, by association, tends to mark them for*
> *frivolousness. Would you feel safe entrusting your life to a doctorette?*
> (Tannen 1994: 109)

The grammatical endings that specifically denote the feminine gender are diminutive and reduce the impact of the associated nouns and therefore the impact of the individual woman. There has therefore recently been a move for some women in the entertainment field to identify themselves as 'actors' rather than 'actresses' in an attempt to deflect some of the frivolity associated with the feminine form. Women in other occupations have followed – the descriptor 'lady' before doctor has now been eliminated, for example. As Tannen (1994: 109) notes: 'The extra meanings carried by gender markers reflect the traditional associations with the female gender: not quite serious, often sexual'.

Trudgill (2000: 80) and others (Mullaney 2007; Mannion (2011); Edwards 2013; Coates 2004, to name several) are clear that the different lexical, phonological and grammatical variables signal and reinforce a speaker's identity as male or female. 'Female speakers of English tend to use linguistic forms which are considered to be 'better' than male forms' (Trudgill 2000: 70). It is possible, then, that women, in their wish to achieve overt prestige, may well be hypercorrect in their use of grammar and

move more closely towards Received Pronunciation (BBC English) in the work place in order to be perceived more favourably. These views expressed by Trudgill will be evaluated later in a discussion on gender and feminist theory.

Thus, considering the socio-cultural historical script, it would appear that women are deemed to be grammatically inferior and culturally different from men in their understanding and use of grammatical constructs, and it may be hypothesised that the social expectations around the use of language could continue to support this cultural difference.

Verbosity

The proverbs quoted at the beginning of this chapter refer to the stereotypical assumption that women to speak too much. The concept of the verbosity of women is an interesting one, and there are numerous examples in literature from the 15th century (and before) to the 20th century, including Shakespeare and Jane Austen, where women are depicted as characters chattering mindlessly to little effect about insubstantial topics. The stereotype is perpetuated in children's nursery rhymes that are still taught in Britain and in North America, some versions of which reflect the influence of ancient attitudes. For example, the popular nursery rhyme, 'The Wheels on the Bus' includes, in some versions:

> *The Daddies on the bus go read, read, read…*
> *The Mummies on the bus go chatter, chatter, chatter.*

As Coates points out, in literature women's 'silence is made synonymous with obedience' (2004: 25). There are also examples of the ideal, silent woman presented in Chaucer and in Renaissance literature. MacLean (1980:62) suggests: 'The implication is that it is inappropriate for a woman to be eloquent or liberal, or for a man to be economical and silent'.

It is noteworthy that during the Renaissance the concept of eloquence was held in high esteem (for men); eloquence is a virtue in a man, but the corresponding virtue in a woman was *silence* (Coates 2004: 25). There are numerous other examples in literature that laud the concept of silence in women. Coates (2004:25) therefore posits that the 'model of the silent woman is still presented to girls,' because 'quiet

behaviour is … encouraged by teachers, particularly in girls.' Cameron (2005: 451) explains: 'Even today, in British English at least, a loose and vulgar female tongue is still sometimes figured in the person of the 'fishwife''. This very term conflates verbosity with a lack of refinement and defines low-status women as 'unfeminine, vulgar and undisciplined'.

The very heart of this issue of verbosity is iterated with great clarity by Spender (1980: 42)

> *The talkativeness of women has been gauged in comparison not with men but with silence…When silence is the desired state for women … then any talk in which a woman engages can be too much.*

There are then, it would appear, according to British cultural script as set out in literature, in nursery rhymes and potentially in schools and universities very different social expectations of male and female speakers: men would appear to have the right to talk and women are possibly still expected to remain silent. These societal expectations could potentially prove to be challenging for an assertive woman manager in the context of her work.

Spender (1979 in Coates 2004: 118)

> *claims that women are normally allowed no more than 30 per cent of talking time. This seems to be the upper limit before men feel that women are contributing more than their share.*

Spender's contention is borne out by a study of electronic discourse among academics in the US, which demonstrated that email discussion was asymmetrical, with male participants contributing 80 per cent of the total discussion. It is interesting that on the rare occasion of women's contributions exceeding men's 'men became distressed and angry, claiming they were being 'silenced' and threatening to 'unsubscribe' from the network' (Coates 2004: 118). These reactions are quite extreme and again suggest that 'women and men do not have equal rights to speak. By contributing more, even temporarily, women in the group violated the unspoken convention that control of public discourse belongs rightfully to men' (Herring et al 1998: 198).

Again, if public discourse belongs to men, the challenge for a woman manager who is required to speak out in public is clear. Coates (2004: 26) concludes: '[T]here is no

doubt that western European culture is imbued with the belief that women *do* talk a lot, and there is evidence that silence is an ideal that has been held up to (and imposed on) women for many centuries'. O'Barr and Bowman (1980) reported that men and women, on average, speak 16,000 words per day; however, women are still perceived to speak more than men (in Mannion 2011: 113).

In summary, the historical, cultural attitudes towards women and their use of language as evidenced in literature, nursery rhymes and folklore are as follows:

- Women were perceived to be guilty of changing language (for the worse) through their overuse of 'ornaments' that came and went in the way of fashion. The effect of this belief is that women are perceived to be flighty and insubstantial in their use of language.

- Women trivialised language through their excessive use of adverbial and adjectival forms.

- Women had a weaker grasp of grammar and used parataxis (a series of main clauses) as opposed to hypotaxis (involving subordination of one clause to another), hypotaxis being identified as the more sophisticated structure.

- Women try harder with their pronunciation, use more indirect expressions and, in general, avoid the use of 'coarse and gross expressions' in their attempt to gain social prestige.

- Women talk too much; the ideal woman is an obedient and silent one.

Each of the above statements can be explained as a product of its time. However, while the attitudes discussed above may appear to be anachronistic, they could potentially still be endemic in British society. Indeed, critical to this argument, Olsson and Walker (2003: 388) suggest that 'Gender schema draw on the discursive history and cultural scripts of a society, the narratives of childhood through to adulthood, to function at a subconscious level so that, while gender is constantly being constructed in specific contexts: …cultural ideas frame and restrain what men and what women should think, feel and do' (Alvesson 2002).

It follows that if these assumptions are absorbed through cultural osmosis, they could, in some likelihood, bleed into the workplace where they could potentially influence both male and female expectations of each other as managers.

> *The very language of management is resolutely masculine. Organizations are then a crucial site for the ordering of gender and for the establishment and preservation of male power.* (Wajcman 1998: 7)

In the 1970s Robin Lakoff proposed that women's speech can be distinguished from men's speech in a number of ways, which are summarised in the table below. According to Edwards (2013: 109) 'a subordinate social role can imply security, uncertainty and lack of confidence' – all highlighted in Lakoff's work in the 1970s. However, there are a number of difficulties with her work both in terms of methodology and analysis. Most importantly, Lakoff implicitly adopted a 'male-as-norm' perspective, which has since been challenged.

Table 2.2
Summary of Lakoff's Gendered Differences in Language Use

Feature	Example
Empty adjectives	Divine, adorable, gorgeous
Excessively polite forms	Is it OK if..? Would you mind…?
More apologies than men	I'm sorry, but I think…
Speak less frequently	
Avoid swear words and coarse language	Oh dear
Hyper-correct grammar and pronunciation	Speak more clearly and with better grammar than men
Requests made indirectly	You don't mind me sitting here, do you?
Speaking in italics	I am *so* not going to that party
Tag questions	That's right, isn't it?

Adapted from Mannion 2011: 113

Lakoff did, however, begin the process of classification of recurring gender differences in speech and, in general, the attempt has been 'widely and favourably recognised' (Edwards 2013: 109).

The cultural script for women's language has been outlined in the first part of this literature review. There follows now a discussion of concepts of gender as they are reflected within this study.

Developing an understanding of gender

Let us first consider the term 'gender', which has itself undergone many semantic changes throughout the years. Today's usage in reference to the indication of the masculine or feminine behaviour of men and women is usually, and usefully, distinguished from 'sex': biological characteristics define the latter, while gender, although built upon biological categorisation, is a social construction (Edwards 2013). This separation was a conceptual breakthrough for 'second-wave feminism', first articulated by Oakley in 1972 (Talbot 2013: 7). While sex is rooted in physical and chemical characteristics, 'gender' is socially constructed; it is learned (Talbot 2013: 7). Interestingly, unlike 'sex', gender is not binary. We are able to describe one man as being more masculine than another; similarly, we can refer to degrees of femininity in women. Talbot (2013: 8) suggests that "people are 'gendered' and actively involved in the process of their own gendering". This is an important statement and one that forms a cornerstone concept for this work. If we conceptualise gender in this way, as a social construction, it can be seen that the sex preferential differentiations in language use (among others) are ways of *doing gender* (Talbot 2013: 8). Thus, the choices that individuals make demonstrate that they are behaving as 'proper' men and women in particular cultures (Talbot 2013: 8). Talbot (2013) argues that if these preferences were indeed biological in root, people would not display the rich diversity that they do and they would be the same everywhere.

It is important, then, to be careful when making claims about the relation between sex and gender. As Talbot suggests, 'when gender is mapped onto sex, as it frequently is, there is an implicit assumption that socially determined differences between women and men are natural and inevitable' (2013:9). Confusion of sex and

gender, according to Talbot (2013: 9) has political underpinnings, potentially reasserting traditional family roles or justifying male privilege. She cites several examples of statements as cases in point, one of which is below:

> *Well, I suppose the boys do dominate in class. Oh, they hog the computers, naturally. No, the girls just aren't interested.*

It is important to recognise that the danger in erasing the distinction between sex and gender, restricted opportunities available for women and girls may be excused as biologically necessary, and, as important, 'received ideas about differences in male and female capacities, needs and desires left unchallenged (Talbot 2013: 9).

According to Mullaney (2007: 25), 'children's socialised gender identity develops around the biological sex label that has been assigned to them at birth'. It would appear then that 'biological differences become a signal for, rather than a cause of, differentiation in social roles' (Wodak and Benke 1997: 129 in Mullaney 2007: 25). It would also appear that these differences are reinforced and maintained by societal norms and expectations. It is important to remember that 'sex is used as a powerful categorization device' in society (Wodak 1997: 12 in Mullaney 2007: 25), and this categorization can be evidenced in the inequality of the pay gap between women and men in the workplace. Mullaney (2007: 25) argues that '[s]ex, in such contexts is perceived as a natural biological category, and not as a social construct'.

Until relatively recently, sociolinguists had virtually ignored the concept of gender (Coates 2004: 4). Earlier sociolinguistic studies were carried out on male populations (for example, Labov's (1972) study of black adolescents in Harlem; Reid's (1976) study of Edinburgh schoolboys). According to Coates (2004: 4), it was not until the late 1980s that studies appeared which concentrated on female speakers, such as those by Bate and Taylor (1988) and Coates and Cameron (1989). Secondly, as sociolinguistics became more established as a discipline, there was a focus on non-standard varieties of language, i.e. those of minority groups, those of different social classes, those used by different sections of the population, as stratified by age. One possible explanation for the more recent shift in sociolinguist interest towards language and gender is the social change around women in society in the late 20th century and their increasing involvement in working

life, with the associated change in feminine social role (Coates 2004: 4).

As noted above, girls and boys are socialised into their gender roles through the use of gendered language from birth. They develop linguistic strategies that are compatible with gendered behaviours. Several studies show differences in the linguistic forms used by male and female children and confirm that language is an important aspect of being socialised into doing 'gender' in a particular way. According to Coates (2004: 169), socialisation through language is achieved in a variety of ways:

1. Through explicit comment on certain aspects of linguistic behaviour (e.g. swearing, taboo language, verbosity, politeness).
2. Through adults providing different linguistic models for children to identify with.
3. Through adults talking to children differently depending on the gender of the child (e.g. adults are more likely to interrupt girls, and lisp more when talking to little girls).
4. Through adults having different preconceptions of male and female children (e.g. adults expect female infants to be more verbally able than male infants).
5. Through adults responding differently to girls and boys using the same linguistic strategy (e.g. boys arguing or talking assertively are more likely to get a positive response than girls).
6. ….through children's participation in gender-specific subcultures which create and maintain distinct male and female styles of interaction.

The statements above include assumptions about differentiated communicative competence. In the educational context, this 'differing understanding of when to speak, when to remain silent, how to mark speech for politeness, when it is permissible to interrupt, and so on, helps to contribute to different outcomes for girls and boys' (Coates 2004: 190). In the classroom, gender is a very important identifier. It is 'a highly visible source of individual and social identity, clearly marked by dress and by language; everyone is either male or female (Thorne 1993: 34). Trudgill (2000: 61) concurs:

> *the first thing you notice about somebody when you first meet them is what sex they are. This is so obvious that we do not even think about it. …. The*

fact that the difference is so basic means that it is hardly surprising that it is also reflected and indicated in all human languages. It is a semantic universal which is lexicalized in all the languages of the world…'

Further, the dominance of boys in classroom talk is well documented (Sadker and Sadker 1994 in Kimmell 2000: 154-5). This study showed that, in general, boys did (and possibly still do) much of the talking in the classroom, including shouting out, even when the teacher had decreed that they must raise their hands and be called upon. There still appears to be some reinforcement of the concept of the ideal, silent woman, who requires permission from a higher authority (in this case, the teacher) to participate. For example, more

> *recent Canadian research has shown that teachers typically dominate the 'linguistic space' in the classroom to an overwhelming degree and, of the small portion available to the pupils, boys often claim the lion's share: one study found the ratio of girls' to boys' verbal contributions to be in the order of 1:10* (Edwards 2013: 43).

Although many challenge the radical, feminist nature of her work, Spender (1990) estimates that teachers normally give two-thirds of their attention to boys. Thus, it is conjectured that boys' dominance in classroom interaction is co-constructed by all participants – including the teacher (Coates 2004: 190). It would be worthwhile to consider whether this type of co-construction of male dominance is also at play in the workplace.

It is worth noting that the school setting is one arena in which boys begin to construct their identities.

> *One way that boys 'do' masculinity in the classroom is by fooling around. As boys get older, 'having a laugh' begins to be a crucial aspect of masculinity. Boys try to be cool and to avoid the label of 'nerd' or 'boffin'. At the same time they brag about how good they are: after a school test, for example, they will say it was ''easy', 'simple', while the girls tend to express anxiety about their performance (their comments are of course unrelated to their results). Boys … participate actively, call out answers, make lots of guesses, while girls listen more passively.* (Coates 2004: 191)

Boys are therefore used to constructing their identity as being good at things; for girls, such a boast might be considered immodest. It would appear that girls are taught that there is something unfeminine about loudness (perhaps an unconscious avoidance of the label of 'fishwife'), and they receive negative feedback when they do transgress the boundaries of gendered behaviour. Coates (2004: 191) suggests

that 'girls' sense of their own identity as a female makes them feel that the speech acts of arguing, challenging and shouting are inappropriate behaviour for them'. An Ofsted report concluded that 'Boys are good at fancy footwork but often wildly over-estimate their ability and believe they will succeed without expending any energy' (*The Observer,* 19 October 2003). Another Ofsted report from 1993 suggested that 'Boys were more likely than girls to interrupt one another, to argue openly and to voice opinions strongly' (in Cameron 2005: 456). If boys learn and are rewarded for these behaviours from birth and continue to be rewarded for them throughout their school career, it is possible that they will continue to use what they perceive to be successful linguistic strategies in all areas of their lives, including work.

The situation appears to continue unchanged at university level. Hunt (2003) explored gender discrepancies at Cambridge University in the UK. Interestingly,

> *while all students accepted at Cambridge have an outstanding academic record, more male students go on to get first-class degrees (26.2 per cent compared with only 16.6 per cent of female students in 2002)* (Coates 2004: 196).

Further, according to Coates (2004: 196):

> *…female students, many of whom demonstrated a readiness to listen, absorb and synthesise, were much less comfortable in this competitive ethos. Their confidence is slowly undermined over three years of intimidating tutorials, and when it comes to the final 'sudden-death' examinations the system does not reward their strengths.*

As Coates (2004: 197) suggests, the 'differential usage of interactional resources by teachers, girls and boys inside the classroom ***collude***' [researcher's italics and emphasis] in perpetuating male dominance in the educational setting.

Linguistic interaction is learned behaviour (Talbot 2013: 11). Considering the 'cultural script' from nursery rhymes, literature, early socialisation into gendered roles through the use of language, the dominance of boys in the classroom (at schools and at university), it is conceivable that these gendered messages are still carried into the workplace. In most cases, these messages and associated stereotypes are so ingrained that many people will be aware of only the most obvious ones. More dangerous are the insidious beliefs that imply that women's contributions are

insubstantial. The cultural script for gendered behaviour that is played out from birth cannot be ignored in sociolinguistic studies of the workplace.

The influence of feminism and feminist linguistics: 'deficit', 'dominance' and 'difference'

A substantial review of the early work on gender and language has already been carried out in the previous section on the cultural script, where a body of literature was identified that recycled and reinforced prescriptive (ostensibly male) attitudes for how women should speak and therefore behave in society. Having considered the cultural script and associated folkloric beliefs, this section evaluates more recent scholarship on language and gender.

First, though, we must ask why language study is important for feminism? There are two 'broad assumptions underlying the equation of "gender and language" and "women and language"' (Talbot 2013: 15). The first view is that 'language simply reflects society, so that social divisions on gender grounds are reflected in patterns of language use' (2013:15). The second view is that 'language does not simply reflect gender divisions, it actually creates them' – for example, (Miss, Mrs) as opposed to the single title for Mr, has reflected the importance to society of a woman's marital status (Talbot 2013: 15). This example (but one of many) creates and sustains inequalities. The two approaches therefore (elaborated later in this chapter) are 'language as mirror' and 'language as reproductive' (Talbot 2013: 15). Talbot suggests and the writer concurs that there is likely to be a productive path to be negotiated between the two approaches. We no longer subscribe solely to the idea that 'our consciousness is constrained, even created, by the language we have' (Talbot 2013: 16) and equally, we know that simply changing the language does not necessarily bring about change in social behaviour.

> *To change language may not be to embark on drastic social changes directly, but it does involve consciousness-raising: that is, bringing awareness of a problem to the public's attention. The assumption underlying consciousness-raising is that before a behaviour can be changed, there must be awareness that a situation exists warranting alteration (Nan van den Bergh 1987: 132).*

'[F]eminism is a form of politics dedicated to bringing about social change and to arresting the reproduction of systematic inequalities between men and women' (Talbot 2013: 16). There is thus an interest in the role that language plays, together

with other social practices and institutions, in reflecting, creating and sustaining gender divisions in society. The role that language plays in constructing management identity is the focus of this study.

There follows a discussion of the development of feminism and linguistic theory. As well as the proverbs, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a range of etiquette books advised women against public speaking, to tailor their talk to the interests of their (male) guests, to ask facilitative questions, and to listen rather than to speak (Cameron 1995; Eble 1976; Kramarae 1981). It is of much interest that in the 1970s and 80s, many women attended assertiveness training courses that taught them further prescriptive ways of behaving (and dressing for power) in an ostensibly male workplace.

As noted earlier in this chapter, Jesperson (1922) made several pronouncements on women's language, but these were based 'largely on impressionistic data (and literary texts), reflecting ideas and epistemologies that existed at the time for the study of language' (Sunderland 2006: 5). In the early twentieth century, however, other researchers were conducting empirical fieldwork on language (Haas, for example), who also documented gender **differences** in language use (Sunderland 2006: 5)

Sunderland (2006: 6) explains the concept of 'sex preferential' uses of language, which

> *refer 'to differential tendencies, that is ways in which women and men tend to talk differently from each other in a given context. 'Sex preferential' phonetic, intonation, lexical, syntactic and wider interactional tendencies have been identified'.*

The use of the word 'tendencies' here is important, particularly given Mullaney's (2007: 25) warning, with which the author concurs, that 'essentialism is rife in wider society, and thus needs to be given full consideration in language and gender research'. 'Tendencies' implies variation within groups of women and within groups of men, that is, intra-group diversity. According to Sunderland (2006: 7), this diversity was downplayed by early researchers and requires ongoing emphasis on the importance of this concept. The author is cognisant of this concept.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, sociolinguists took increasing interest in the

topic of women's and men's speech, particularly with reference to gender-differentiated style shifting (between formal and casual speech), use of prestige and stigmatised variants, linguistic conservatism, the question of who initiates language change and the evaluation of such change (Sunderland 2006: 7).

However, Labov (1966, 1972) and Trudgill (1972) both carried out influential empirical studies of variation in language use; both were 'interested in biological sex [as opposed to gender] as a sociolinguistic variable' (Sunderland 2005: 7). In general, both Labov and Trudgill concluded that 'women are more status-conscious than men, generally speaking … and are therefore more aware of the social significance of linguistic variables' (Trudgill 1972: 182).

These conclusions have attracted considerable feminist critique. For example, Cameron considers whether

> *women's assessments might ... have reflected their awareness of sex-stereotypes and their consequent desire to fulfil "normal" expectations that women talk "better".* (Cameron 1992: 63).

There are thus other potential interpretations of Trudgill's conclusions about women being more conscious of social status.

Sunderland (2006: 8) notes that gender-language relationships have been the focus of pre- and non-feminist work in several areas other than language use, citing studies in linguistic gender, verbal ability in girls and boys and gendered language use by parents. This work has tended to be framed within the **'gender differences'** approach (to be discussed later), but it does provide a useful starting point from which to develop more dynamic conceptualisations of gender-language relationships.

Deficit and dominance

In the mid-twentieth century, feminists such as Morgan (1968) claimed that

> *The very semantics of the language reflect women's condition. We do not even have our own names, but bear that of the father until we exchange it for that of the husband.*

Further, Greer (1972) commented on the use of 'food' terms for endearments for women – 'honey', 'sweetie'. Through lexical items such as 'Mrs/Miss', 'son-of-a-

bitch' and 'manageress', the English language was said to 'define, degrade and stereotype' women, and through the so-called 'generics' of 'he' and 'man' to render them invisible (Sunderland 2006: 11). There was an assumption at that time that changing sexist language would influence both thought and behaviour (Sapir-Whorf) and this led to a drive for the use of inclusive language, i.e., the title of Ms for all women, the use of s/he, and the like, which continues to the present day. While more recent research has cast doubt on the conclusions reached by the research of Sapir-Whorf, there is a 'persistent suspicion that constant use of a particular kind of language – overtly sexist for instance – may distort people's perceptions' (Mannion 2011: 103). These concerns of the early feminists focussed largely on the concept of language as an abstract tool, rather than as a social practice, thus giving rise to an interest in naturally occurring language. Lakoff (1975) explored the 'gender differences in language use' (Sunderland 2006: 13). This work was widely critiqued on the grounds that it represented women's language as being 'deficient', relative to that of men; it is often referred to as the 'deficit approach' to the study of language and gender, but there is also reference within Lakoff's work to male dominance, as well as to female deficit. While these views may seem outmoded today, the work still carries wide-ranging influence, attested by the frequency of the academic citations (Sunderland 2006: 14).

Spender (1980) was similarly influential in her writing about sexism in the English language with male dominance resulting in the disadvantage of women. Spender was uncompromising in her views:

> *I would reiterate that it has been the dominant group – in this case, males – who have created the world, invented the categories, constructed sexism and its justification and developed a language trap which is in their interest. …Males …have produced language, thought and reality. Historically it has been the structures, the categories and the meanings which have been invented by males – though not of course by all males – and they have been validated by reference to other males. In this process women have played little or no part.* (Spender 1980: 142-3)

Both Lakoff and Spender can be considered to be pioneers in the study of gender and language and both have been widely critiqued by the academic community. In Spender's case, she had built her research on the assumption of the

> *Whorfian hypothesis that language and categories shape how people see the word and that a sexist world has been created by men, the inventors of those*

categories' (Sunderland 2006: 16).

The concept of male dominance as reflected through language also carries with it assumptions of male power and creates difficulties in maintaining awareness of it, as well as in changing the status quo.

> *The crux of our difficulties lies in being able to identify and transform the rules which govern our behaviour and which bring patriarchal order into existence. Yet the tools we have for doing this are part of that patriarchal order.* (Spender 1980 in Mannion 2011: 114)

While the author acknowledges that there is much of interest in Spender's seminal work, there is also a concern that a focus on language in isolation, apart from social interaction and usage, could present only a partial picture of the issue.

Cameron (1995: 39) commented that, 'dominance...represented [a] particular moment …in feminism'. However, there has also been a suggestion that research in the 'dominance' tradition represents women 'as passive and as victims and of using women's 'subordination' as a complete and 'pan-contextual' explanation for characteristics of mixed-sex talk and there are clearly issues with this representation (Sunderland 2006: 19).

Sunderland notes:
> *With a hindsight informed by post-structuralism, women's silence (absolute or relative to that of men), for example, can sometimes be read as actively subversive, rather than enforced.* (2006: 19)

Having considered the deficit and dominance approaches to the study of language and gender, let us now consider the concept of cultural difference in more depth. The cultural difference approach virtually ignored the concept of masculine verbal power that was a crucial analytical concept in the discourse of dominance.

Coates (1996), Holmes (1995) and Tannen (1991) all presented variations on the cultural difference approach, heavily influenced by the work of Maltz and Borker (1982) who

claimed that girls and boys grew up largely in different 'sociolinguistic subcultures' and that any communication problems in women's and men's talk …are the result of differences in systems of conversational inference and the cues for signalling speech acts and speaker's intent (Maltz and Borker 1982: 201 in Sunderland 2006: 19).

In essence, Maltz and Borker viewed men and women as 'members of different speech cultures' comparable to those of speakers of different languages', an interesting, alternative view to that of dominance (Sunderland 2006: 19).

Different phases/stages of feminism can be observed through the dominance and difference approaches, reflecting the ongoing development of feminism. Cameron (1995: 39) suggests:

> *Both dominance and difference represented particular moments in feminism: dominance was the moment of feminist outrage, of bearing witness to oppression in all aspects of women's lives, while difference was the moment of feminist celebration, reclaiming and revaluing women's distinctive cultural traditions.*

As Sunderland (2006: 21) argues,

> *Feminism in general and feminist theory in particular also drove the subsequent critique of 'dominance' and 'difference' as a single approach, with more in common than not. Both were prefaced on a binary notion of gender, entailing an investigative focus on differences. Though this was well intentioned … both can be seen in one sense as anti-feminist with their socially essentialist focus on the binary nature of gender.*

Cameron (1992:40) suggests that 'every word we say on the subject of difference just underlines the salience and the importance of a division we are ultimately striving to end', thus emphasising her concern about perpetuation of the discourse of difference. Edwards (2013:110) argues (and the author agrees) that a dominance-subordinate dichotomy is clearly an insufficiently nuanced perspective. Mullany (2004) also concluded that the dominant discourse of hegemonic masculinity reinforces and reproduces the discourse of gender difference and actively works against women in the workplace.

Edwards (2013:11) is cautious about 'treating the speech of one gender as the norm from which that of the other differs or deviates. Rather, he suggests (and the author agrees) that Holmes' phrase: 'Not gender difference, but the difference gender

makes' is relevant to all investigations in this area. Interestingly, Edwards (2013:110) posits:

> *More fine-grained analysis of gender differences in speech reveal that women's features, such as 'greater female politeness, increased use of standard variants, and so, may all imply more about genuine facilitative and supportive desires than they do about insecurity and lack of confidence.*

Interestingly, Helene Leet-Pellegrini in Edwards (2013: 111) suggests that 'men typically ask themselves if they have won in conversational exchanges, while women ponder whether or not they have been sufficiently helpful'. Edwards (2013: 111) suggests that a

> *…broader point is that men and women may use language for different social purposes, having been socialised in different ways from earliest childhood.*

It is important here to acknowledge the contribution of the concept of *discourse* to the study of language and gender. Bucholtz (1999: 4) explains that more recent scholarship in the field of language and gender recognises that gender identity is at once more specific than most 1970s feminism realised and more fluid than much 1980s feminism allowed (Sunderland 2006: 22).

Thus current conceptualisations of gender and language, with which the author concurs and which form the theoretical foundation for this study, rely on notions of performativity, the dynamic construction of identity through discourse with reference to non-linguistic social practice, demonstrating, according to Sunderland (2006: 23), that the field is significantly shaped by feminist theory, i.e. actively contesting the concept of gender as something 'other than a binary, biologically shaped or socially determined entity, consisting of a monolithic masculinity and femininity'.

Developing understandings of language: discourse and discourses

Viewed through a social constructionist lens, *discourse* has previously been defined in two ways: Language above the level of the sentence (Tannen 1989: 6); and also, drawing on Foucault's discourse theory (1972; 1981), as social practice in that discourse represents the patterns of speech and thought by which people construct their roles and identities in a given social context. This study explores the language

of management *in situ* to enable a focus on the social processes around management, with a view to discovering how managers construct their performative identities.

Discourse can also refer to 'knowledge and practices generally associated with a particular institution (Talbot 1995: 43). Building on this concept, Sunderland (2006) suggests that we can talk about discourses as ways of seeing the world and 'ways of representing the 'mental' world of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so on, and the social world' (Fairclough 2003: 124 in Sunderland 2006: 47).

Foucault's discourse theory has achieved considerable influence in feminist linguistic study over the years (Coates and Jordan 1997; Mills 1997: Coates 1999; Baxter 2003; Sunderland 2004; Mullaney 2007). For the purposes of this study, 'discourse' refers to 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972: 49). Therefore, the author also subscribes to the view put forward by Mills (1997: 17) that management interactions will reveal the 'ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving in a given context'.

A number of authors have linked the concepts of 'gender' and 'discourse' in a number of works/publications (Sunderland (2004); Wodak (1997) Walsh (2001) Litosseliti and Sunderland (2003). Sunderland (2004: 20-21) argues for the use of the term 'gendered discourse' as it assumes that 'gender is already a part of the "thing" which is being described' (Mullaney 2007: 30). In line with Sutherland's (2004) definition and Foucault's (1972) definition above, the author would situate herself in accordance with these concepts; therefore, gendered discourse, as used in this study, refers to the words, utterances and paralinguistic behaviours that systematically construct 'the objects of which they speak' – management identities. Mullaney suggests:

> *Gendered discourses are maintained by gender ideologies…the speech strategies that women and men draw upon are important ways in which they are judged to be acting (in)appropriately for the particular identity and social role that they are enacting.* (Mullaney 2007: 31)

Hence, the study draws on two conceptualisations of discourse: (1) the language at the level of interaction (discourse above the level of the sentence); and (2) in the sense of the Foucauldian-influenced definition of discourse, in that 'gendered

discourses are the boundaries of social practice through which appropriate gendered behaviour is regulated' (Mullaney 2007: 31).

As noted in Chapter One, critical discourse analysis is a method of analytical research that primarily studies the way 'social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (van Dijk 2001, cited in Tannen et al 1982: 352). Edwards (2013: 42) suggests that the 'more expansive discourse analysis concerns itself with context and, above all, with the power relationships that stand behind and emerge within all linguistic events, spoken or written'.

The concept of power is also of central importance in the field of sociolinguistics, particularly with reference to Foucault's conceptualisation of power and that of Habermas (1981). In sociolinguistics the emphasis is on the role of power in communication and discourse and their potential exclusionary effects (Farfan and Holzscheiter (2011: 140). Foucault and Habermas differ in sense that Foucault focussed on the power of society to deem what was acceptable, whereas the Habermasian 'understanding of discourse emphasizes the emancipatory potential of discursive interaction as a place where power relations can be challenged and renegotiated' (Farfan and Holzscheiter 2011: 141). According to Habermas, it is 'possible to observe and potentially rectify or at the very least, contest, power asymmetries' in a particular social situation (Farfan and Hozscheiter 2011: 141). The writer accepts the value of both of these understandings, recognising that ultimately individuals all work within the parameters of the social groups in which they operate (the power of discourse), but also that individuals are free to renegotiate and 'reformulate these conventions (the power in discourse)' (Farfan and Holzscheiter 2011: 141). Discourse analysis has therefore devoted much attention to political language and recognised the value of 'situated language', as in this study. Hence, discourse analysis as a method of analysis of research is particularly suited to exploring social groups where there are inequalities of power, as might still be the case in terms of female power in male-dominated management contexts.

> *Most women throughout the world are still bunched together in the same types of jobs, earn less than men, have more difficulty obtaining leadership positions, and do most of the household work and care for children and the elderly…Even in societies where there is legislation against blatant sexism,*

sexual harassment and physical violence against women still persist (Lazar and Kramarae 2011: 225).

Power and power abuse (domination), one of the fundamental aspects of the social order construed and reproduced by discourse, may be defined in terms of a preferential access to, and control over, public discourse by social groups or organisations (van Dijk 2011: 3); it is therefore appropriate that there is ongoing investigation into the discursive strategies at play in particular contexts. There is still much work to do to re-dress the power structures and the study of women's and men's discourse can 'give us an insight into how conflicting perceptions of gender justice operate and also point to mechanisms of subtle sexism' (Lazar and Kramarae 2011: 218), a statement that resonates with this study.

Edwards (2013: 42) is concerned, however, that 'critical discourse analysis' as a discipline has become increasingly narrow, noting that the main interests of CDA lie in 'political discourse, media, advertisement, ideology, racism and institutional discourse'. According to Tannen (1982: 81): 'One cannot speak without showing one's attitude to the message and speech activity.' For example, a speaker may wrinkle his/her nose and this can reveal attitudes towards the ideas and concepts under discussion. Hence, this study draws on examples of the prosodic features of exchanges (pauses, false starts, changes in intonation and emphasis), which were vital in coding perceived attitudes, in addition to the specific lexical features of the management discourse. Further discussion on discourse analysis can be found in Chapter 3.

Gender and identity

Given that social roles represent the social expectations of gender and how men and women are socialised into these roles, it is important to consider the process of socialisation. Social attitudes are significant determinants of identity formation (Trudgill 2000: 80). It is therefore vital to examine these implicit gendered social attitudes endemic in British society to determine how these values, beliefs and assumptions might impact on women's use of language to construct their professional identities.

As noted in Chapter 1, Holmes and Schnurr (2006: 31) suggest that '*femininity* is an ambiguous concept with complex associations', noting that that it 'has been treated as something of a dirty word in gender studies', associated, from a feminist perspective with 'demureness, deference, and lack of power and influence'.

Mullaney (2007: 20) suggests that

> *despite the fact that there are now more women in the workforce than ever before, it should not be overlooked that there is still a higher concentration of women in lower-paid occupations than men*.

Milroy and Milroy (1997) posit that there are distinct divisions between unequal social groups in society, maintained by language ideologies, which result in conflict (Mullaney 2007: 22).

As discussed in an earlier section, it is important here to acknowledge and to challenge the assumption in Milroy's work that 'language reflects already existing social identities rather than constructs them' (Romaine 2003: 109). Unsurprisingly, speakers are regularly and subconsciously distinguished as male or female, and their linguistic behaviour is categorized as a consequence of this distinction. 'It is therefore more accurately sex, not gender, that is used as a categorization device' (Wodak and Benke 1997 in Mullaney 2007: 22). A number of authors have called for a re-consideration and/or re-evaluation of the way in which gender is conceived within sociolinguistic studies. For example, Cameron (1996: 44) argues that sociolinguistics 'has taken gender for granted by treating it as a demographic category that is a given'. She urges sociolinguists to consider critical social theory and integrate this with detailed linguistic analyses. More specifically, Cameron 'points to Butler's (1990) view that gender should be perceived as a performative social construct, rather than a fixed social category'. According to Mullaney (2007: 22), the social constructionist, performativity approach has had significant impact on language and gender studies and this perspective now prevails in gender and discourse research. This study conceptualises gender as a social construction. Applying Butler's ideas specifically to language use, language and gender academics have come to view discursive acts as 'sites where people produce their gender identity' and that, in performing gender, people also reproduce the clture's regulatory norms (Lazar and Kramarae 2011: 217).

Goffman (1976, 1979) posits that ways of talking and behaving associated with gender are a matter of display, rather than of identity, i.e., the behaviour is a performance (display) accomplished by the individual, rather than the nature of the individual (identity) (Tannen 1993: 198). Goffman sees interaction as a ceremony comprised of rituals – 'perfunctory, conventionalised acts through which one individual portrays his regard for another to that other' (Tannen 1993: 198). Further, Goffman suggests that displays provide evidence of an individual's alignment, the position s/he seems prepared to assume within the social situation. According to Tannen (1993: 199) Goffman's view is radically

> *different from the view of language in language and gender research and in linguistics that both consider language to be code, where language is inert and a mere conduit of meaning.*

Becker (1995) suggests that framing is one accomplishment of language – displaying our alignment in a given situation (Tannen 1993: 199). This approach is synchronous with Butler's (1980) work on performativity.

Butler (1990:25) suggests that gender is a performative social construct produced in discourse because 'there is no gendered identity behind the expressions of gender; rather, identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results'. In essence, then, Butler suggests that masculinity or femininity are performed through activities in which individuals participate, not by predetermined traits, such as sex. Butler draws on Foucault's work, 'particularly on his perceptions of identity and power' (Mullaney 2007: 23), as

> *it offers ways out of what seems like the intractable problem of collapsing back into unchangeable stereotypes whenever we talk about gender differences'* (Jones 2000: 194).

Butler's model has changed the way that identity is perceived within sociolinguistic research; rather than linguistic behaviour representing 'who you already are', Butler's view is that who you are and who you are taken to be 'depends on your repeated performance over time of the acts that constitute a particular identity' (Mullaney 2007: 23).

Wodak and Benke (1997) also viewed gender as a social construct, suggesting that individuals should be seen as 'doing gender' as opposed to 'viewing gender as a

fixed and stable social category from which linguistic behaviour can be ascribed, as with the variationist sociolinguistic approach. 'The conceptualization of 'doing gender' enables the full complexity of enacting identities to be seen' (Mullaney 2007: 23). Litosseliti (2006) and Baxter (2006) suggest that the concept of 'doing' gender permits glimpses of the complex, multi-layered, contextualised, fluid, and sometimes contradictory nature of constructed identities, thus offering a richer rubric for discussion and revealing layers of humanity within the identity. Baxter (2006) stresses 'that the performativity approach has enabled gender identities to be perceived as co-constructed through social interactions and practices' (Mullaney 2007: 23).

Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that conceptualising gender as a performative social construct, rather than as a fixed, pre-determined social identity, opens up a variety of ways in which individuals can construct that identity. Butler (1990: 33) posits that these performative acts take place within a 'rigid regulatory framework', i.e. within the social norms and practices of a given society. Therefore, speakers may 'engage in acts of transgression, subversion and resistance', though Cameron (1997: 50) notes that these challenges to social norms would occur at 'some social cost' to the speaker who transgresses the gendered norms typically associated with their sex (Mullaney 2007: 24).

The author of this paper accepts the concept of performativity, but equally acknowledges that societies have expectations and beliefs around roles (consider the folkloric beliefs considered in the first part of this chapter and also Trudgill's (2000) comment that women cannot stray too far from society's expectations and stereotypes). The author subscribes to the view that individuals, in this case, women managers, are free to perform their identities within the organisation, a further education college, but also that these performative acts will be mitigated by the norms of the organisation. Therefore, while this study focusses on the linguistic strategies used to perform identity in management contexts, it must be acknowledged that the influence of stereotypes potentially permeates every social interaction. The focus of the study is on the performative identity constructed through the linguistic strategies, not on the stereotypes, although their existence must be acknowledged. It is worth returning to Alvesson at this point: 'while gender is constantly being constructed in specific contexts: …cultural ideas frame and restrain

what men and what women should think, feel and do' (Alvesson 2002). Holmes and Schnurr (206: 32) concur that

> *gender is relevant at some level in every workplace interaction, an ever present influence on how we behave, and how we interepret others' behaviour, even if our level of awareness of this influence varies from one interaction to another, and from moment to moment within an interaction.*

We are always aware of the gender of those we are talking to, and we bring to every workplace interaction our familiarity with societal gender stereotypes (from the cultural script), and the gendered norms to which women and men are expected to conform (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 97). The author, like Holmes (2005: 46) and Mullaney (2007: 26), believes that the concept of gender permeates every interaction. Importantly, Bem (1993) and the author agree that the manner in which we perceive one another is 'automatically filtered through a gendered lens.'

Gender and management

Having looked at the cultural and folkloric script for femininity and concepts of gender, discourse and identity, let us now consider the workplace to review the available literature on gendered discourse at work.

> *Workplaces are simply one of many sites for gender performances which have the potential to strengthen the 'gender order'* (Connell 1987).

Holmes and Schnurr (2006: 32) note that

> *in all workplaces individuals unavoidably enact gendered roles, adopt recognisably gendered stances, and construct gender identity in the process of interacting with others at work.*

Eagly and Karau (2002) suggest that the ways in which management roles are gender-typed elicit expectations for behaviour, confirming Trudgill's assertion that men and women assume different places in the social structure, including the division of labour in the family, the types of occupations generally held by men and women, and differences in status, prestige and power associated with being male or female (Atwater et al 2004: 192). Arising from the different societal roles, the role of manager in an organizational context has been 'generally seen as primarily masculine (or agentic), as opposed to feminine (or communal)' (Rudman and Glick, 1999) in Atwater et al 2004: 192.

It is of particular note that working-class speech or the use of non-standard forms 'seems to have connotations of or associations with masculinity, which may lead men to be more favourably disposed to non-standard linguistic forms than women.' It follows that the 'toughness' traditionally considered to be characteristic of working-class life and evidenced in male language use is widely deemed to be a desirable masculine characteristic (Trudgill 2000: 73). In fact, men assume a type of covert prestige from using non-standard forms (including expletives); women, on the other hand, seek overt prestige, perhaps related to aspirational social status, an idea that has received much comment and criticism from feminists. Moreover, men are more likely to use double negatives, to drop the (ng) at the end of words (walkin', rather than walking), and to use glottal stops in words like 'butter' and 'but', whereas women use a higher percentage of prestige features, allowing for social class (Trudgill 2000: 71). Thus, men's use of non-standard forms and expletives is perceived to be evidence of men's masculinity, and this quality of linguistic discourse is potentially still valued as such in the workplace.

Holmes and Stubbe (2003) considered whether different organisations are more or less feminine than others in terms of organisational culture (Holmes and Schnurr 2006: 33). They identified that, in general, IT companies and manufacturing organisations 'typically tended to be labelled as more masculine workplaces, while organisations (and especially government departments) which deal directly with clients, or with people-oriented, social issues, or with education, tended to be perceived as more feminine places to work' (Holmes and Schnurr 2006: 33). Moreover, many societies (including British) expect a higher level of adherence to social norms from women than they do from men (Trudgill 2000: 73). Women may have a tendency to speak in a more prestigious way so as not to be thought sexually promiscuous in a society rife with double standards (Trudgill 2000: 73). There are therefore significant social pressures on women; however, there are equal pressures on men to continue to use 'less prestigious variants as a signal of group solidarity and personal identity, because of concepts of masculinity current in our society' (Trudgill 2000: 74). Some researchers (Coates 1995; Kendall and Tannen 1997; Mullany 2004) note that masculine speech norms potentially still exist in the workplace as a result of the long-standing tradition of work as a male-dominated arena. It would appear that there is a tendency for women to work harder to present

themselves in a better light in terms of the linguistic strategies that they employ.

It is likely that the employees of these organisations draw on a wide range of linguistic and discursive strategies to construct their professional identities in workplace interaction, and to negotiate particular pragmatic functions, such as giving directives, criticising, disagreeing, approving, and so on. These choices reveal particular stances (authoritative, consultative, deferential) which construct not only their professional identities or roles (manager, team leader, support worker), but also their **gender positioning** [author's emphasis and italics] (Holmes, Stubbe and Vine 1999; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Kendall 2003, 2004). It can be considered therefore that 'the most obvious way in which people enact conventional gender identities at work' is 'through linguistic and discursive choices which indirectly index normative femininity whilst also instantiating a particular professional relationship' (Holmes and Schnurr 2006: 34).

Tannen (1993: 199) suggests that the

> *most fruitful approaches to examining gender and language do not try to link behaviour directly to individuals of one sex or another, but rather begin by asking how interaction is framed – in Goffman's terms, what alignments speakers are taking up.*

Similarly, Davies and Harre (1990) ask 'how speakers are positioning themselves with respect to the situation - and then ask where women and men tend to fall in this pattern'. Goffman's idea of framing is also evident in Ochs' (1992) work, where it is argued, 'individuals assume stances that become associated in a given cultural context with being male or female (Tannen 1993: 201).

These views are in contrast to early studies of language and gender that sought to essentialise the language of men and women.

According to Mullany (2004), several previous studies on language and gender in the workplace have found that:

- Men tend to get and keep the floor more often than women.
- Men tend to talk for longer.
- Men tend to interrupt more.
- Men use strategies that challenge, create and maintain status distinctions.

- Females use strategies that are supportive, encourage collaboration and minimise status differences.
- Masculine speech norms are given higher value in the workplace, due to the long tradition of the workplace as a male-dominated arena (Coates 1995; Kendall and Tannen, 1997).
- There are implicit assumptions of female co-operativeness versus male competitiveness.

Other findings from recent studies on male and female language are summarised by Mannion (2011: 115) below.

- Men tend to change the subject more frequently than females.
- Men make less use of backchannelling than women (minimal responses) (i.e. supportive utterances, such as 'yeah' or Hmmm to encourage a speaker to continue); if they do so, it is most likely to show agreement.
- Use of questions: men use questions to request information, whereas women use questions as a way of showing engagement with a conversational partner; thus, women use questions more frequently.
- Self-disclosure – women share details about themselves; men tend to be more impersonal.
- Turn-taking – women are comfortable taking turns in conversation; men like to be at the centre of talk, or remain silent when turns are offered implicitly through hedges such as, 'you know?'
- Verbal aggression – men make more use of threats, swear words, shouting and name calling than women, and are more likely to engage in direct confrontation. Women interpret this behaviour as disruptive to conversation, but men view it as a way of showing status in a social group.
- Listening and attentiveness – women think listening is important and value the role of confidante of the speaker and therefore interrupt less than men.
- Dominance versus subjection – male experts speak at greater length than their female counterparts, and male teachers gain more attention from their students.
- Politeness – women are more concerned with preserving both positive and negative face than men; they are more polite.

Hofstede (2004) identified five cultural dimensions of leadership, one of these being the Masculinity (MAS) index, which is a relative measure of the distribution of roles between the genders for a given society. Interestingly, the UK's score is 66, higher than Arab world nations, than South Africa and the USA and much higher than Sweden, suggesting a stronger value for traditional male and female roles. These gender role expectations are likely to be reflected in the workplace and it could be that women have developed specific linguistic strategies to construct their leader-manager identities in a context that still reflects these male and masculine constructs.

Indeed, Katila and Marilainen (1999: 171) confirm these societal expectations:

> *When women become visible either by being explicitly competent or when they become large in number they constitute a threat to the prevailing system, men start to feel unease which becomes evident in different slips of the tongue expressing that the situation is not 'normal' or 'natural'.*

This statement confirms a similar level of discomfort to that displayed when women contribute more to online discussions, as described earlier in this chapter.

Collinson and Collinson (1997: 402) go so far as to suggest that 'women managers at all hierarchical levels will only survive if they follow the example of most of their male counterparts'. And, yet, should women 'ape' their male colleagues, the Androcentric Rule is invoked. Coates (2004: 201) points out that women

> *…are expected to adopt the more adversarial, information-focused style characteristic of all-male talk, and typical of talk in the public domain, but … they run the risk of being perceived as aggressive and confrontational, as un-feminine. In other words, there is a clash between what is expected of a woman and what is expected of a person with high status in the public sphere.*

It is not surprising then that the linguistic strategies and discursive patterns used in the workplace to accomplish management tasks are therefore also influenced by gender. Indeed, after a life time of training and socialisation into gendered roles and identities and subliminal messages from literature, media, social role and expectation, folklore and policy, it would be unreasonable to expect that the linguistic discourse strategies and associated attitudes that have been learned and practised

successfully would be left at the entrance to the workplace, in this case, a college of further education.

It is evident from a number of studies that men and women bring different conversational strategies to the workplace. In education, Coleman (2000 in Priola 2004: 423) surveyed women head-teachers in England and Wales and found that some identify with a collaborative, people-oriented style of leadership.   'However, critical analysis of gendered power relations in contemporary organisations has demonstrated the pervasiveness and dominance of masculine practices and discourses.' Rather, Hearn (2001) suggests that women have learnt to 'do management in different ways without fundamentally contesting the long established masculine culture.' Hearn's work, therefore, echoes the findings of Trudgill (2000) and Labov (1972) in their assertions that women's language and behaviour cannot stray too far from traditional societal expectations at a given time.

If the workplace values what are perceived to be masculine style and behaviours, what differences are there in terms of the skills that women bring to the boardroom? Table 2.2 sets out the different features of interactional style according to Holmes and Stubbe (2003: 574). The qualities in the right-hand column are 'often regarded by career consultants as the characteristics needed to be a successful manager' (Coates 2004: 197). The communicative competencies that are required to enact the behaviours from the two columns will therefore likely be quite different. Cameron (2008: 29) suggests that 'articulacy or fluency and emotional literacy are among the qualities that are considered to make women better communicators than men'.

There is also evidence that negative stereotypes about the effectiveness of women's discourse in management still persist in the literature (Lakoff 1975; Case 1995; Talbot 2003; Kendall 2003), particularly in relation to the controlling and directing behaviours of management. However, Priola (2004: 424) observes that the four discourses generally associated with femininities are:

- The ability to manage multi-tasks (including administration).
- People and communication skills.
- The ability to focus on support and care for the staff.
- The implementation of a team-based approach rather than an authoritarian

style.

Interestingly, Coates (2004: 210) notes the growing body of research showing that the interpersonal skills that women bring into the workplace are beginning to be valued. The complex demands of modern workplaces require managers to be able to draw on a wide range of interactive styles, including both those traditionally associated with male speakers and those traditionally associated with female speakers. Nelson (1998: 357) posits that it is challenging for women to assert themselves using the collaborative style in a competitive environment, but adds that there are substantial benefits to be gained from using the interactive patterns into which women have been socialised.

Table 2.3

Widely cited Features of 'feminine' and 'masculine' interactional style

<u>Feminine</u>	<u>Masculine</u>
indirect	direct
conciliatory	confrontational
facilitative	competitive
collaborative	autonomous
minor contribution (public)	dominates (public) talking time
supportive feedback	aggressive interruptions
person/process-oriented	task/outcome-oriented
affectively oriented	referentially oriented

Holmes and Stubbe (2003a: 574)

Further, Holmes et al (2003) suggested that women use collaborative humour in the workplace to establish solidarity and collegiality. These findings were supported by Mullany's study in 2003. Mullany found that groups composed of more women members included more instances of the use of humour than those in male-dominated groups. In contrast, men used humour to compete with one another, rather than to bond with each other.

It is worth noting that neither set of constructs, the masculine or the feminine, is inherently more valuable than the other, just potentially different, and the ways in

which leader-managers may use discourse reflects these different constructs. Collinson and Hearn (1994: 9) suggest that

> analyses need to reflect and explore the social relations and identities through men's differences, and their perception of differences, as reproduced and transformed in organisational practices and power asymmetries.

Moreover, it is important to remember that 'gender is but one of the many relevant social identities we construct and perform in the workplace' (Holmes et al 2003: 415). Equally, it is important to consider that work contexts in business and education are different and it would be unrealistic to treat the social context as fixed rather than fluid. We know that gender relations and associated roles of social power have developed through time and will continue to do so. Moreover, the characters of organisations change with changing members of staff and the culture generated by traditions and stories within a given context; the workplace therefore is not a 'monolithic, social context, unmodified by different objectives, participants, and networks', but rather it can be 'viewed as social practice in action' (Holmes et al 2003: 415). The discourse will change as the context changes.

How do women use language at work?

Having observed from the literature that some men and women do tend to use language differently and also that some workplaces might favour masculine discourse and behaviours, let us now consider examples of the types of discourse that characterise the female constructs previously identified.

Directives

First, women 'use more indirect methods of gaining compliance' (Holmes 2003: 415). A directive is an example of an interaction when a manager requests an action of some sort by someone else. However, West (1990 cited in Holmes: 415) 'found that female physicians used more mitigated directives to their patients than did male physicians, and she suggested that these hedged directives were more likely to result in the patients' compliance with the doctor's advice than the male physicians' use of imperatives. Further, in a study of women managers in workplaces in New Zealand, women used indirect strategies to achieve their management goals. Holmes et al (2003: 417) explains that 'linguistic devices such as modal verbs (may,

might, could), modal particles (probably, perhaps, possible, maybe, just, well), tag questions (could you? Isn't it? Eh?) and pragmatic particle hedges (you know, sort of, like, I think, I suppose)' were used to help them to achieve their desired ends. Interestingly, Holmes *et al* (2003) found that women did use direct imperatives, but that these utterances were frequently hedged or softened, as in, 'What we might need to do is send down a confirmation note' (2003:417). This example shows the use of the collaborative 'we', as well as the modal verb 'might'. It was therefore concluded that the women in the New Zealand study used a range of strategies for mitigating the force of workplace directives by using the linguistic hedging devices described earlier. Nevertheless, when required, the women demonstrated that they could also make use of direct imperatives, which have been stereotypically linked with male constructs, partly because they often reflect an imbalance of power (male manager to female receptionist, for example). The women in the New Zealand study were able to use the more direct forms to give instructions, and they tended to do this by using 'need' statements, for example, 'I need these figures by ten.' It is important to remember here that the concept of women in powerful roles is a relatively recent development and that factors 'such as relative power and social distance' can also affect the choice of lexis for the discourse (Brown and Levinson 1987, in Holmes et al 2003: 417). The New Zealand study provides examples of some of the more subtle directives that characterise feminine discourse (Holmes *et al* 2003: 417).

Holmes *et al.* (2003: 417) note the use of 'a strategically mitigated directive form, involving the modal verb *might* and a softening tag question *mightn't we*. The use of 'we' suggests collaboration and inclusion, rather than a detached, distant directive. The collaborative 'we' is used even when the manager involved has no intention of participating in the task that is being directed. It is interesting that women tend to mitigate directives when they don't know each other well or where there is evidence of power imbalance (senior manager and clerical staff, for example) and the use of mitigation can be seen in such statements as, 'I wondered if you wouldn't mind….'

It is interesting that men and women are sometimes perceived differently if they speak the same way. Men are often described as being 'strictly business' or 'no nonsense'; a similar approach in a woman invokes a negative reaction: 'She's got a

pseudo-masculine style' (Tannen 2009: 195). Again, there is criticism of women who appear to ape male linguistic behaviours. Tannen (2009: 195) refers to the concept of directness and how it is a compliment to men but a complaint when applied to women:

Well, her style was very direct. I think very direct and abrupt. Because that was one of the criticisms I had of her . . . was a, somewhat of a lack of tact. Because she could make statements which were right, but not tactfully made. And she tended to upset – or ruffle some feathers.

There is thus some evidence that men and women who do not conform to expectations for their gender may not be liked. Tannen (2009: 203) sums up the situation succinctly:

A woman is in a double bind. Everything she does to enhance her assertiveness risks undercutting her femininity, in the eyes of others. And everything she does to fit expectations of how a woman should talk risks undercutting the impression of competence that she makes.

Authority

The New Zealand study also suggests that female managers shift and check their discourse in response to others, where there is a perceived power imbalance. Again, a 'range of linguistic devices, such as pragmatic particles, are used (you know, sort of, I mean)', as well as repetition, and echoing devices (Holmes et al 2003: 419). These particles have the effect of softening the message and diluting the authority of the manager and support the saving of the 'face' of the subordinate.

In the New Zealand study there is also the example of a female manager negotiating a directive when she senses that 'a subordinate signals reluctance in accepting a particular directive' (2003: 420). In this case, the 'mitigated directive is framed as a tag question, inviting agreement'. In this instance, a policy analyst, in discussion with a senior manager, is reluctant to make a phone call to deal with a particular problem. The transcript reflects the final complementary paired exchanges of a lengthier discussion. This exchange is of particular importance, because the more senior manager uses the collaborative and inclusive 'we' and then amends it to 'you', signifying who will make the phone call. This lexical shift in itself is a subtle example of a direct imperative. The power of the particular request can be seen through the prosodic features of the response— a laugh and then the exaggerated drawl of

capitulation (Okaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaay). This is an interesting example of how a woman manager has used collaborative and inclusive language to influence a reluctant individual to carry out a directive and thus to enact the authority associated with the management role.

From the three examples provided from the New Zealand study, we can see that some women often use discursive strategies to construct their management identities and social relationships with their colleagues; further, they use particular forms to include others and to mitigate for power differentials. The New Zealand study gives credence to Rosener's work (1990: 119). Rosener (1990) also found that women's leadership preferences could be characterised by a more interactive, collaborative and inclusive style and she felt that the style had strong links with transformational leadership. It also supports the work of Alimo-Metcalfe in that it underscores the constructs of relational, supportive, collaborative and inclusive discourse.

> *Women demonstrate a remarkably wide stylistic range in getting things done at work. They give orders when appropriate, but they also effectively negotiate agreement from a reluctant colleague'* (Holmes et al 2003: 422).

There is therefore some evidence that women are indeed able to enact their authority by giving directives and negotiating solutions, but they perform these tasks in ways that are consistent with cultural expectations of the feminine gender in contemporary British society. However, women can also be more direct, using 'need' statements when there is urgency involved. Indeed, perhaps a sense of urgency enables women to use the more direct, male constructs. Holmes et al (2003: 423) suggest that it is this stylistic flexibility and sensitivity to the face needs of others that 'repeatedly emerge as crucial components in the effective manager's verbal repertoire'. This study explores these language patterns in a college of further education in the UK.

Moreover, Mullaney (2004) echoes the statement that women tend to be co-operative and collaborative and males tend to be competitive, noting that females tend to use strategies that are supportive, encourage collaboration and minimise status differences. However, it is important to recognise that earlier studies have, in some cases, oversimplified and over-generalised gender stereotypes in the

workplace, a view supported by Kark (2003: 163). As a further *caveat* we must also remember that not all women are the same, just as not all men are the same, and careful attention must be paid to analysing discourse in practice and being cautious about essentialising men and women. It is more likely that male and female managers draw on a range of interactive styles to suit the situation; this study explores the extent to which the various discursive models are used in different FE management contexts.

In terms of the four discourse patterns generally associated with women leader-managers identified in Priola (2004: 424), we have considered examples of the people and communication skills and the team based, collaborative approach rather than the more authoritarian style, as evidenced by discourse style. Holmes et al (2003: 423) note that women leader-managers display 'sensitivity to face needs of others' and that this approach can foster positive relationships in teams. Rosener (1990) found that women leader-managers 'put effort in building relationships and understanding the people they work with, so that they can adapt their style to each individual' (in Priola 2004: 425).

Multi-tasking

Further, multi-tasking or the 'ability to manage different activities simultaneously finds its origins in the role of women in various societies' (Priola 2004: 424). She notes that almost all of the participants in her research in a UK institution of higher education 'referred to multi-tasking as a female quality and ability, which contributes to the construction of feminine identities in the workplace'. In addition, the ability to 'juggle several things at once was also reported as one of the differences between women and men in Deem's (2003) study of 137 manager-academics' (both male and female). A comment from one participant (Susan) follows:

> *I don't think that there are particular benefits in being a woman in my position. However, I find it generally easier to work with female colleagues because they can cope with multitasks, they do what they say and get on with things without too much fuss'* (Susan, Associate Dean).

Analysis of Susan's discourse shows that she views her own role as being gender neutral; however, she finds it generally easier to work with other women because of their ability to multi-task, among other attributes. The salient point here, of course, is

not that men cannot multi-task, but that women construct themselves as being able to do so and in this way differentiate themselves and their management practice from that of male colleagues.

The nurturing manager

Another of the 'feminine' management constructs is that of supporting and nurturing. 'Research into the feminisation of management suggests that contemporary managers are moving towards substituting 'masculine power' of decision-making, giving orders and being obeyed, with the power to give others (work force) sustenance, nurture their growth and care for them' (Fondas 1997 in Priola 2004: 425). A head of department, Linda, comments

> *In my job, I try to ensure a balanced workload and also to suit the right people to the right jobs. I think I offer support and help whenever it is needed. As a leader, I think you need to take the people with you, to encourage and make sure that everybody could do what is best for them. Also, you should not be aggressive and I think I am a good leader, however, for some I may be evil.*

The above discourse shows that Linda is committed to supporting, helping and developing the people with whom she works. She is very aware however that male colleagues might perceive her in a different light. Indeed, in another organisation, a male manager commented of an operationally-involved leader-manager:

> *The Dean should not be so 'hands-on' on the daily running of the school. She should be out there talking to government bodies and authorities.*

The criticism here seems to be related to the proportion of time spent on what are perceived to be management task, when leadership activities are expected. Does this criticism suggest gendered perceptions of leadership and management?
It would appear, therefore, that when women step out of the male expectations of leadership and management, they might be open to criticism from their male co-workers, possibly because they have stepped outside what, to the male leader-manager, is 'normal' behaviour, as noted by Katila and Marilainen (1999: 171), and the Androcentric Rule is again invoked with the accompanying backlash.

There appears to be a difference in the way that men and women construct their identities in the workplace, and they tend to be somewhat different in terms of expectation, influenced by social factors and the fact that the work place is still male

dominant.

Tannen (2009: 166) suggests that 'Images of authority come drenched in gender'. In 1967 McGregor commented 'that the model of a successful manager was aggressive, competitive, firm and just, and argued that he is not feminine or intuitive in a womanly sense' (Mavin et al 2004: 295).

Mavin (2004: 295) posits that 'Ambitious women who aspire to leadership are still subject to derogatory comments such as Dragons, Battle-axes and Barracudas and perceived as more male than men'(Mavin 2001; Still 1994). Western culture provides a range of stereotypes for women: 'school mistress, head nurse, headmistress, doting mother, cruel stepmother, dragon lady, catwoman, witch, bitch' (Tannen 2009: 165). In an unusual example below, Margaret Thatcher is linked with the first, second and third of Tannen's stereotypes above, while reference to the more pejorative dragon lady can be found throughout the media references to her leadership.

*Newsweek'*s review of Margaret Thatcher's memoir about her years as British prime minister:

> *For 11 1/2 years, Margaret Thatcher presided over the British government like a strong-minded headmistress. She reshaped the economy, broke the unions and starched up Britain's languid posture in world affairs. Through it all, she thoroughly dominated the 'wets' in her own cabinet, clobbering them with a metaphorical handbag whenever they showed too little spine in the defence of conservative ideology – or too much in opposing her will.*

It is interesting that the first simile links Thatcher with an acceptable stereotype for a woman: the headmistress. The writer of this piece also used the verb 'starched up', thus linking Thatcher with the archetypal housewife/washerwoman, 'if not a head nurse stiff in a starched uniform'. Further, Tannen posits that the image of Thatcher 'clobbering them with her metaphorical handbag' downplays her achievements: 'A woman clobbering men with her handbag is an object of laughter, not fear or admiration' (Tannen 2009: 166). Thus the discourse used to describe the achievements of a female prime minister is itself used to indirectly discredit her achievements; had this prime minister been a man, it is likely that the discourse would have conjured images of the military or sporting prowess, rather than linking him to his home – the implied rightful place of a woman. Consider an ambitious man

who is short in stature: he may well be described as having a 'Napoleon complex'. This characterises the male in terms of military hero. It is unlikely that his achievements would be undermined through the discourse used to describe them.

Management itself has traditionally suggested maleness and this maleness carried with it the managerial and leadership qualities, sometimes that women are assumed inherently by men to lack (Hearn 1994: 196 in Mavin et al 2004: 295). Mavin posits that those who cling to this stereotypical view are 'likely to perceive women as ineffective leaders in jobs incongruent with the traditional female passive sex role' (Ferrario 1991 in Mavin et al 2004: 295).

According to Tannen (2009: 168):

> *femaleness is associated with softeners, mitigation and politeness, whereas maleness is associated with authority. This means that women who want to sound authoritative must risk sounding male.*

Conversely, men who want to sound polite must risk sounding female. The very image of authority in our society tends to be associated with masculinity.

The media portrays professional women in an unflattering light. Hillary Clinton is often referred to as being 'careerist'. Tannen (2009: 169) asks of careerism:

> *Is it, on the model of 'sexist' someone who discriminates on the basis of careers? It is used, of course, to describe a woman who is so focused on her career that she neglects her family or shirks the responsibility of having a family at all. …it is just a word that brings to mind the negative image of a woman who has a career rather than a job.*

It is interesting that society judges women in roles of public authority so harshly; indeed women are judged by how they **enact** their authority, and, according to Tannen (2009: 170), this 'poses a particular challenge for women.' The reason for this is clear: the way that society expects women to talk is different from the talk expected in the accepted images of authority.

> *Women are expected to hedge their beliefs as opinions, to seek opinions and advice from others, to be 'polite' in their requests. If a woman talks this way, she is seen as lacking in authority. But if she talks with certainty, makes bold statements of fact rather than hedged statements of opinion, interrupts others, goes on at length, and speaks in a declamatory and aggressive manner, she will be disliked.* (Tannen 2009: 170)

Indeed, Tannen notes that many women in positions of authority explain that 'what makes them good managers is that they do *not* act like an authority figure – insofar as an authority figure is thought to be authoritarian). 'Women then must gauge the fine balance between exercising authority and not appearing too authoritarian' (Tannen 2009: 171).

Identity and Demeanor

Women therefore construct a 'demeanour' for themselves. '"Demeanour" was coined by Goffman to describe the way we show the world the qualities we want others to believe we have. Those in positions of authority must speak in ways that create the proper demeanour for someone in their position' (Tannen 2009: 173). In other words, then, it is possible that women are in a situation where they must appear to downplay their authority while exercising it – a considerable challenge. Goffman's term 'demeanour' where someone in authority constructs an identity that displays the desired qualities must be balanced by 'deference'. Others, therefore, must behave in a way that acknowledges that an individual has these qualities: 'If others refuse to treat you as deserving of authority, you can't 'hold up' your face on your own' (Tannen 2009: 181). Bearing in mind that social constructionism refers to the sociological term that everyday reality, including the enactment of authority, is constructed through and maintained by social interactions (Berger and Luckman 1966), there is then a sense that we co-construct our identities in the work place, and influence or authority is also jointly socially constructed. A corollary of women downplaying their authority could be that this practice also encourages men to downplay women's authority and to question it. Ainsworth-Vaughn (in Tannen, 2009: 184) describes a woman doctor observed in consultation with a male patient:

> *She laughs good-naturedly and supports topics rather than initiating them…She plays down being board certified. All this is jointly constructed. [The male patient] is initiating so many topics she hardly can fit one in. He plays down her board certification…. When the topic of her success comes up, he changes the topic to whether she went shopping while she was in Minneapolis taking the boards.*

The sociolinguistic term 'jointly constructed' used here suggests that the identity performed by the doctor is co-constructed with the patient, but the doctor is in danger of creating the 'wrong impression' by the malleable nature of her performance. As Tannen suggests, 'Wearing the mantle of authority lightly allows it to be more easily

pushed off your shoulders'. Tannen's warning is clear: A woman who is simply trying to be appropriately feminine in her manner is seen as submissive and a woman who is not is seen as dominating and reviled for it (2009:200).

Conclusion

This literature review has considered the cultural themes, messages and beliefs related to women's language use, the influence of feminism and feminist linguistics in terms of deficit, dominance and difference, as well as setting out the author's assumptions in relation to critical discourse analysis, gender and identity. The chapter has also considered the discursive strategies of women at work and how these are used to construct management roles and to enact their authority. The concept of authority and how women enact that authority through discursive strategies to influence others have also been considered.

Some of the linguistic discourse strategies that woman managers use to achieve their aims and objectives and to construct/perform her management identity in a workplace that still possibly reflects and values the male tradition have been explored. There is suggestion that women prefer to use a more participative, collaborative, supportive style, consistent with some aspects of transformational leadership. Rosener (1990) and others (Edwards 2013) suggest that women focus on enhancing the self-worth of others in the work place, as well as sharing more power and information. Examples from a study of women leader-managers in New Zealand and in a HE institution in the UK have provided evidence of how women use discursive strategies to achieve their aims in the workplace. Mullaney (2007) presents the results of her investigations in retail and manufacturing contexts. There is no published research available on discourse patterns amongst leader-managers in the FE sector in the UK.

The chapter has also traced the development of the field of language and gender through early feminism, characterised by the dominance and difference approaches, through to the post-structuralist view that women draw on a range of strategies in performing 'gender roles' within the parameters of the society or organisation in which they operate.

There still appears to be considerable influence of the dominance and difference

discourses, however, possibly due to the cultural script and possibly due to sociolinguistic studies that categorized language as a code separate from situated social practice and context. The linguistic strategies used by women to develop both equal and subordinate power relationships at work are of interest, particularly in terms of how women adapt their leader-manager style to the context, using hedged directives to equals or to new employees (where there is considerable social distance). Women seem to pay far more attention to the 'face' needs of others and work hard to appear not to be authoritarian or to appear not to be exerting authority, when they influence others to 'get things done'. Holmes et al (2003: 423) suggest that it is this stylistic flexibility and sensitivity to the face needs of others that 'repeatedly emerge as crucial components in the effective manager's verbal repertoire'.

The chapter has established the fact that more recent research focuses on differential tendencies, that is, ways in which women and men tend to talk differently from each other in a given context. 'Sex preferential' phonetic, intonation, lexical, syntactic and wider interactional tendencies have been identified' and discussed at length in the preceding pages. These sex-preferential tendencies are investigated in this research study in a management context.

This chapter has also established that the cultural script from nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and social expectation is gendered. In most cases, female and male children are socialised differently through a range of language-related means from birth; they are treated differently in the classroom and at university. It would be unreasonable to expect that these gendered role expectations are somehow 'forgotten' when adults move into the workplace.

In conclusion, it would appear that the implementation of equal opportunities policy and practice has improved the way forward for more women to engage in leader-manager roles. The preceding examples have shown how some women may differentiate their practice from that of men and how they may potentially construct a feminine, leader-manager identity by refuting the 'authoritarian, hard and tough style' associated with Margaret Thatcher's approach, which aped male identity. Trudgill (2000: 80) explains:

Social attitudes … clearly have a close connection with the importance of identity…We now have to suppose that signalling one's identity is equally important.

Trudgill continues: linguistic structures 'play a role…in signalling and reinforcing a speaker's identity as male or female. So, also, 'we have to assume, do the different lexical, phonological and grammatical variables' that have been under discussion. Building on the use of linguistic strategies to signal and reinforce identity as male and female, then so must the use of these strategies function to establish our workplace identities as leader-managers.

This study explores the discursive strategies that male and female managers use to construct their workplace identity (ies) and to influence others in the daily exercise of their management roles. The investigation of discourse patterns used by both male and female managers in the FE context could provide greater insight and understanding and, most importantly, raise awareness of possible latent attitudes regarding women's roles in leadership and management and suggest methods of modifying communicative competency within the organisation.

Chapter Three sets out the research approach, delineates and provides a rationale for the methodology for the study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 INTRODUCTION

> *Education is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry that has borrowed concepts and theories from psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, and other disciplines.'* (McMillan and Schumacher 1984: 15)

Unquestionably, multi- and inter-disciplinary concepts and theories can enrich and extend research-based knowledge in education and other fields. The present study is no exception and similarly draws on a range of disciplines and methodologies to inform its design and process.

While various types of research design could be considered in responding to the research questions, outlined in Chapter One - descriptive, experimental, correlational and causal-comparative, to cite several examples, the study seemed most amenable to a qualitative research approach. As Cohen et al (2008:167) assert, 'the social and educational world is a messy place, full of contradictions, richness, complexity, connectedness, conjunctions and disjunctions'.   This observation informed the adoption of the qualitative, naturalistic research approach underpinning this study, including the two central premises that

- Humans actively construct their own meanings of situations, and
- Meaning arises out of social situations and is handled through interpretive processes. (Cohen et al 2008: 167)

Holmes and Meyerhoff (2003) indicate that integrated approaches which 'combine methodologies are highly productive' (in Mullaney 2007: 50), both in identifying trends in data and also in producing the detailed, finely-honed analysis of the phenomena under investigation. However, the writer considers that the central issue in terms of methodological approach must be one of fitness of purpose for the task at hand. Bearing this consideration in mind, for the topic under investigation here, the writer chose a qualitative approach, primarily because the aim of the research was to deepen understanding of how managers in FE use discourse to construct their management identities. According to Mullaney (2007: 52):

The methodological principle of needing to gain a deeper understanding of context through an ethnographic approach runs through a range of work on language and gender, including Gal (1979), Brown (1980), and more recently, work in the collections of Bucholtz et al (1999) and Baron and Kotthoff (2001). It is also important not to overlook the fact that variationist sociolinguistic research has also utilized ethnographic methods, including Milroy (1987), Cheshire (1982) and Eckert (2000).

Sociolinguistics and ethnography

Ethnography in sociolinguistics has been traditionally associated with the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1974) and interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1974: 1982 as cited in Mullaney 2007: 52). Further, driven by the aim of attempting to gain a deeper understanding of issues, the ethnographic approach forms the backbone of much work on language and gender (Mullaney 2007: 52). The approach taken in this study is a linguistic analysis of potentially gendered utterances, gained through observation and interviews, which are then examined against the overarching gendered discourses which may operate at an institutional level.

Defining ethnography

In anthropology, ethnography refers to a specific set of methods:

The ethnographer participates overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research. (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 1).

In anthropology this 'extended period of time' is not quantified and it has usually meant that the researcher absorbs him/herself in a community (sometimes with exotic tribes) for many years (Duranti 1997 in Mullaney 2007: 53). From a sociolinguistic perspective, however, Swann and Maybin (2008) posit that it is 'very uncommon for researchers to embrace ethnography in this traditional, anthropological sense'. Taking the lead of Green and Bloome (1995), they argue that sociolinguists are far more likely to follow an *ethnographic perspective*, though nevertheless one that is still influenced by ethnographic principles, including insider observations, based on ethnographic methods (Mullaney 2007: 53). The ethnographic perspective used in this study therefore follows the sociolinguistic

tradition, rather than the anthropological tradition, in that a range of ethnographic methods are used, including insider or participant observation – please refer to the discussion of the role of participant researcher later in the chapter. The length of time 'in the field' was two academic terms.

This particular sociolinguistic study therefore adopted a qualitative research approach that was influenced by ethnographic methods. The distinctive feature of this form of collecting data is that a participant-observer records as much as possible concerning a situation (in this case, the linguistic discourse patterns used in carrying out management tasks) over a particular period of time. The investigator therefore adopted a dynamic or social constructionist approach as distinct from those associated with the approaches of deficit, difference and dominance (Coates 2004: 5). The dynamic approach, i.e. recording live interactions, allows the data to emerge naturally; subsequent analysis of the products of interaction focussed on the elements of the communication, rather than being framed by assumptions that women's language was in deficit, culturally different or repressed. Some of these biased discourses were evident in the 'talk' of the participants, and these have been explored to further understanding of the gendered attitudes at play within the organisation. However, one difficulty with qualitative research influenced by both ethnographic and phenomenological approaches is the labour intensiveness of its very nature and the need to triangulate the findings, a process which can be challenging. Cohen et al (2008: 141) suggest that 'triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint …' Hence, the study uses the multi-method approach of observation and recording of meetings; interviews to discuss salient aspects arising from these meetings; and completion of a classification task.

The research undertaken in this study, therefore, is both qualitative and naturalistic, recognising, first, that 'only time-bound and context-bound working hypotheses are possible and that all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping' (Cohen et al 2008: 167); and, secondly, that the knowledge and insights obtained from qualitative research can enrich and extend knowledge in education and other social disciplines.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) suggests that

> *Social research is essential for democracy. Government of the people, for the people, by the people requires research about the people …. Democracy needs research.*

There is an assumption that research studies are performed with the aim of developing and improving both society and education and promoting better understandings of people within their own contexts. Ideally, such research should make an impact on the very issue (and the people) that it investigates. Silverman (2005: 242) suggests that quality research should, where possible, contribute to both practice and policy. Freebody (2004: 218) goes further and identifies the aim of educational research as being 'to change the social world by discovering better understandings of its qualities'. To this end, this study will contribute to the understanding of the use of management discourse in a further education college and inform the conceptualisation of staff development programmes for managers. However, this commitment to producing research that is of relevance to wider society, as well as to those being researched, carries with it a range of complex issues to be considered and mitigated in selecting research methodologies.

3.1 Overview

More specifically, having established that the purpose of the study was to deepen understanding of gendered discourse in social practice as it relates to management in the further education sector, the first section of this chapter will briefly review the philosophical approach underpinning the research that was set out in some detail in Chapter One and situate the project in a research paradigm. The second part of the chapter will consider the research design, the methodology itself, sampling, analysis and ethics relating to the study, to provide a perspective on management discourse in FE, with a view to raising awareness of these practices in the College under discussion. The chapter will also set out the decisions made and justifications for these at each stage of the process.

3.2 Research Approach

The first consideration in a study of this nature is whether the approach should be qualitative or quantitative. In the past decade, there has been a noticeable transition

to qualitative, ethnographic methodological approaches in the study of language and gender (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003). This transition seems to be reflected as a trend across various disciplines in the social sciences, including organisational and management studies (Alvesson and Deetz 2000 in Mullaney 2007: 50).

Freebody (2004: 215) posits that 'qualitative research in education has been seen as a radical, potentially transformative insertion into educational practice' and he cautions that 'methods are not of themselves practically, socially or ideologically conservative or transformative'. He is right to acknowledge that methods are neutral in themselves and that it is the attitudes and ideological positions behind them that are of real importance in terms of how the findings of the research are to be used. Critical discourse analysis is a method that examines the structures used and the particular linguistic patterns adopted in specific contexts. It also examines such events as interruptions and 'talk overs', as well as other linguistic indicators of power and rank. Even silence can be interpreted as being laden with meaning in some circumstances. As such, the discourse used within an organisation can reflect the 'voice' of the organisation, both formal and informal. As noted in Chapter 2, Foucault (1979: 208) suggests that organisational discourse presents systems of thinking, acting and being that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak. Critical discourse analysis was therefore used to delve into and examine the world of management in a further education college.

According to Wilson (1977) in McMillan and Schumacher (1984: 308), 'An ethnographer has a naturalistic-ecological and a qualitative-phenomenological research orientation'. This study is influenced by each of these perspectives. The first perspective views 'human actions as strongly influenced by the setting in which they occur and sees human behaviour as inexplicable without contextual meanings….Ecological psychologists believe that 'settings generate regularities in behaviour that often transcend differences among individuals' (Wilson 1977: 246-253). Similarly, 'sociologists studying organizations suggest that the traditions, roles, values and norms that are part of organizational life affect human behaviour' McMillan and Schumacher 1984: 308). The researcher in this case, therefore, studied the discourse in natural, rather than contrived, contexts, so as to observe the organisation and its ways of talking in dynamic action. However, it is clear that while

the data was gathered in the naturalistic settings of meetings, the study is not ethnographic in nature, as there was not a prolonged period of observation or the recording of detailed field notes. Rather, the study is influenced by ethnographic approaches in that the data were collected in real-life, real-time settings, as well as in interviews. However, drawing also on Phenomenology, the researcher recognizes that behaviours and utterances in any context can be interpreted in a variety of ways and that the most important framework for drawing conclusions about behaviours and utterances is consultation with the participants themselves.

> *The discipline of phenomenology may be defined initially as the study of structures of experience, or consciousness. Literally, phenomenology is the study of "phenomena": appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view.*
> (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/)

In general, the participant-researcher considers the interpretations of subjects to have first importance. It is for this reason that the researcher drew on both of the ethnographic perspectives described above. Therefore, again, the study is distinct from ethnography, although it is influenced by ethnographic, phenomenological approaches.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992:88) called for language and gender researchers to develop 'an interdisciplinary community of scholarly practice' on the basis that critical social theory should be combined with sociolinguistics to further the development of research on language and gender. As discussed in Chapter One, this particular study has been difficult to situate within a discrete philosophical framework, as its content intersects the areas of sociolinguistics, leadership and management and gender studies, to name several. Mullaney (2007:6) suggests that the centralist model is 'defined as one where a single discipline still remains at the centre of knowledge' (in this case, sociolinguistics) with reference to social constructionism, and critical social theory, as appropriate. Olsson and Walker (2003: 388) posit:

> *We believe that a constructionist approach can complement and add to*

statistical or qualitative research findings, in this case the statistical evidence of the under-representation of women in executive leadership positions…

Thus, as argued by Olsson and Walker (2003:388) 'a social constructionist approach shifts the focus of research from empirical data to discourse':

> *…as the prime site for understanding individuals, social groups and society.*
> (Weatherall 2002: 82)

Further, Olsson and Walker (2003: 388) assert 'that a social constructionist approach goes some way to explaining the persistence of attitudes that place women in an antithetical position to executive power'.

In summary, this study is a qualitative, sociolinguistic investigation that draws on aspects of ethnography and phenomenology, as well as theories of social constructionism and critical social theory and applies these to the investigation of manager workplace discourse in a further education college.

In order to investigate the discourse, the study was framed through the following research questions.

1. How do managers (both male and female) use discourse to construct their management identities?
2. Are there implicit attitudes linked to gender and management embedded in the discourse?
3. Is there evidence that gendered discourses are at play in the organisation?
4. How might the findings from this study contribute to the conceptualisation of leadership and management professional development programmes?

3.3 Rationales for research approach

Silverman (2005: 242) asserts that good qualitative research '…thinks theoretically through and with data' and 'develops empirically sound, reliable and valid findings' as well as using 'methods which are demonstrably appropriate to the research problem'.

The subjective nature of qualitative research methods means that care must be taken with respect to triangulation and to reduce sample bias as much as possible.

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Silverman (2005: 242) underscores the need to validate key interpretations and descriptions. The type of 'key interpretation' likely to be generated through qualitative research of the type under discussion here requires further confirmation through triangulation. Validation of this sort therefore engenders a greater sense of trustworthiness in terms of the conclusions reached from the study; the writer in this case was aware that subjective descriptions, assertions and interpretations drawn by the researcher would require validation by the participants of the study, providing opportunity for them to assent, to modify the result or to choose to remove their comments. Stake (in Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 453) suggests:

> *The qualitative researcher is interested in diversity of perception, even the multiple realities within which people live. Triangulation helps to identify different realities.*

Silverman (2005: 233) also emphasises the importance of the trustworthiness of the data and its analysis and raises questions of quality and integrity of research. This study therefore made opportunity to confirm the subjective interpretations of events or findings with those of others, as advocated by Stake (1995: 113). The data and interviews thus were used to triangulate the data with the perspectives of the individuals concerned.

3.4 Research approach applied to critical discourse analysis

As noted in Chapter One, critical discourse analysis is a method of analytical research that primarily studies the way 'social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (van Dijk 2006). Hence, this method of analysis of research is particularly suited to exploring social groups where there are inequalities of power, as might still be the case in terms of female power in male-dominated management contexts.

According to Tannen (1982: 81): 'One cannot speak without showing one's attitude to the message and speech activity.' For example, a speaker may wrinkle his/her nose and this can reveal attitudes towards the ideas and concepts under discussion. While this study did not draw on examples of paralanguage, the prosodic features of

exchanges (pauses, false starts, changes in intonation and emphasis) were vital in coding perceived attitudes, in addition to the lexical features of the management discourse.

The qualitative method of discourse analysis as a research tool can provide a multi-dimensional picture of an individual's or a group's experiences. In fact, it provides a method of analysing the 'hidden' issues that are sometimes obscured by politics and rhetoric. Indeed, van Dijk (1981: 6) reminds us that:

> *An interactional analysis of discourse will not only be concerned*
> *with structural or functional properties of dialogues. It will*
> *especially have to indicate what the various social contexts of*
> *these structures and functions are. Not any conversation can*
> *take place in any context. Context types, situations, participants*
> *and their various functions (roles, positions, status, etc.) and the*
> *rules and conventions regulating their possible actions and*
> *speech acts in these contexts must be specified. Again we see*
> *that a serious analysis of discourse requires an interdisciplinary*
> *approach.*

By considering the setting, the context and the participants, as van Dijk suggests, together with an analysis of the actual spoken discourse, the method can produce a well-rounded profile of the individual(s). However, one of the key areas of potential difficulty with critical discourse analysis is the subjectivity of the analyst in terms of the inferences made. Hence, perception checking and triangulation with others was built into the research design to mitigate for partisanship on the part of the researcher, to ensure that the story told by the data is a well-evidenced story, rather than the one the researcher hoped to tell.

The researcher in this case has drawn on her background of linguistic analysis, cognitive psychology and educational theory. van Dijk (2001: 363) suggests:

> *There is still a gap between more linguistically oriented studies of text and talk*
> *and the various approaches in the social. The first often ignore concepts and*
> *theories in sociology and political science on power abuse and inequality,*
> *whereas the second seldom engage in detailed discourse analysis.*
> *Integration of various approaches is therefore very important to arrive at a*
> *satisfactory form of multidisciplinary CDA.*

Moreover, Toolan (1997: 83) raises other issues when he cautions that critical discourse analysis needs to critique some of its own theoretical distinctions (e.g. between description and interpretive explanation). He goes further to say that:

> *It needs to be more critical and more demanding of the text linguistics it uses, it must strive for greater thoroughness and strength of evidence in its argumentation while pursuing simplicity of presentation, and it must not shrink from prescribing correction or reform of particular hegemonizing discourses.*

Toolan's point is a valid one. There is a responsibility on the part of the researcher to present detailed and thorough analyses of data and then to use the research to challenge the status quo.

Buchanan (1992 cited in Silverman 2005:237) argues that the quality of qualitative research:

> *…cannot be determined by following prescribed formulas. Rather its quality lies in the power of its language to display a picture of the world in which we discover something about ourselves and our common humanity.*

In terms of providing a multi-dimensional picture of the world of the population being studied, in this case, managers in a further education college, critical discourse analysis has emphasised some interesting and salient points, particularly relating to aspects of management interactions, such as directness and the use of silence, for example. The aim of the study was to contribute to the writer's developing Buchanan's (1992) better 'picture of the world' and to enhance her understanding of the gendered discourses at play in the College community. However, in summary, researchers using the method of critical discourse analysis need to be particularly clear about the quality of research design, data collection and multi-disciplinary analysis to convince other researchers of the validity and reliability of the approach.

Validity and reliability in interviews also warrant consideration in this section. Given that gender, status and age can be potent sources of bias (Cohen et al 2008: 150), the researcher used multi-methods in order not to rely too heavily on one source of data and to reduce the 'tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support preconceived notions; misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the

respondent is saying; and misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked' (Cohen et al 2008: 150). Therefore, the three different sources of data produced by the multi-method approach presented a greater richness of data from different perspectives to offer multiple views of the problem under investigation.

3.5 Methods

To explore the linguistic strategies for constructing and performing management identities, six meetings were taped and six interviews with both male and female managers (two at the three different levels) then followed. These interviews explored views/attitudes towards management and aimed to explore particular exchanges that had occurred in the recorded meetings.

> *It is a long-standing tradition within discourse-orientated sociolinguistic research to examine language in use, and more specifically, it is the job of sociolinguists to focus on how workplace identities are constructed through communicative interaction* (Marra et al 2006 in Mullaney (2007: 41).

These follow-up interviews, based on selected extracts from the meetings, determined by specific criteria set out on page 63, explored potential multiple perceptions in a more comprehensive manner and reduced the effect of the researcher's individual interpretations and biases affecting the outcomes. The interviews were divided into two parts: the first part checked the interpretation of the illustrative exchange or theme identified in the recorded meeting; the second explored managers' views on their own roles as leaders and managers, using Yukl's Taxonomy of Management Subroles (1989) as a catalyst for discussion. It is important to note here that Yukl's Taxonomy was not a tool for data collection in its own right; rather, it was a means of initiating discussion about management subroles. However, the data gleaned from these indices were analysed using SPSS to identify relationships between the scoring of behaviours as masculine/feminine/neutral and age/gender, although the sample was too small to identify statistically significant relationships: these data, which add an interesting dimension to the study, are available in the appendices, but they are ancillary to the main sources of data, i.e. transcripts of meetings and interviews.

The meeting and interview data were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim;

results were anonymised. Thematic analysis was then conducted on the transcripts. The data were coded for themes identified from the literature (see page 73) and analysed manually because of the researcher's commitment to being 'close' to the data; the use of Nvivo was explored and considered, but since the data were so rich and required personal, close interpretation, it was felt that Nvivo would not add significant richness to the process.

To summarise, the study drew on multiple methods: audio-taped meetings and focussed, semi-structured interviews, exploring illustrative exchanges in some depth, as well as the completion of Yukl's Taxonomy (1989), with associated discussion, that provided the basis for the exploration of gender and management.

Thus, the method generated a triple layer of data for analysis: the original data source; the first part of the interview to explore the data source with the individual; and the second part of the interview to discuss management behaviours in general, to determine whether gendered attitudes exist, using Yukl's Taxonomy as a catalyst for this discussion. The linguistic strategies used to construct management and the management identity permeated the three layers of data. All names have been anonymised to protect the identity of the participants.

3.5.1 Research Design

The study was non-experimental in design because, in this case, the investigator had 'no control of causation' (McMillan and Schumacher 1984: 25). Non-experimental research is descriptive in nature, as it simply describes phenomena (behaviours or events) that have occurred. Descriptive research, by its very nature, seeks to further extend understanding of particular phenomena, as it assesses the nature of existing conditions. McMillan and Schumacher 1984: 26 suggest: 'There is no manipulation or treatment of subjects; the researcher takes things as they are'. The study in this case sought to explore the language patterns used by managers working in the Further Education sector and the extent to which these patterns are used to construct a professional identity to determine whether this identity was gendered. Thus, it is the 'how' which was being sought through the research; non-experimental, descriptive research was therefore appropriate for the study. The

research outcomes provide a description of how men and women construct their management identities and the linguistic strategies they use to do so.

3.5.2 The Participant-observer

Participant-observation is the 'traditional methodology of anthropologists, who study different cultures by living in the society' (McMillan and Schumacher 1984: 306). Interestingly, it has also been the methodology of 'winners of the most prestigious sociological research awards given by the American Sociological Association' (306). McMillan and Schumacher note that 'increased publication of ethnographic studies, presentations of research papers at national conferences, and the growing numbers of methodological writings indicate recognition of the research contributions obtained through this methodology (306). The approach is therefore contributing more and more to the understanding of particular sections of society. Smith (1979: 329) suggests:

> *outside the dominant educational psychological paradigm in educational research, a larger body of research exists within the qualitative, ethnographic, participant-observation genre. Its roots lie especially in anthropology and several traditions of sociology. A brief overview … suggests its applicability to a broad array of problems within education – schools, classrooms, curriculum development, and evaluation.*

The writer contends that the ethnographically-influenced, participant-observation genre was the appropriate research orientation for the study of gendered discourse in leadership and management in a further education context. While there are inherent advantages in the participant-observation approach (relationships, both formal and informal can be developed in more natural environments, than those in which experiments and surveys are conducted), there were, however, some challenges associated with the role of participant-observer, as discussed below. Stewart (1998) in Mullaney (2007: 53) 'argues that…participation observation is the key research tool of any ethnographic study, while Alvesson and Deetz (2000) suggest that 'participation observation, accompanied with loosely structured interviews, make up the most fundamental elements of ethnography, with further engagement in informal talk and examination of materials' (Mullaney 2007: 54). With particular reference to management studies, Alvesson and Deetz (2000: 76) emphasise the importance of conducting informal interviews and engaging in informal talk with managers is seen as an essential part of the field work process.

They suggest that 'without the information gleaned from these methods it is difficult to comment on 'the meanings of an ideas guiding particular behaviours and practices' (2000: 76).

The participant-observer 'is a person who has a role in the setting in which he or she intends to study. … This role exists whether or not the study is conducted. The ethnographer conducts his or her normal activities while collecting data. … the researcher must follow ethical and legal procedures to protect the rights of human subjects' (McMillan and Schumacher 1984: 315). The researcher in this case was therefore an insider, with 'the advantage of knowing the setting and having the participants' trust. The insider can more easily move into a variety of situations as part of his or her normal routine' (McMillan and Schumacher 1984: 315). There are a range of degrees of immersion in research activity - from the researcher 'who assumes an insider role and who does not declare that he or she is a researcher (Cohen et al 2008: 404) to the participant-as-observer, who is 'part of the social life of participants' (Cohen et al 2008: 404) and who also documents/records events and actions for research purposes. In this case, the researcher was participant-observer; there was no covert observation of the meetings. The researcher participated in the meetings in her regular management capacity, while recording and observing. Cohen et al (2008: 404) suggest that participation observation may be particularly useful in studying small groups or for researchers who wish to reach inside a situation (such as behaviour in organisations) or when the primary interest is in gathering detailed information about what is happening, as in this study. Morrison (1993: 88) in Cohen at al (2008: 405) suggests that 'being immersed in a particular context over time, not only will the salient features of the situation emerge and present themselves, but a more holistic view will be gathered of the interrelationships of factors'. It is widely recognised that the insider researcher participates in the daily life of the 'community, its committees and academic activities' (Hanson 2013: 391), as well as a 'legitimate' view of its history – the legends, the heroes, the villains and the dark secrets (Edwards 1999). Thus, an insider can access richness and depth in an organisation that would escape an outsider. This immersion facilitates the generation of thick descriptions, particularly of social processes and interaction. According to Cohen et al (2008: 405), the data derived from participant observation are 'strong on reality'.

However, despite the apparent advantages identified above, Hanson (2012: 389) suggests that there are multiple complexities related to carrying out insider research, namely proximity, role ambiguity, internal politics, ethics (discussed later in a separate section) and voice.

It is recognised by the researcher that proximity to an organisation which is also the object of research can result in much that is unsaid, unchallenged or taken for granted, because of the shared understanding and insider knowledge alluded to above – hence some concepts might remain unexplored and there might not be a perceived need to interrogate them. There might also be an assumption that the researcher sees events through the same lens as the respondent. There is therefore the danger that some statements will be 'taken for granted' and that participant observers might be less critical than they would be if they were seeing events in the organisation 'with fresh eyes' from a distance (Hanson 2013: 389). Platt (1981) suggests that the ease of everyday conversation could spill over into the interviews, such that the researcher either 'refrains from probing too deeply' or, at the other end of the spectrum, offers opinions that bias the responses (in Hanson 2013: 391). The researcher concurs with this assessment and one of the key concerns in carrying out this study was the reduction of bias, as much as is possible. In approaching the interviews the researcher tried to limit linguistic interventions in addition to the questions to neutral back-channelling or acknowledgements ('Right', 'Yep', 'OK', 'Really?') that encouraged participants to continue to develop their thoughts. Other statements confirmed process: 'So you are quite happy with what we're looking at?' It was very difficult, particularly with colleagues at the same organisational level, not to engage in the types of everyday conversations that occur on a daily basis and the researcher was aware that the interviews must be of a different tenor to avoid, as far as possible, the introduction of some bias into the data. Structured interview questions prevented the daily social exchanges from veering into other areas and focussed the discussion on the issues, rather on the routine personal relationship with the researcher.

Further, there are potential tensions between the 'everyday role' in the organisation and the researcher role; these roles do not necessarily align comfortably. As a middle manager with a portfolio of nine different departments, the researcher has

developed a wide network of relationships across the College at all management levels. She is also aware that there will be varying perceptions of that management role that could influence the data. Inherent in the management role is the need to present a positive, corporate face about strategic direction and operational tactics, whether or not there is personal agreement with them. It is possible that individuals, depending on the level of congruity between their own beliefs about the College and the researcher's everyday role, would make assumptions either positively or negatively.

It is important for this type of research that the researcher is able to make recordings of proceedings, as these are an important aspect of conducting an ethnographic study from a sociolinguistic perspective. The researcher first obtained permission from the Principal to record meetings in the College, but further negotiations with other managers were required to obtain the data. Some managers were happy to be interviewed but less comfortable being recorded and this reluctance is evidenced in their not providing dates/times for the observation and recording of meetings. The researcher took time at the beginning of recorded meetings and interviews to explain the nature of the research and to begin to signal a role identity as distinct from the middle manager role and representative of College management. According to Mullaney (2007: 55), 'it is vital for the managers…to understand and appreciate the overall purpose of the research' in order not to perceive 'the researcher as a threat or challenge'. The explanations about the research, the structured questions and the instructions provided for completing the classification task provided a framework and were, in themselves, 'other' ways of interacting between the researcher and the respondents that were different from the routine interactions and thus signalled a separate researcher identity. Hanson (2013: 392) concurs with this approach and refers to 'making the familiar strange'. It must be acknowledged, however, that there could be some bias within the data occurring because of the influence of the researcher's management role, despite the attempts made to minimise such risk.

In addition, when observing meetings, there was the issue of 'mental compartmentalisation' whereby one must continue in the normal role and also detach from it at the same time to identify phenomena as they arise and to recognise one's own actions and potential influences within the play of events. There is then also the

possible interference of the 'day job' with the tasks of the researcher, and it is possible for researchers to become engrossed in the discussions in meetings and lose focus on the issues being researched. Maintaining focus and balance was a challenge. However, as an experienced teacher trainer with a background in carrying out observations against specific criteria, the researcher had previously developed some ability to both participate in and observe proceedings. There is undoubtedly tension with the role of insider researcher; as soon as one detaches from the group to research it, one, in effect, becomes an outsider. As noted by Hanson, the role is dynamic and fluid and researchers move between roles throughout the research process (Hanson 2013: 391). It is important to acknowledge here that in the audio-taping of and participation in meetings, the researcher took on the role of participant-observer; in the interviews, however, the researcher was a participant-researcher. The researcher was aware of and sensitive to this role shift.

However, it is never an easy task to imagine oneself removed from a situation in which one normally plays a part; the researcher was constantly aware of the different roles she was playing within the research process and the possible pragmatic complicating factors, particularly during the interviews. For example, as line manager to two respondents, colleague to two others and subordinate of two more, there was the possibility that the researcher's own internal roles could influence the outcomes of the research. Nonetheless, as the conceptual threads and linguistic strategies were identified across management layers, it would seem, on the surface at least, that the researcher has maintained some distance from her daily roles. In addition, particularly in the interviews with subordinates, both individuals (male and female) were at pains to explain their thoughts on gendered discourse even though they thought their views might be at odds with the purpose of the study, so there appeared to be no attempt to 'please the researcher' from either of these individuals. Colleagues at the same organisational level appeared to approach the discussions in the same way that they would any other work-related discussion - the dangers associated with this assumption have been outlined above. See also the discussion relating to research with colleagues later in the chapter in the discussion of ethics.

Senior managers were interested in the study and keen to add to the data. However, one senior manager made a comment about 'trying to help' (see

discussion in Chapter 4). It was in interviewing one of the two senior managers, those whom Hanson (2013: 393) refers to as the 'elite' respondents where the researcher experienced most challenge in constructing the role of researcher, separate from the everyday role(s) within the College. She was uncomfortable probing sensitive issues, such as the prolonged, awkward silence in Leadership Team meetings and in Open Forums. It was in the meeting with the Principal that the researcher had to work harder to construct the identity of researcher, separate from the everyday management role. The transcript of this meeting demonstrates the difficulty experienced by the researcher, as there is more 'talk' by the researcher than with the other respondents, perhaps reflecting the more difficult pragmatics of the interview. This phenomenon is at odds with that acknowledged by others: 'Elites are used to being in charge and talking about their organisation, which can result in interviews becoming monologues (Mikecz: 2012 in Hanson 2013: 393). It is notable that the 'elite' respondent did not enter into a monologue. In this case, she waited to become fully engaged in the interview, offering only minimal responses, until she was sure of the issues that would be raised. The challenge of remaining in researcher role as opposed to the middle manager role was significant. Morgan (2006:40) refers to the concept of 'excruciating tension' and this term would apply to the interview with the elite respondent. However, the sensitive issues were tackled at the instigation of the researcher, suggesting that to some extent a separate researcher identity was cultivated in the interview with the elite respondent, although the fact that the researcher had to offer more information for comment and work harder to probe behind the initial responses could potentially have influenced the data collected.

Again, the consistency of the themes around linguistic strategies seems to suggest that pleasing the researcher was not high on the agenda and that interaction in the interviews appeared to be genuine, perhaps as it was offered in an environment of trust and confidentiality. It was beneficial that the area of research was separate from the researcher's daily role and that the study of language use is considered to be removed from it.

Internal organisational politics can also be of some concern in carrying out insider research. Sensitivity to these politics prompted the researcher to use Yukl's

taxonomy (1989) as the basis for interview discussions, to neutralise the political comment. Hanson (2013: 395) comments that insider research in which she was involved 'allowed some deans to lobby against the proposal made by the Pro Vice-Chancellor and myself'. This type of eventuality was considered very early in the study and averted through the use of the taxonomy. However, as a woman manager, the researcher's own sensitivity to politics and in the interests of not being seen as 'a trouble maker', the researcher must consider whether her own thinking is evidence of gender bias and whether this has influenced the research design. Land (2004) suggests that insider research has the potential to threaten organisational norms, so management of organisational politics is critical. The tension for the researcher was to balance two factors (Mercer's 'double-edged sword' (2007)): to continue to be perceived by senior management as being loyal and committed to the organisation (personal gendered beliefs and attitudes about women conforming to authority?) and to carry out research that could raise potential critical comment. This was another area illustrating Hanson's 'excruciating tension'. Nonetheless, the researcher has been able to explore through meetings and interviews issues of management and gender identity, without internal backlash, without complaints, with very limited involvement in College politics and no damage to personal reputation.

Hanson (2013: 395) considers the concept of researcher 'voice' and the difficulty of finding it with the complicating factors of internal politics and summarises thus

> *…it is not possible to be absolutely either an insider or an outsider in the research environment of the organisational practitioner.*

Despite informing the Principal and senior management team about the study and obtaining approval for it, the researcher protected the integrity of her own voice by not requesting from the College financial support or remission of time for the undertaking of the research, and so reducing the College's influence on the nature, format, process or outcomes of the research. Taking this stance has made the research significantly more difficult on a personal level, but it was felt by the researcher to be of vital importance in maintaining independence and integrity of voice.

3.5.3 Sampling

Sampling in qualitative research can also be problematic and dependent on the researcher's aim in carrying out the research. In small studies which attempt to examine phenomena from the inside using a small number of participants, generalising to other populations can be difficult. In this case, there were elements of purposive, dimensional and volunteer sampling: purposive in the sense that the researcher wanted to gain access to managers with knowledge and interest in the subject area; dimensional in that three different management levels within the organisation were represented; and volunteer in the sense that some managers requested involvement in the study (Cohen et al 2008: 114-116).

The organisation chart can be found on page 85. Of particular note, at this organisation, is that heads of department are considered to be first-line managers; curriculum leads are considered to be middle managers; positions above middle managers are termed 'senior managers'.

Figure 3.1 Simplified College Management Structure

Principal
(Female)

| Senior Management Team (Male) | Senior Management Team (Male) | Senior Management Team (Male) | Senior Management Team (Male) | Senior Management Team (Male) | Senior Management Team (Male) |

Curriculum Middle Manager — Curriculum Middle Manager — Curriculum Middle Manager — Curriculum Middle Manager — Curriculum Middle Manager — Curriculum Middle Manager

Heads of Department

(16 male; 14 female)

3.5.4 Selecting the Meetings

For this study, the researcher recorded six management meetings: two at head of department level; two at middle manager level and two at senior manager level.

Figure 3.2 Selecting the Meetings

Principal approached and informed of the intention and subject of the study; permission requested and granted to explore the issue

Senior Managers emailed to request permission to record meetings

Six meetings attended and recorded; two meetings at three levels of the organisation, chosen to represent strategic and operational interests, including management and curriculum support areas, as well as curriculum areas

Ratios and attendance of male and female managers at meetings were naturally represented/occurring, rather than contrived. The rationale for selecting meetings at different levels of the organization was to determine whether dimensional patterns emerged that were consistent across the College and whether similar examples of linguistic constructs were used at different levels of the organisation.

Once permission had been gained from the appropriate individuals to tape six management meetings at three levels of the organisation, the meetings were recorded as follows:

- two senior management meetings (chaired by a member of SMT); these were convenience samples, as they were the meetings available for observation

and recording. However, the researcher chose the two meetings from a range of possibilities (Leadership Team; Sixth Form Management Team; Curriculum Management Team, for example) to reflect the fact that different areas of management could potentially employ different management practices and associated discourse. The sample remains a convenience sample, albeit with variation in the types of meetings chosen.

- two middle management meetings (chaired by a middle manager); to achieve a broader, cross-College range of activity, these two meetings took place in a quality assurance area (management support) and a curriculum area. Similarly, from the range of meetings available, the researcher chose two variations to present depth and breadth of perspective across College. This was a convenience sample, again with variation.

- two head of department meetings (chaired by a head of department); again, for breadth of perspective, one meeting took place in a student support service area and one in a curriculum area. Again this was a convenience sample, as the Heads of Department had requested involvement in the research.

The approach to meeting selection ensured that a range of meetings at strategic and operational level, including service and curriculum departments were included in the study to provide a rich cross-section of the organisation.

In line with the research questions, six exchanges were then selected by the researcher from these meetings according to the following criteria:

- There was a strong sense of a 'failed' communication that resulted in one or both participants becoming uncomfortable or where there was an emotive exchange. For example, there were three examples of emotional reactions (individuals leaving meetings in anger; silence, awkwardness in an open forum; refusal to participate in discussion of issues in a senior management meeting and associated frustration). All three illustrative exchanges were explored in the interviews.

- There was a clear example of discourse being used to construct professional identity and to discuss authority, including clear statements about identity,

ranging from characterisation of self as military hero to repeated examples of construction of powerless identity. Examples were selected from each end of the power continuum where the discourse seemed to project a performative identity with some relevance to gender.

- There were clear examples of discourse where performative 'masks' were dropped and personal preferences allowed to emerge. This criterion relates to the periods of time before and after meetings when individuals are not yet in 'formal' professional roles and might be inclined to reveal personal preferences. There were several examples of these instances, two of which have been explored in some depth – one because of the impact an experience had on an individual; one because it was contradictory to the more formal and emphatic discussion that had preceded it.

- There was evidence of implicit attitudes linked to gender and management embedded in the discourse. This criterion refers to potential tensions or contradictions in what is said or implied through public comment. Illustrative exchanges were selected because of their link to attitudes around gender, either implicit or explicit.

These criteria were identified from the informal observations that were the catalyst for the study and which the researcher wished to explore further. For criteria 2, 3 and 4, there is also corroborating discussion in the literature (Cameron 2008; Trudgill 2000; Coates 2004; Tannen 1994, 1996; Constantine-Simms 2007: Priola 2004; Deem 2003; Mullaney 2007; Holmes et al 2003; Litosseliti 2006; Jones 2000; and Kark 2003).

In summary, there is no intention to suggest that the illustrative exchanges represent the full range of interactions across the meetings and interviews. However, the exchanges chosen from the criteria above provide interesting and rich data for analysis.

3.5.5 Selecting the Interview Participants

Potential respondents were individuals who attended and/or chaired the selected meetings, as the intention of the interviews was to explore the illustrative exchanges that occurred in the meetings. Similar to the selection of meetings, selection of individuals for interview was based on achieving variety of dimensions of management within the hierarchy to ensure that the discourse reflected the different dimensions of management.

Table 3.1 below outlines the process for selecting interview participants.

Table 3.1 Process for Selecting Interview Participants

Senior Management Team (SMT)
Invitations to participate in the study were sent to six members of the Senior Management Team (all male) and the Principal (female). The Principal and one other member of SMT responded and agreed to be interviewed; these two individuals provided male and female representation at SMT level. One deputy principal offered a meeting for recording, but did not wish to be interviewed. The other four did not respond to the invitation. The two people who responded were in attendance at meetings that were recorded and there was opportunity to discuss perceptions of the meetings with each of them. The senior managers who agreed to participate were both interested in management in general and in the research project, in particular. This was a convenience sample.
Middle Management (MM)
Invitations were sent to six middle managers. Three showed interest and offered meetings for recording, but did not follow through when asked for dates. Another participated in a pilot interview to provide feedback on the interview questions and process. Two others accepted the invitation: one male from a curriculum division and one female from Quality Assurance. Both of these individuals had been present in meetings that were observed and recorded; again, the illustrative exchanges and Yukl's subroles were explored in the interviews. The two middle managers who did participate (one male; one female) were interested in the study and agreed to participate fully, including the interview stage, in the research. Consequently, the sample was also a convenience sample.
Heads of Department
There are more than forty heads of department at Forestside College. The researcher invited two heads of department to participate in the research. These individuals had expressed an interest in the research (one male from a service department; one female from a curriculum department). Two department meetings had been recorded; these Heads of Department chaired the meetings. Again, this was a convenience sample.

Figure 3.3

Data Collection Process

Two Department level meetings chaired by Heads of Department (one student support area; one curriculum area)

Two middle management meetings, chaired by second line managers (quality assurance and curriculum area)

Two senior management meetings, chaired by senior managers (Leadership Team and Sixth Form Management Team)

Identification of six illustrative exchanges, according to criteria:

- Sense of failed communication
- Discourse used to construct professional identity
- Example of performative mask being dropped and personal preferences emerging
- Explicit comment revealing attitudes about gender and management

Interviews exploring issues that emerge from the illustrative exchanges; discussion based on Yukl's Taxonomy (1989) of management subroles to allow construction of own management identity through discussion

From Table 3.2 below, it can be seen that there is an even balance of male and female managers for the interviews, who self-selected themselves in response to participate in the research, by responding to an invitation from the researcher. All senior managers (7) and all middle managers (6) (See the organisational chart in Figure 3.1) were invited to participate in the research. Two from each level of management were interviewed. Male and female managers were interviewed to present a balanced approach to the research and to explore whether there were differences in terms of the discourse they used to discuss management subroles that reflected attitudes and beliefs about management. Within the convenience sample, there was nevertheless a rich variety of individuals who had attended the meetings and who were potentially available for interview. Usefully, managers at different points in their careers were represented in the research, which ensured a broad range of experience on which to draw in the interviews that could possibly reflect differing attitudes according to age.

Table 3.2: Summary of Characteristics of Interview Participant Sample

Gender	Organisational level	Type of Department	Length of time in management role	Career Stage
Female	Head of Department	Curriculum lead	Less than 10 years	Early-mid career
Male	Head of Department	Service department	11-20 years	Late career
Female	Middle Manager	Quality	11-20 years	Late career
Male	Middle Manager	Curriculum	11-20 years	Mid-career
Female	Senior Manager	College	21-30 years	Mid-late career
Male	Senior Manager	Organisational Development	21-30 years	Mid-late career

3.5.6 The Interviews

The follow-up interviews, based on exchanges in the meetings and reflecting the criteria, explored potential multiple perceptions of the discussions/events in the

meetings and ensured that the researcher's individual interpretations and biases, as much as possible, did not prejudice the outcomes. The interviews were divided into two parts: the first part checked the researcher's interpretation of the illustrative exchange; the second part explored participants' views on their own roles as leaders and managers, using Yukl's taxonomy of management subroles. The data from the meetings, exchanges and interviews were analysed as in the section on data analysis below. The process is set out graphically on the following page.

After exploring the exchanges of the meetings in some depth, the second part of the interview focussed on Yukl's (1989) taxonomy of 14 management subroles. Yukl (2002: 63) described his taxonomy:

> *This taxonomy is based primarily on factor analysis, but judgmental classification and theoretical deduction were also used to identify categories that maintain continuity with earlier taxonomies and research. … The behaviour categories are generic enough to be widely applicable to different kinds of managers, but specific enough to relate to the unique situational demands and constraints confronted by an individual manager.*

Respondents were asked 'To what extent are the following subroles (1) more characteristically masculine, (2) more characteristically feminine or (3) neutral in nature. Respondents were also asked to provide their age range, their gender and length of time in a management role. The data were collected from members of the management group at Forestside College and interviews were held during working hours. Managers received no incentive to participate in the interviews. The interviews took between 40 minutes and one hour to conduct, with most falling into the 45-60 minute range.   This second part of the interview was designed to encourage participants to discuss leadership and management in general, so that the linguistic discourse in relation to management and any potential gendered attitudes could be identified.

In short, the interviews moved from specific illustrative exchanges in which the individual had been involved and/or observed to their general thoughts on leadership and management, with a view to providing rich data that could be used to uncover attitudes about management behaviours and subroles, as well as providing the opportunity for individuals to construct their own management identities in discussion with the researcher.

Lee (1993: 99) suggests that interviewer effects can concern, among other aspects, the expectations that the interviewers may have of the interview, i.e. 'a researcher may feel apprehensive about, or uncomfortable with, an interview about a sensitive matter'. It is certainly conceivable that interviewers might be worried about managing sensitive subject matter; in this case, the concerns were centred around the interviewer challenging and probing issues with senior managers where differences of power and status operate. In particular, to mitigate for the power differential when interviewing the Principal, the researcher made a conscious effort to construct a positive, equal identity and to continue to probe, even when the topic was sensitive (reference to feedback regarding a College initiative). The researcher had anticipated this sensitivity and had considered beforehand the interviewing stance that would be assumed – see the earlier discussion on the participant-researcher.

There was no such dilemma with the middle managers interviewed, who are of equal rank and status with the interviewer. However, the interviewer was keenly aware that the two heads of department could potentially feel that they needed to please a researcher who had different organisational status and power. Lee (1993: 102-14) acknowledges this concern. In interviewing the Heads of Department, the interviewer ensured that the interviews took place in neutral space (not in the offices of the interviewer or interviewee) to avoid reinforcing existing reporting relationships and the seating arrangements were conversational, although with one manager, the interview arrangement was side by side at a desk (his choice). There did not appear to be any discomfort in any of the interviews. Having thought carefully about the potential sensitivities in advance, the researcher did not approach the interviews with any trepidation. In fact, Bradburn and Sudman (1979 in Lee 1993: 101) 'report that interviewers who did not anticipate difficulties in the interview achieved a 5-20 per cent higher level of reporting on sensitive topics than those who anticipated difficulties'.

3.5.7 Why Yukl's Taxonomy?

Recognising that most earlier work on gender and management assumed that management itself is a masculine role (Atwater et al 2004: 192), this research study

builds on previous research by focussing in discussion on men's and women's perceptions of the specific subroles required of those in managerial positions. The use of Yukl's Taxonomy (1989) of Managerial Subroles could potentially test whether respondents were more likely to perceive particular management subroles as masculine and others as feminine in nature.

Yukl's Taxonomy was developed from the use of multiple methodologies, 'including theoretical deduction, judgmental classification, and factor analysis. It contains 14 roles that represent a relatively broad spectrum of managerial behaviour (Atwater et al 2004: 192). Looking at the specific subroles of the manager affords a closer look at the nuances of gender and management. Classification of the subroles was used in this study to determine whether some management subroles are considered masculine and others feminine in their gender-typing, or indeed, whether all subroles were considered neutral.

The researcher was keenly aware of her role as participant-researcher who would continue her relationships with the participants long after the completion of the study. Further, she was aware that a study on management discourse and behaviours within her workplace could present some difficulties and sensitivities, particularly if participants felt they were being asked to comment specifically on leadership and management within the College community. There was the potential for the researcher to be the receptor of critical, subjective interpretations of the actions of individual leaders and managers. To circumvent this conceivable difficulty, the researcher used a neutral tool for discussion (Yukl's Taxonomy) of matters relating to leadership and management. The benefits of this approach were four-fold: (1) the participants could discuss their thoughts openly around management behaviours and subroles without feeling that they were compromising their professional positions; (2) the subject matter enabled them to use the language of leadership and management to discuss the behaviours and construct their own identities in relation to the behaviours/approaches (participants cannot simply be asked to describe the language they use to talk about leadership and management and hence the taxonomy provides a neutral vehicle for them to do so); (3) the participants' on-going relationships with the researcher and with the College were protected for the future; (4) completion of the classification task relating to the taxonomy and associated

commentary as respondents completed the task also provided another layer of data that was revealing about management subroles.

It is also important here to acknowledge that Yukl's taxonomy was designed in the late 1980s at a time when the dominance/difference debate raged, and the taxonomy is a product of that time. Recognising the concerns about perpetuating the discourse of differentiation, the researcher took particular care with the instructions for the task, noting that there was no requirement to categorise behaviours and pointing out the 'neutral' category. Importantly, it was felt that presenting participants with an essentialist tool would provoke a reaction and stimulate discussion. While these data are not statistically significant, they do add another interesting strand of data which can be considered alongside the other sources of data. Therefore, the interviews, with reference to the taxonomy, provided an opportunity for respondents to construct their professional identity in relation to management subroles.

Holmes (2005) references *overtly gendered discourse* where 'gender becomes the actual topic of the interaction.' Mullaney (2007: 41) posits that

> *Discussing the topic of gender in direct relation to language will enable stereotypical, folklinguistic beliefs to be directly accessed, through which dominant gendered discourses can be viewed* (Talbot 2003).

Consistent with Talbot's comment, Yukl's Taxonomy of Managerial Subroles(1989) was used as a basis for the second part of the interview discussion as a catalyst for the exploration of the topic of gender and management and also to determine whether the subroles are gender-typed in the discourse of the participants.

3.5.8 Data Collection

Given the need to collect data from naturalistic settings, as discussed in the overview of the methodology an ethnographically-influenced, social constructionist approach to collecting the data was taken.

> *It is a long-standing tradition within discourse-orientated sociolinguistic research to examine language in use, and more specifically, it is the job of sociolinguists to focus on how workplace identities are constructed through communicative interaction* (Marra et al. 2006 in Mullaney (2007: 41).

There was a need to study the discourse of managers in everyday contexts and interactions; therefore, audio recording was carried out in formal meetings with members of staff (represented as they occurred naturally) across a range of management levels within the further education college under discussion. The periods of time before and after meetings were also recorded. The approach to data collection sought out illustrative exchanges arising from the observed meetings and interactions that confirmed or refuted the literature. Cross-validation and triangulation occurred through follow-up interviews to explore the illustrative exchanges and support the researcher's interpretation of events. To support triangulation, the investigator followed up illustrative exchanges identified through the observations of meetings with interviews to explore further the aspects of interest. With a research team of one, there are practical limitations to the number of observations and interviews that can be carried out; it was therefore particularly important that a limited number of key and representative individuals were involved in the research. A transcript of the meeting was provided to the participant and his/her thoughts about the event were explored, using the reflective practice approach (Schon: 1987) to exploring an illustrative exchange. Cohen et al (2008: 142) refer to this multi-method approach as *Methodological triangulation*, using different methods on the same object of study.

Audio-tape recordings captured the follow-up interviews; these tape recordings were transcribed and coded for linguistic variables relating to management identity. As a participant-observer, there was a clear need for the researcher to build trust and rapport throughout the research project and to be ever-mindful of the ethics in not breaching this trust – see the discussion on ethics on page 74.

The interview questions focussed on probing aspects of interest in the identified meeting, asking the individual to reflect on the discussion/exchange from his/her perspective and to consider the exchange in the wider context of his/her own role as manager as well as the wider political context within the organisation.

Some questions were also devoted to target the management identity constructed through the discourse, but this theme was also extrapolated from general discussion on other topics and from naturally occurring discourse (conversational as opposed to

interview questioning) arising from the discussion of leadership/management subroles. Mullaney (2007: 41), quoting from Sunderland (2004: 7), suggests that 'gendered discourses can also be fruitfully analysed within the language that women and men managers use to represent their ideas, opinions and concepts', particularly about issues of gender and language in the workplace.

Indeed, Brewis (2001: 293) contends that a Foucauldian-influenced discourse analysis can be successfully conducted by analysing interview data, as

> *Listening to females talking about organizations allows an exploration of their discursive positioning', which can highlight if they are being disadvantaged and/or treated differently due to dominant gendered discourses.* (Mullaney 2007: 41)

3.5.9 Data Coding and Analysis

The codes below were developed from the literature and reflect the linguistic variables that are considered by some to be representative of feminine language of management; the researcher explored whether these patterns of discourse were in operation in the further education college.

The data obtained from the various sources were analysed and thematically coded for linguistic variables such as

- Mitigated versus unmitigated speech directives (West 1995; Holmes 1995): to discover whether there are gender differences in approach to giving directives, particularly in terms of maintaining and perpetuating status differences (using language to obtain and hold power or to enact authority).
- Repressive versus oppressive discourse (Pateman 1980; Fairclough 1992)
- Mitigated intonation, tag questions and modal verbs, lexical items (such as perhaps); and pragmatic particles, such as 'sort of' and 'I think' (Holmes 1995: 74-75) Goodwin (1980): to determine whether managers actively construct their discourse in response to the individual(s) before them. For example, did they differentiate their discourse for various groups and purposes?
- Collaborative structures: 'Let's' and 'We'
- Mirroring language (repetition of words/phrases and body posture)

- Attitudes towards and assumptions about male and female managers that are revealed in interview.

- References that relate to an individual's professional management identity (either one's own or relating to another manager).

- The use of silence or delayed feedback as a communication tool.

- Linguistic strategies that signify a performative identity that require corroboration by others.

The data from the meetings that generated the chosen exchanges were examined and interpreted; there was also some quantitative analysis of some of the constructions, to provide a combined qualitative-quantitative approach to the subject. Further, the participants were required to categorise management subroles using Yukl's Taxonomy (1989); the data from these indexes were analysed using the SPSS software package, but the sample was too small to identify significant, statistical relationships between the scoring of behaviours as masculine/feminine/neutral and age/gender. As noted earlier, these data are ancillary to the main sources of data and included for interest in the Appendices.

Thus, the multi-method approach generated a triple layer of data for analysis: (1) the original data source; (2) the first part of the interview to explore the meeting data with the individual; and (3) the second part of the interview to discuss gender/management in relation to Yukl's management subroles. The linguistic strategies used to construct discussions around management and the management identity permeated the three layers of data. These three sources of data were compiled to present a thick description of management in the further education sector and to guarantee a measure of triangulation.

3.6 Ethics

Cohen et al (2008:55) suggest that the first step in an ethical approach to a research project is to inform the appropriate senior official of the relevant institution. Accordingly, approval of the study and the research methods by the Principal and Senior Management Team of the further education college and the Ethics Committee of the University were sought as a first priority. It was also important to inform the

middle management team about the research and to share the aims of the study with them. As Cohen et al (2008: 55) suggest, 'achieving goodwill and cooperation is especially important where the proposed research extends over a period of time'. Data was gathered over two terms in the further education college, so it was important that managers were aware of the study. It was helpful that they were already aware of the research when meetings were about to be audio-taped, as a quick summary of the project was all that was needed, alongside the participant information sheet (see Appendix 1).

Further, a concern with ethical considerations influenced the research study throughout, including attention to the researcher's ethical collection, interpretation and presentation of the data from the study.

Considering the researcher's role as participant-observer, the aim was to report findings with credibility and impartiality and yet also to recognise and demonstrate throughout the process the paramount importance of respect for the protection of the rights of those being researched. As an 'insider', it is generally considered unwise to assume the co-operation of colleagues without making formal application for potential participants' involvement in the project (Cohen et al 2008:56). Therefore, before collecting the data, the researcher asked all managers in the various meetings for permission to audio-record the proceedings (they had already been made aware of the project in general terms). In an effort to protect the privacy and identity of individuals, divisional names and references were anonymised. Several steps were taken to safeguard the privacy and rights of those being researched, including: a general briefing to those who could potentially be involved; a written request to those whose contributions had been selected (with a concise outline of the proposed research and their part within it); written consent forms (with the option of withdrawing at any time during the study); the option of reviewing the data and the discussion before publication; and a final debrief. There was little chance that the participants would have felt obliged to participate (see earlier discussion about participant-observer) and certainly they were informed that there would be no negative consequence should they decide not to be involved, thus removing, as far as possible, the likelihood of duress. All of these measures are consistent with the recommendations of Cohen et al (2008:55) for obtaining informed consent of the

participants.

Cohen et al (2008:55) note that,

> *Participants may feel coerced to volunteer…or may not wish to offend a researcher by refusing to participate, or may succumb to peer pressure to volunteer (or not to volunteer), or may wish to volunteer for reasons other than the researcher's (e.g. to malign a school principal or senior colleagues, to gain resources for his or her department, or to gain approval from colleagues).*

These concerns are legitimate. The researcher's approach to potential participants was careful in that colleagues were never put on the spot. They were advised of the project and invited to contact the researcher for further information if they were interested. When managers agreed to participate but then did not offer meetings for recording, despite follow up, the researcher assumed that this was a polite way of refusing to participate in the study and did then not pursue further. The researcher was keenly aware that colleagues were doing a favour by participating (Cohen et al 2008: 59). The researcher continues to work positively with most of the participants on a daily basis (although one has since taken up a post at another institution and two have retired); those who remain at the College display on-going interest about the conclusions of the research. The researcher therefore believes that there was careful management of the approach to recruiting participants.
Indeed,

> *Individual circumstances must be the final arbiter…If it appears that the research is going to come into conflict with aspects of school policy, management styles, or individual personalities, it is better to confront the issues head on, consult relevant parties, and make rearrangements in the research where possible or necessary.* (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995: 41)

To address potential issues as noted above, the researcher met first with the Principal of the organisation who had been provided with the research proposal. Questions around the nature of the research were asked and the meeting concluded with the Principal approving the project, with the proviso that the researcher discussed the findings with that individual before publication.

In the semi-structured, follow-up interviews, individual managers were assured of confidentiality and reminded of their right to withdraw at any stage of the process. They were given the opportunity to review the transcript of their interview, to modify it, if desired, and to give final approval for its use in the thesis. It is important to consider carefully the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality. For example, while pseudonyms have been provided for the organisation, the names of participants have been changed and no job titles have been used in the findings or the written analysis of the data, there is still a possibility that anyone outside of the organisation who knows the researcher would recognise the institution in the thesis, if not the individual participants themselves. Indeed, as there is only one Principal in the College, reference is not made to the job title to protect confidentiality. This possibility was raised with the Principal at the first meeting. Approval was given, with the proviso explained above. The identities of the participants are known only to the researcher. Bailey (1994: 457) concurs with this approach, advocating the maintenance of privacy of participants through the use of aggregated or anonymised data.

Where meetings/discussions were taped, participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the process at any time, should they so desire (see Appendix 2). Due consideration was given to whether there were any potential conflicts of interest with other middle managers, given that the researcher is also a member of the Leadership and Management team, but none was identified.

The researcher anticipated some sensitivities in follow-up interviews with members of the senior management team, who could potentially be reluctant to discuss motivations for particular courses of action with a colleague from a different level in the organisational hierarchy; these concerns proved to be unfounded. Members of the senior management team, including the Principal, took great interest in the study.

Participants were assured of confidentiality of the data, with all names anonymised; no records of the interviews with real names were kept. No other researchers had access to the data, and the interview data was not stored online or on any computer system at any institution; it was all stored securely on the researcher's flash pen, which was kept in a locked office location.

The steps outlined above ensured that the research and data gathering process complied with the purpose and intentions of the BERA ethical guidelines. The research study also received formal approval from the Research and Graduate Office of the University of Southampton.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has set out the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study with an associated rationale, the research approach, the methodology itself, sampling, data collection, data analysis and the ethics relating to the study of gendered discourse in a further education management context. The chapter has also attempted to frame the decisions made and justifications for these at each stage of the process. In summary, the subject under investigation was researched by obtaining and analysing naturalistic data from formal meetings and interviews, as well as informal exchanges before and after meetings, with a specific focus on how discursive strategies construct management identity; how management authority is enacted; illustrative exchanges when performative masks were dropped to reveal an inner identity, implicit attitudes to gender and management, all with a view to identifying potential issues for inclusion in leadership and management development programmes.

The following chapter presents the findings of the study.

Chapter Four
Findings

Introduction

In the literature review, the concept of the persistence of attitudes that might place women in an antithetical position to executive power was introduced. One assumption underpinning the social constructionist approach is that '…the world …is constituted in one way or another as people talk it, write it, and argue it' (Schwandt 2000: 198). Therefore, this study has employed an examination of words and interactions to determine how managers, both male and female, construct and perform their identities in the workplace to carry out the tasks/duties consistent with their management roles; and to determine whether there is, in fact, a persistence of attitudes that could place women at a disadvantage in the workplace.

The previous chapter set out the methodology for the investigation. This chapter presents and analyses the findings. The data were collected through observation and recording of meetings and interviews with participants, as well as dialogue while participants completed a classification task based on Yukl's Taxonomy (1989) and the management subroles contained within it. The Taxonomy breaks down the role of manager into more specific components or subroles that represent a relatively broad spectrum of managerial behaviour (Atwater et al 2004: 192). The researcher felt that using the taxonomy would provide a more multi-faceted perspective on management and opportunity for respondents to consider aspects of management that they might not immediately have considered. The sample was too small for statistical analysis of the scored taxonomies, so participant comments are included in the discussion, but the table of results is included for interest in the Appendices. It is worth noting that Yukl attempted 'to summarise the literature and examine the taxonomies of managerial behaviours and roles' (Yukl 2002), resulting in a taxonomy of managerial roles and practices that 'was formed on the basis of multiple methodologies including theoretical deduction, judgmental classification, and factor analysis' (Atwater et al 2004: 192). As such, the researcher felt that the taxonomy would be a useful tool to foster discussion in the interviews. The discussions in the interviews therefore ranged from a context-specific focus around illustrative exchanges to discussion of management subroles, thus moving from specific to general management contexts.

This chapter is structured around the research questions, used as main headings, with the themes emerging from the data as subheadings. In parentheses after the main headings are the themes relating to that research question as they emerged from the research.

In addressing research question 1, the section explores the data from illustrative exchanges derived from observations of six meetings and concludes that there are some noticeable differences in the manner in which men and women construct their professional management identities, most notably in their responses to 'silence', directness versus indirectness, views on hierarchy and authority and the need for social approval. Figure 4.2 outlines the criteria for selecting illustrative exchanges and sets out examples thereof, together with an explanation of why the exchange was chosen.

A further section reports on the qualitative data gathered from the interview discussions in relation to the illustrative exchanges and also to dialogue around the categorising task. These identify several (six) areas where there are potentially gendered attitudes in the discourse relating to management subroles: developing and mentoring personnel, managing conflict, consulting others, strategic decision-making, communicating and informing and networking. These areas of interest will be explored in more detail in this chapter, in relation to research question 2.

Background and Context

> *It is significant that in the post-16 education sector women are found predominantly in middle and first line management, especially as programme or curriculum managers, where statistics show that they comprise 50 to 60% of this level of the workforce.* (Lifelong Learning Uk 2005; Utting 2006)

At the further education college in question, Utting's figures of gender representation in first and middle management are confirmed; however, at senior management level there is a 6:1 ratio of male to female managers, thus also confirming Utting's (2006) statement that women are found predominantly in middle and first line management and that there are a greater proportion of males in senior positions. In Chapter One, it was established that, although there is gradual improvement in the representation

of women at higher levels of management in general, at Forestside College, in particular,

- Women are still over-represented in first line management roles as course co-ordinators and heads of department.
- Women continue to be under-represented at senior management levels.

This study explores the role of women's use of language to construct their performative management identities to determine whether language is a factor in the under-representation of women at higher levels of management.

Findings

A summary of the findings follows. The space constraints of the thesis do not permit all of the findings to be explored in detail; therefore, only the findings related directly to the research questions will be fully developed; that is, those related to performative management identity and implicit attitudes towards gender and management.

1.0 How do managers (both male and female) use discourse to construct their management identity(ies)? (Hierarchy, Indirectness and Style)

From the data, it would appear that more male managers paid greater attention to the concept of hierarchy and that more female managers focussed on working with and alongside others, regardless of their position in the organisation.

Let us consider first the concepts of authority and hierarchy. Tannen (1994: 161) posits that 'military and sports worlds offer us images of male authority'. Knoppers and Anthonissen (2005: 126) suggest that 'discursive practices associated with senior management are associated with masculinities'. Further, Coakley (2004: 275) confirms that 'being tough, disciplined and physically strong enough to dominate others often is the central criterion for evaluating everyone from coaches to business executives: "doing it like a man" is usually the way to gain power and influence'. The male managers interviewed for this study presented reasonably consistent views of

authority; they were also very aware of hierarchy. The manner in which they constructed their management identities was often related to hierarchy. They used military terms to construct their management identity; for example, when asked how he would describe himself as a manager, Martin (named thus for the purpose of this study), a first-line manager, replied: 'I see myself as a strategist and a tactician, possibly less of a tactician than a strategist,' thus drawing on military language to describe his approach to management. Similarly, at a potentially difficult meeting, one senior manager said to another (both males of equal rank): 'I'll be Caesar', meaning that he would take the chair. This individual publicly characterised himself as a military leader (and opened himself to a competitive comment from the other senior manager with a good-natured, rivalrous warning about what eventually happened to Caesar). It is also of some interest that the nature of this meeting could well have been confrontational because of sensitive negotiations with middle managers around salary and job roles, so the senior manager, in characterising himself as a military hero, was possibly signalling his intention to take a hard line and to do battle, if necessary. Both this stance and Martin's description of himself as strategist and tactician were public constructions of management identity that signalled strength and confidence. Further, the senior manager who taunted the other about Caesar's eventual fate was, in effect, saying, 'I will let you chair this time, but beware' – thus also publicly performing his management identity for the assembled middle managers.

Male managers at Forestside College also paid significant attention to the concept of hierarchy. All male managers interviewed, at every level, talked about the need for clarity of reporting relationships through a well-defined hierarchy.

> Martin: *um… I think I have a more directive approach to things generally; they see that they're in a position of authority, it's their role to lead and direct in a way that possibly women don't. You know, um, you're getting back to gender .. um.. upbringing.*
>
> *I'm probably too bureaucratic in my approach to things but if you haven't got that kind of structure you don't know what people are doing…*

Tannen (1994:40) explained the importance of hierarchy in the socialisation of boys:

> *Boys are expected to play by different rules, since the social organization of boys is different. Boys' groups tend to be more obviously hierarchical: Someone is one-up, and someone is one-down. Boys don't typically accuse each other of being "bossy" because the high-status boys are expected to give orders and push the low-status boys around…Giving orders and telling the others what to do are ways of getting and keeping the high-status role….Along with this, many boys learn to state their opinions in the strongest possible terms and find out if they're wrong by seeing if others challenge them. These **ways of talking** [researcher's bold emphasis] translate into an impression of confidence.*

It is possible that the more proficient managers (both male and female) are at adopting these 'ways of talking', the more confident they will appear in their management roles. 'Ways of talking' therefore could be key to constructing management identity. When interviewed, Martin echoed Tannen's research and confirmed his understanding of the dynamics of male relationships, specifically referring to the term 'leader':

> *I notice the more confident the leader feels, the more self-respect they have in their own ability, the less they feel threatened when someone contradicts them or, you know, says, well, perhaps that's not right.*

Martin appeared to be comfortable accepting challenge from others; in fact, he appeared to expect it, possibly because of the way he might have been socialised as a boy. Some women, on the other hand, appeared to try to avoid a direct challenge, seeking instead to mitigate, compromise and, in some cases, acquiesce, in order to keep the channels of communication open and permit further development of the relationship (Miller et al. 1986).

Nathaniel, on the other hand, the youngest middle manager interviewed, took pains to describe how he worked collaboratively with his teams:

> *Uh…uh.,. I try and work with, with the people I manage. I'm not sort of – I don't think I am anyway – a sort of um in terms of a typical sort of command structure where a military command structure – directive and so – 'Get on with it, blah, blah, blah. I try and work with them….collaboratively, yeah, as opposed to directive.*

This rather halting and uncertain description of his approach to management, punctuated with fillers (uh/um), pauses of at least two seconds and several breaks in

the sentence (-), was an interesting one that appeared to lack clarity about identity as a manager. Nathaniel struggled to find the words to produce a description, seeming to be at pains to describe himself as a collaborative worker. This description of management self was quite different to Martin's clear statement of authority through hierarchy. The fact that the concept of collaborative management was so difficult for Nathaniel to formulate could suggest that there is an element of wanting to appear to be different from the traditional male authority figure (especially when being interviewed by a woman manager). Whether Nathaniel actually believed his characterisation of himself as a collaborative manager could be questioned by the uncertainty and awkwardness of the description. Further, there was much mitigation in the statement as Nathaniel has a sporting background and routinely leads teams as part of his job role. However, even more interesting was Nathaniel's criticism of **his** senior manager (also a sportsman) as providing little clarity and direction.

> *We don't get that sort of direction at the moment because, I think, the things that we get on with and do as Curriculum Heads we meet – in a sense separately and (name) is not there….I mean we know it needs to be sorted, so we go away and do it, so there's not the direction.*

In this statement, there was only one pause of 2 seconds and a much greater clarity of the message – 'We don't get that sort of direction' – seeming to imply that direction is both desirable and necessary.   There was some cognitive dissonance here; Nathaniel seemed to be espousing (publicly) a collaborative management style and yet he was critical when his manager attempted to lead and manage in the same way. This dissonance might suggest that Nathaniel still held firm the idea that the leader sets, directs and orders. Nathaniel's performative identity, then, as constructed in the interview, was that of collaborative manager, but he seemed to expect traditional, directive leadership from his own line manager.

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Table 4.1 Selection of Illustrative Exchanges

Criterion	Example(s)	Significance/Theme
Sense of 'failed communication' where participants felt uncomfortable	Long, awkward silences in Leadership Team meetings Silence in Open Forums with mandated attendance	The researcher sought to identify illustrative exchanges that might be perceived by some managers as a communicative failure in that they did not a) move the issue forward or b) engage individuals in the communication. From the **six** meetings there were **three** exchanges that could be classed as 'failing'. Two involved long periods of time in the Leadership Team meetings (with senior and middle managers) where most managers refused to engage in the proceedings, to the frustration of the most senior member of the Leadership Team. Another illustrative exchange was observed in an Open Forum. A cross section of staff attended the Open Forum, but most remained silent for some time, until two individuals engaged with the discussion. The powerful account of the reactions of these two individuals is discussed as an illustrative exchange and reported in the data. The concept of silence in meetings is explored at three levels of management and then related to the published literature.
Discourse used to construct professional identity	Overt comments about self as manager in meetings: comment made by senior manager at the start of a potentially difficult meeting, signalling his role in the proceedings Silence used to construct	**Two** illustrative exchanges were selected from meeting data against this criterion. The researcher observed pre and post-meeting discussions as well as the main body of the meetings to identify illustrative exchanges where there is public construction and signalling of performative identity. **Silence by individuals** in meetings was also important in constructing

	professional identity	professional identity. The findings were related to the published literature. One extract from a departmental meeting was selected; the illustrative exchange was followed up in interview with the individual.
Example of performative mask being dropped and personal preferences emerging	Comments within meeting about frustrations in the management role that changed the tenor of the meeting Comments prior to a meeting where personal response to organisational matters was aired	A middle manager chairing a Quality meeting dropped the threads of the meeting to discuss her personal feelings in relation to resourcing and lack of voice in the organisation. An extract from this meeting is included in the discussion of the findings.
Explicit comments revealing gendered attitudes (for selection of interview data)	*Sample comment from an interview: '… I think you need some men in the team…Otherwise, you are going to lose some lecturers and the danger is that you…that gender stereotyping will start….you know, you've gotta be aware of it to counteract its worst manifestations*	Explicit gendered comments were extracted from the interview data. Where comments from the interviews about the illustrative exchanges appeared to be gender-related, they were selected for inclusion in the data.

Considering the discussion above, it might be said that some male managers at this further education college characterised themselves using the language of male authority. Even the manager who constructed his identity by focussing on collaboration was clear that he wanted directive leadership from his own manager, so there appears to be some commitment to the concept of male as leader-manager. One wonders whether this type of self-construction as 'leader', potentially learned in

the playground and from the cultural script, sets some men apart and opens opportunities for them in the workplace. Conversely, some women who construct their management identities in an antithetical manner to the more traditional masculine construction of leadership and management could potentially, in some contexts, be disadvantaged.

Women in the sample appeared to view hierarchy quite differently. The most senior female manager, Donna, was willing to cut across lines of reporting to deal with people and said of men:

> *They like clear lines. I know I've had conversations around working through line managers and I say that's irrelevant. I don't want to disempower the person who is the line manager, but you know if somebody comes to me with something, I'm not going to say 'you've got to go through your line manager to get to me'.*

She expressed concerns that she is 'wanting people to work in a flatter way' and identified the potential conflict for men who prefer clear hierarchy. On the whole, some women managers seemed to prefer a flatter management structure with a focus on people and collaborative working, with less interest in /concern with hierarchy.

Donna actively tried to break down hierarchies and 'silos':

> *I think it's been really important in stopping people working in silos, but actually in terms of their own development and, you know, not having it so hierarchical.*

Donna believed that she had adopted a people-focussed management and leadership style. There were no pauses, no hesitations, no sentence breaks and no hedges in this reflection on hierarchy. The clear and uncluttered nature of the extract suggested that Donna had already considered and worked through the tensions between structure and people and had opted for a collaborative 'people-driven' approach to management, rather than operating primarily through hierarchical structure. This approach was in contrast to Martin's comments about being *'in a position of authority, it's their role to lead and direct'.*

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One female Head of Department, Diane, who was promoted from within a departmental team talked about how her relationship with team members changed, so that she had direct reporting responsibilities for people who were previously her peers; in the following extract, she commented on some difficulty assuming her management role and forming a new type of relationship with a colleague:

> *That was with a person I worked very closely with for over ten years in a different way... It was just that particular person because that person was also finding it difficult initially for me being in the role …um… so I didn't want to appear to be saying, 'I'm the manager; you have to listen to me.' That's not how I work.*

The tension between being a colleague and then manager was discussed hesitatingly here, with three pauses of two seconds or more, two sentence breaks and a negative construction of a positive identity: 'I didn't want to appear to be saying, "I'm the manager".' Reluctance to embrace the supervisory aspects and provide evaluative feedback on performance and give direction were revealed here, and this stance was very different from 'I will be Caesar' that was uttered by the male senior manager. There was considerable use of hedged language in this extract: *appear to be saying*, which reflected the concern about how she was perceived as a manager. She was clear to state in a mitigated, indirect way that she did not feel comfortable giving directives (or potentially being perceived as 'bossy'). Diane was also clear that being publicly confident and directive is not how she works, so the performative identity that was constructed here is very different from that of the 'Caesar' discussed earlier. Evaluation also proved to be a challenge:

> *It was difficult for me to evaluate employees initially, for the reasons I gave before about them being my colleagues for years. That was hard. I've got better at it. What I found particularly difficult was I didn't want to sound patronising …um… but at the same time, they needed praise.*

Again, there was some discomfort around assuming management responsibility and acknowledging the difference in status. There might also be a concern about being liked, although this concept was not raised explicitly.

Penny, a middle manager, also discussed her tentative approach to giving directives:

> *I try to be amenable; I don't think – I think that if I …um … if I go in right at the beginning and go, 'Right, I want you to do that and you to do that, I don't think… it doesn't work.*

In her statement above, Penny noted, with some clarity, that she tried to be amenable. The primary statement here set the tone for her approach to management – she wanted to be perceived as being amenable and therefore resorted to indirectness so as not to appear to be bossy. There was then less clarity beyond that statement, particularly around giving directives and asserting her management authority.

Trudgill (2000: 137) suggests that indirectness is used more in societies which are, or which have been until recently, heavily hierarchical in structure. Further, he explains: '…if you want to avoid intimidating people lower in the social hierarchy [possibly a lower management reporting level], then indirectness may be an important strategy. In fact, the more frequent use by women in western societies of indirectness in conversation is due to the fact that they have traditionally had less power in these societies' (Trudgill 2000: 117).

Both Diane and Penny resorted to indirectness in carrying out management tasks and both described their reluctance to assume a directive role, which then caused them some difficulty. At the root of this reluctance could be the conditioned feminine motive of wishing to appear to be 'amenable' rather than bossy.

It would seem that this concept of indirectness, statistically adopted more by women than by men, is the key 'to gender-based differences in conversational style' which can lead to misunderstandings (Trudgill 2000: 117). It could be that these misunderstandings are perceived as a lack of clarity when women attempt to 'get things done'.   Trudgill (2000: 118) suggests that because of women's relative lack of directness they may be perceived by men as being evasive, indecisive and uncommunicative.

Penny reflected on her ability to 'get more things done':

…whether I could get more things done…um…whether I give them a bit too much freedom, I don't know.

Again, the reflection was couched in uncertainty, with three long pauses and two false starts, followed by a declarative statement: 'I don't know'. It would appear that the only thing Penny was certain of was the last statement… and the fact that she wished to be 'amenable'.

There appeared to be a theme of self-doubt that permeated Penny's interactions with others. If we refer back to Martin's comment about *I notice the more confident the leader feels, the more self-respect they have in their own ability* and consider that some male managers are perhaps expecting to see these levels of confidence, it could be that some women are misinterpreted and misunderstood by other managers as a result of the manner in which they construct their performative management identities, particularly in relation to indirectness as a linguistic strategy. It could be that some women who might have had little training in the 'one up; one down' of the male social order find it very difficult when they are suddenly the 'one up'. However, it is also possible that they find a middle way that is neither traditionally feminine, nor traditionally masculine - 'women generally have a more androgynous view of managers' (Atwater et al 2004: 198).

Thus, the women managers interviewed at all levels of the organisation commented on their difficulty with assuming a particular level in the hierarchy, often underpinned by a perceived lack of confidence. They all mentioned the need to work with and alongside people, feeling discomfort at being in a position of higher status and directing others to carry out tasks. There appeared to be a general reluctance to step into the role of manager at a level above peers, possibly for fear of being viewed adversely, as there are negative connotations for women who are directive (consider the lampooning of Margaret Thatcher in the press during her tenure as Prime Minister). In the sample, hierarchy was not mentioned in any interview with a woman manager (except how to work around it), but mentioned as an important aspect of leadership and management in every interview with male managers.

The Sound of Silence

Silence is a powerful tool for communication. At organisational level it can reflect a lack of clarity about strategic direction; at a personal level, it can sometimes signal confusion about which action to take, sometimes an unwillingness to cooperate/collaborate (passive resistance) and sometimes a fear about speaking up. Some individuals use carefully managed silence to construct their management identities. Coates (2004: 122) posits that silence is 'often a sign of malfunction in conversation', an idea which will be explored later in more depth. The data contained several examples of people alluding to silence in different contexts. However, silence can also be used on a personal level to construct one's identity. In one curriculum level meeting during which there was much talking at once and talking over each other by the participants, one male manager, Martin, did not speak at all until more than half way through the meeting. When he did speak, it was the only occasion when everyone was quiet and appeared to listen. Although his contributions were infrequent and he was silent and seemed thoughtful for much of the time, there appeared to be tremendous respect afforded this individual. His silence may have signalled that when he contributed, he made thoughtful and considered comments; the silence of the group when Martin spoke appeared to indicate his status within the group. When interviewed and after reviewing the transcript of the meeting, Martin commented on his use of silence: '*I try not to say too much unless it's, you know, I think it's important*' and he was also aware that this approach bolstered and reinforced his power as leader. Therefore, Martin's identity as 'leader' was co-constructed with the team members through the use of silence.

Interestingly, no woman in this departmental meeting group was afforded any leadership role, despite the Chair being a woman. There was no question who was the leader; it was proclaimed simply through the complementary use of silence. Tannen (1994: 281) identified a similar phenomenon in her work.

> *…I was struck by the influence of a man I will call Gary who was, by any measure, 'quiet.' He did not often volunteer to speak. And yet it was clear that if he expressed an opinion, he was listened to, and when he didn't volunteer, his opinion was often explicitly sought.*

The male use of silence to construct performative identity is powerful and can result in significant levels of influence. This phenomenon has been noted in other meetings and used by other males who were accorded particular status as a result of their silence. Interestingly, DeFrancisco (1998) and Sattel (1983) both found that silence or no response is used by men as a strategy for achieving male dominance. Sattel (1983: 120) suggests that male inexpressiveness is a method of achieving control in both mixed and all-male conversation. A silent woman might not have the same impact or influence, as women are traditionally conditioned to be silent in public fora; therefore, her quiet behaviour would fulfil the gendered role expectation and would not likely be noticed.

However, the meeting data in this study suggested that the women in the sample were uncomfortable with silence in some contexts, and it is here that Coates' (2004) assertion that silence is evidence of a malfunction in communication is of some importance. The following exchange was taken from some pre-meeting discussion. Two women, Mary and Tina, were reporting to their colleagues about an open forum that was held the previous evening, the purpose of which was to provide opportunity for everyone in the College to ask questions of senior management about College strategic direction; attendance was not compulsory, but a register was taken. These women were extremely uncomfortable about the silence; their discussion of the silence follows in their report to their colleagues prior to a team meeting the next day.

Janet:	[interrupting] so what were they focussing on?
Tina:	[interrupting] focussing on the tumbleweed that was going across the room
Chair:	The silence.
Mary :	Yes, the silence that went on for minutes and minutes.
Chair:	Donna was used to that. That's what she alluded to, didn't she?
Mary:	**I** was **so** uncomfortable…
Tina:	[Interrupting] Hideous
Mary:	**So** uncomfortable. I was slightly…
DS:	[Interrupting] The whole thing sounds uncomfortable to me.
Mary:	I started to speak about all sorts of things because I was so uncomfortable with the silence
Nina:	[Interrupting] Wasn't anybody saying anything then?
Mary:	No, and then I started saying lots
Tina:	So did I [talk over]
Mary:	and I had no intention of saying anything.

Chair:	You were filling the silence.
Mary:	I was filling the silence.
Chair:	You broke under the pressure.
Tina:	I did exactly the same. I cracked.
DS:	You confessed everything [laughing].
Mary:	I totally cracked. I said more in that meeting than I've ever said in College.
Tina:	[At same time – talking over] I said more than I've ever said in my life.
Tina:	Look, I've got sweaty palms just thinking about it. Revisiting. I thought I'd left that there.
Janet:	So nobody wanted to put their head above the parapet and make a suggestion then?
Mary:	No
Tina:	I went to be nosy [talking over]
DS:	It just feels like, exactly, as Janet said, it feels like putting your head above the parapet
Mary:	(To chair) Did I sound ridiculous?
Chair:	No, not at all
Mary:	I kept asking lots – I'm sure I kept asking lots of things

This exchange was an interesting one, as it alluded to the perceived painful silence in the forum. There was no discussion at all of the ideas eventually expressed in the forum, simply the awful silence, which was mentioned explicitly five times. The concept of silence was introduced as 'tumbleweed … going across the room', suggesting desolation. The women spoke of their discomfort, almost competing with each other to explain how uncomfortable they found the silence. The phonology (emphasis on 'so'), as well as the use of adjectives such as 'hideous' and the repetition (four times) of 'uncomfortable' convey the discomfort of these two women in this public forum. Further, they appeared to feel that the silence forced them to contribute to the forum more than they would have liked and this then made them feel vulnerable: 'Did I sound ridiculous?' (requiring affirmation from the Chair) and the hyperbolic, 'I said more than I've ever said in College,' demonstrate that this individual did not feel as if speaking in a public forum were the norm for her; she added that she 'had no intention of saying anything'.

Tina constructed solidarity with Mary, echoing that: 'I said more than I have ever said in my life' (again using hyperbole to illustrate the discomfort), commenting that she had 'sweaty palms just thinking about it'. There was the intimation that speaking up was risky – 'putting one's head above the parapet'. Both Tina and Mary spoke of

'cracking under the pressure' almost in the sense of an interrogation, and, yet, the only catalyst for their responses had been the silence in a public forum.

There were also instances of mirroring language between Mary and the Chair and between Tina and Mary:

    Chair: You were <u>filling the silence.</u>
    Mary: I was <u>filling the silence.</u>

There was a similar instance of mirroring language between the two women who shared the experience.

    Tina: ……I <u>cracked</u>.
    Mary: I totally <u>cracked</u>.

The mirroring language in the above extract emphasised the women's shared experience and their solidarity was recognition of their mutual response to the situation. Coates (2004:25) suggests that 'quiet behaviour is very much encouraged by teachers, particularly in girls. Such conditioning begins very early in a child's life.' It should be noted that these women were approximately 20 years apart in age, so the researcher might have expected their responses to the situation to be somewhat different. However, it is possible that both women, who took great pains to communicate their discomfort, might still have been battling with their British social conditioning and perhaps the cultural script to remain silent in a public forum. When the situation (awkward silence) forced them (in their perception) to speak to fill the silence, Tina and Mary were very worried about whether they were perceived negatively and one woman sought reassurance from the Chair (who was also at the forum); the other related a compliment from another participant, who had reassured her that her contribution was a positive one. Both women appeared to need reassurance that they had not transgressed the accepted social boundaries for women. It would appear that the silence and the women's need to please and/or obey a senior manager by contributing to the forum was in conflict with their personal levels of confidence and comfort about speaking out in public. No such qualms about speaking out or about how one appeared when stating his opinion in public were

expressed by any men in any of the meetings observed or mentioned in any of the interviews with them.

It can be seen then that discourse analysis can be used to interpret the communicative interaction. These two women used powerful nouns, several repetitions of the words 'silence' and 'uncomfortable', descriptive adjectives, emphatic phonology, hyperbole, mirroring language (to reflect their shared experience) and requests for affirmation to describe how they felt at being pressured, simply by their discomfort at the silence, to speak out in a forum when they had already decided that they would not do so. The fact that the women continued to discuss the silence prior to a separate and unrelated meeting the next day appeared to confirm their interpretation of the silence as a 'malfunction' in communication that they felt they had to correct by speaking out publicly. Speaking out publicly then seemed to cause them some distress, as discussed above.

The above exchange took place before a formal department meeting (the 'I will be Caesar' exchange also occurred prior to the formal start of a meeting). The period of time before meetings start (when people are pouring coffee and taking their seats) and at the close of a meeting can be critical times for learning how people really feel about issues and for assuming performative identities. Women, in particular, appeared to be more likely to participate in discussions that can be construed as being social, as 'small talk episodes are an essential element in keeping the interactional wheels turning at work' (Tannen 2009: 229). However, once participants assume a formal meeting identity, they are more likely to limit expression of internalised feelings.   In fact, Trudgill (2000: 73) notes that 'many societies seem to expect a higher level of adherence to social norms – better behaviour – from women than they do from men'. Women are conditioned through the cultural script to be quiet in public, formal settings. Therefore, a woman who takes on the supposedly 'neutral' behaviours of challenging, directing and controlling in a meeting could potentially be judged very harshly indeed. Consider the response to Margaret Thatcher when she embraced these traits, which might still be perceived to be in the masculine domain. The many-sided media furore surrounding Mrs Thatcher's death revived many of these criticisms.

The concept of silence was raised in the interviews with two members of the senior management team (one male and one female). When asked how he had interpreted the silence in Leadership Team meetings, Mick commented:

> *I think my interpretation of it was, um, was fear in the sense that there wasn't a culture of openness of being able to say what you felt and observed in the College… uh… and I think it goes back to what we were just talking about, this cognitive dissonance, between what I was experiencing all the time and what I think we should be saying to each other and people not being quite clear about whether this was a safe environment to operate in.*

Mick described silence as reflecting organisational culture and he discussed it as being very much an institutional malfunction, whereas Tina and Mary felt that the silence was a social malfunction that forced them to act in a situation in which they were not comfortable and therefore perhaps to *compromise* their routine performative identity of remaining silent in public. Mick referred to the concept of 'cognitive dissonance' and the difference between what people thought/felt and what they were able to say. He was also aware that some people (those other than himself) did not feel 'safe' in the environment, but he was not distressed by the silence in the personal way that Tina and Mary describe, and he did not feel the need to fill the silence. His reflection on silence was more cognitive than emotive and his language linked silence to the organisational culture, rather than to a personal identity.

The female senior manager also reflected on silence in open forums and in the Leadership Team in the extract from the interview below:

> Donna: *Um. It's a big group, that leadership group and in a way having changed it so that it is more in smaller groups of working is… um… is something that I've tried to do because those silences; they can go on for so long and silences can be really powerful, but sometimes I have a tendency to want to put something in the silence, but it's one of those… in a way it's almost like, do you pursue doing it in a similar way that people will then break the silence as they then become more comfortable with the silence? Or do you do something in a different….*

> Int: *I don't know how it looked from your perspective.*

Donna: *Um. It would almost, it would, it would be ok in certain parts because then it would sort of start and get going, but sometimes when it was absolutely…it was very difficult to read what people were thinking, I always find quite … if I can't, if I don't understand why people are being silent or I'm not sure then that becomes, I like to know… silence is really powerful, so I'm quite happy with silence and I tend to use it, you know, certainly.*

Int: *You used it recently in the feedback forums, didn't you? You said, you made a point of saying, 'I'm quite happy to sit with silence.'*

Donna: *Hmmm. Yeah, I mean that is… but if it gets beyond the point where it starts to make me feel really uncomfortable, I think just on a personal level, because I don't know, I can't read it which probably is what you were just saying about having some acknowledgement that you're engaged, so silence is fine while I think people are engaged. If I think people are disengaged, I want to re-engage them.*

Donna interpreted the silence as being uncomfortable, and she has described how she tried to change the structure of the Leadership Team, so that it worked in smaller groups to combat the silence

> *….those silences; they can go on for so long and silences can be really powerful, but sometimes I have a tendency to want to put something in the silence.*

Donna, as a senior manager, held more organisational power than Tina and Mary, but she expressed a similar desire to want to fill the silence, suggesting that she, too, had felt uncomfortable with it. Even the expression of this discomfort was awkward; sentences were started and re-started. However, Donna's discomfort was on a sliding scale; she could manage silence for a time, if she thought that people were engaged and thinking. If the silence reached '*the point where it starts to make me feel really uncomfortable, I think just on a personal level…..*' Donna felt the need to act. The words here were important – 'uncomfortable' and 'personal' – and reflected similar concerns about silence stated by Tina and Mary in the exchange discussed earlier in this chapter.   In this case, silence was interpreted as a personal response to Donna's management role. Despite expressing her discomfort with silence, there was some cognitive dissonance where Donna stated,

> *…if I don't understand why people are being silent or I'm not sure, then that becomes, I like to know … silence is really powerful, so I'm quite happy with silence and I tend to use it, you know, certainly'.*

Donna thus acknowledged her personal discomfort, but also the fact that she would continue to use silence as a management strategy.

As a senior manager, Donna appeared to share the personal discomfort of Tina and Mary, perhaps in response to the perceived communicative malfunction, and she could feel personally vulnerable when silence continued for too long, although she seemed to feel that, despite the discomfort, she should continue to use it to challenge people in certain contexts.

There was no personal vulnerability identified by a male middle manager, Nathaniel, in relation to the topic of silence. Despite a question specifically asking him to comment on silence in Leadership Team meetings, he spoke about a lack of clarity about the purpose of the group:

> *… Um…I don't…I suppose we weren't quite sure what we … what was expected of us as a group… um… it was a change, wasn't it? The group came together because...um… I don't know really why it came together – I presume because Donna wanted a wider group to look at things, the situation within the College other than the SMT, I presume, and to try and move the new, I presume, her vision for the College forward, I suppose.*

Again, Nathaniel expressed no personal discomfort with the notion of silence; he almost refused to acknowledge it and talked about the purpose of the Leadership Team and some confusion about the role of the group. The way he described the group contains five pauses of two seconds, two fillers (Um), five re-starts and two mitigating statements (I presume (used twice) and I suppose) and a tag question (wasn't it?), reducing clarity of expression. For this individual, the silence reflected confusion around organisational matters (very similar to Mick's interpretation of the silence) and there was no personal response to it – no reference at all to personal discomfort, just a lack of clarity around organisational direction, quite similar to the view expressed by Mick. Again, Nathaniel did not feel the need to fill the silence with speech in the way that Tina and Mary did.

It would appear that silence is possibly viewed differently by the men and women in this small sample. By the men, it seemed to be seen as the manifestation of an organisational difficulty; it could also signal an indication of status – such as that accorded to Martin. Indeed, Tannen (1994: 234) posits that 'Silence can also be the privilege of a higher-ranking person, and even an instrument of power' (a concept to which Donna has alluded when she said she would continue to use it to apply pressure in meetings). Silence appeared to be viewed by the women interviewed as discomfort that could threaten their personal identity or as comment on their personal performance. There was some evidence from the exchange above that the most senior manager continued her use of silence as 'an instrument of power', despite her personal discomfort with it in some contexts. In this sample, it was conceivable that the women internalised the communicative malfunction of silence, which resulted in significant personal discomfort, while the men sampled appeared to view silence as one way of constructing a powerful identity or as a condition external to themselves, i.e. an organisational issue. Coates (2004:124) suggests that 'silence in conversation is always (in English-speaking westernised societies) a sign of malfunction…' It would appear that the male interviewees attributed the malfunction to the organisation; the women interviewed appeared to respond in a very personal manner to the malfunction (silence) that could result in a sense of dismay.

I really can't do it – constructing a helpless identity

The data from recorded meetings and taped interviews suggested that there may be some evidence of negative, repressed internal discourse amongst women, particularly in terms of confidence. In two interviews women said they had applied for promotion only at the urging of a male manager in the organisation. The female member of the senior management team, when pressed about why she had not applied initially for her current role, replied:

> *I just didn't consider it. I've never been a career … I've never had a career path and said this is where I want to be.. um.. and it was because of JR saying, 'You must be applying' and I sort of.. I really had not given it any thought. Then, because he said that, I actually thought, 'Well, should I?' and then having made that decision, then decided (which is quite interesting because there was already a woman in that role)…*

This is an interesting extract from a woman who held a senior post in leadership and management. A similar theme was echoed in the discussion with Diane who had the opportunity to lead a department as an acting head for a time before applying for the post:

> *I actually think for me it was a good way to do it because I would never have had the confidence to have applied for it in the first place if I hadn't, because I had to be persuaded to do it anyway, and I didn't think – I wasn't sure – if I could do it, so I think it would have, um, I didn't apply for the original post because I didn't have the confidence to apply, so for me to actually go through the process and learn as I was going was a really good way for me to do it. Otherwise, I probably would never have applied.*

Looking carefully at the above statement, Diane referred twice to the concept of lacking confidence and being persuaded to apply. The sentence breaks and mitigations were around Diane's abilities: 'I didn't think – I wasn't sure – if I could do it'. The halting nature of the above extract suggested Diane's hesitation about her ability to do the job. A male manager persuaded her to step into the job for a period of time before she applied. Her response to this 'support' was clear: 'Otherwise, I probably would never have applied.' The clarity of this expression may reflect Diane's inner certainty that she would not have applied without this trial period.

When pressed as to why she did not feel confident enough to apply for the job, she explained:

> *I think it's probably my personal background because I come from a family without any Level 2 qualifications so going to university, I was like one of the first in my family, in fact I think I'm the only one on one side of the family, so to have the confidence then to go into management jobs was another level beyond what any of my family had done in the past. It actually took managers here to convince me that I would be able to just try it. I'm glad they did make me do it.*

In this case, Diane made reference to her social role. No one in her family had ever held a management role and she had to think twice before stepping out of her socially conditioned identity of teacher to redefine her identity as a manager. There were no awkward utterances or sentence breaks in this extract, and she was clear that she was in uncharted territory in terms of family background and expectations.

It is interesting that Diane focussed on the difference between social role/background and professional identity; it is even more interesting that she gave this response in answer to a question about confidence, focussing not on her personal ability, but on her background. Further, the final 'make' is of some interest here; it implies that Diane was following a directive in accepting the head of department role, rather than taking it of her own volition. There would appear to be a somewhat submissive orientation to male authority in this statement; applying for the Head of Department role appears to be framed as a response to a directive from a male manager.

Tannen (1994: 136) explains:

> *When decisions are made about promotion to management positions, the qualities sought are a high level of competence, decisiveness, and the ability to lead. It is men, or mostly men, who are making the decisions about promotions – as it usually is – they are likely to misinterpret women's ways of talking as showing indecisiveness, inability to assume authority, and even incompetence.*

Atwater et al (2004: 191) suggest that 'most traits associated with management are still generally considered to be masculine'. Reflecting now on how two women, Donna and Diane, have constructed their professional identities (somewhat hesitant, unsure, lacking confidence, requiring the support and encouragement of a male to proceed), it would not be surprising if neither of them had obtained management roles. Nevertheless, both women held demanding management posts, leading large, professional teams and yet they refrained from applying because they did not conceptualise themselves as managers or senior managers. Further, the way in which they constructed their management identities could be seen to be almost deferential and apologetic, in some contrast with the confident discourse of masculinities that is considered the neutral 'norm' in management. Interestingly, Olsson and Walker (2003: 389) suggest that men '…form part of women's career identity, often as mentors'. There is an interesting parallel here with the findings of this study and the work of Constantine-Simms et al (2007: 29), which found 'that women were more likely than men to see supportive line managers or colleagues as important in applying for their current role'. Further, ability to do the job was

significantly more likely to be considered by women than by men when applying for a new post, a concern echoed by the women in the sample for this study.

It would appear that some women's conditioned reluctance to put themselves forward could actively work against them. Perhaps this is one of the factors at play in the so-called 'glass ceiling'. A comment taken from Constantine-Simms et al (2007: 45): Women have a confidence problem – men think they can do a job even when they can't. Men can talk up their experience – women need to project and talk up as well.' This 'confidence problem' was evident in the women sampled for this study, at first line, middle and senior management levels and thus ran through the female cross-section of the organisation.

It should be noted that no such dilemma about applying for posts was revealed by any of the male managers interviewed, nor did any of them express any lack of confidence about their abilities to carry out their duties. The male confidence or the appearance of it, potentially learned in the playground, seems to continue to serve men well throughout their lives. In fact, Knoppers and Anthonissen (2005: 127) suggest that 'selection discourses were congruent with images of corporate leadership skills: heroic, masculine traits were seen as gender neutral'. Thus, men would appear to have little to do to succeed. If the masculine discourses and ways of being are indeed perceived as gender neutral, then women could be working from an entirely different and 'other' platform in their roles as leaders and managers. It may become difficult for them to project their identities in a setting where masculinities and the linguistic behaviours associated with them are considered the 'given' neutral. One possible corollary of this assumption is that some women might therefore feel that they are unheard within an organisation. Again, perhaps we can hear the resonance from the male voices and behaviours from the cultural script.

For example, Penny, the female chair of one curriculum level meeting (a middle manager), commented on not being heard in management meetings:

> *I did mention that and I can't remember where I mentioned it, whether it was at Sixth Form Management Team or Leadership or – I can't remember where I mentioned – there was not – I mentioned about doing this and there was not a very positive response. …I thought that was a good idea.*

This comment, in itself, was not particularly revealing; it simply stated in a rather awkward manner that an idea was not received positively in a management meeting. A few minutes later in the meeting, however, Penny returned to the theme:

> *I…I think quite… negative about this at the moment because… um… I have taken it to various meetings and I've fed back to various people at middle and senior management and people are complaining saying this, but nobody's doing anything about it um…*

In the above extract, there are several pauses and breaks, with the use of a strong adjective to communicate how the individual feels (negative), as well as the focus on self (four references) and how middle and senior management are unresponsive. The theme of not being heard or of feeling powerless continued to develop throughout the meeting, until, finally, the chair spoke directly about not being heard by senior managers:

> *That's one of the things I saw (name) about this morning and I was disappointed in a way by her response; she turned round and said find solutions…*

The chair continued to elaborate on the various issues, but then made a direct emotional statement:

> *I am very disappointed…I'm disappointed because we've been harping on about resources for a long time and been doing the things we have…*

Finally, she succumbed to her feelings:

> *I'll say no more. I work every night. I work at weekends (laughs) I'll say no more.*

> Harriet: *You look quite downtrodden.*

> *I felt… I'm trying to take things forward but… um… and I don't think we're moving forward on this at all, so, anyway, that's just so you know.*

Later on in the meeting, Penny continued:

> *I shall say no more on that (laughs) because, as you can see, um… I feel I'm knocking my head against a brick wall…*

This discussion of her feelings prompted a tremendous amount of sympathy for the chair and the meeting then took on a supportive tone, with other members of the group becoming very solicitous. There were several issues at play here. The first reflected the fact that the group was an all-female one (the only male member did not attend) and it is unlikely that the meeting would have indulged in a prolonged discussion of the Chair's feelings if a male had been present; further, the protracted discussion about feeling unheard, unable to influence, powerless was evidence of internal repressive discourse. Repetition was used of the phrase 'I'll say no more' (three times) and there was emphasis on what the individual did 'I work every night; I work at weekends; I'm trying to take things forward', all of which emphasised the personal activity of the individual manager and underscored the helpless identity being constructed. Other members commented on how she looked (rather than on what she said), using the word 'downtrodden' in response to her helplessness, thus reinforcing the construction. It is unlikely that anyone (male or female) who constructed such a powerless performative management identity would be able to 'move things forward'. It would appear that the helpless identity of the Chair was co-constructed with the individuals in attendance at the meeting. Tannen (2009: 239) explains that women are more likely than men to present their ideas as questions (with appropriate prosodic inflection), to speak quickly and quietly at a lower volume and higher pitch. In short, some women do not use the same discourse markers as men when they want to point out that an issue is important. They are therefore less likely to be 'heard'.

Thus, the management identity constructed through the public discourse appeared to be actively working against this individual, despite her being in a middle manager role. It would appear that senior managers were confirming and perhaps also co-constructing the performative identity that Penny had constructed for herself. In short, she was constructing an identity that might be at odds with the corporate masculinity that continues to advantage some men in relation to most women (Knoppers and Anthonissen 2005: 127).

Arles (1976) in her study of the interaction patterns of different groups suggested that all-female groups operated differently from all-male groups in that women were more flexible, drawing out reticent contributors and developing ways to express

affection and interpersonal concern. This finding appears to be echoed in this meeting with the levels of personal concern for well-being becoming the focus of the meeting at some points. For example, Penny's discourse in this meeting built group solidarity (the women became joined in support of Penny) and reduced the power differential (loss of status as Chair). Coates (2004:206) discusses the difficulties experienced by some women who find the 'androcentric norms of public discourse' to be quite alien to them. According to Coates (2006: 206), 'This discourse is extremely powerful in promoting and maintaining the competitive ethos of the world of work.' From the extracts above, it might appear that Penny has been unable to use the androcentric norms and therefore felt that she was not able to engage successfully in the discourse to enact her management role.

Moreover, Tannen (1994: 284) confirms that 'women are not as likely to be listened to as men, regardless of how they speak or what they say' and this means that women have to modify their discourse to be heard in a work environment that might still esteem masculine norms as neutral. It would appear that there is still much work to be done in terms of raising women's about how their language signals who they are as workers, managers and leaders.

2.0 Are there gendered attitudes embedded in the management discourse?

The women in the sample appeared to be more conscious of public appearance and 'saying the right thing'. For example, one Head of Department spent 40 minutes explaining that there was no gender difference between male and female managers in their approach to management or in relation to any of the management subroles. During the concluding remarks and pleasantries, she then commented that women were 'of course, more flexible and able to deal with different situations'. There is dissonance between the two points of view. The latter comment is consistent with women needing to present a pleasing, social façade and to appear to be compliant; further, it hints at subconscious attitudes about gender and management and, through the use of different social varieties of language, possible social stratification between male and female workers (Trudgill 2000:24), which could reveal another dimension of management at Forestside College.

The discussions around Yukl's (1989) taxonomy where particular management subroles were considered in the abstract, i.e. outside of the personal context, revealed some interesting attitudes. It was noteworthy that males were more likely to categorise the subroles into masculine and feminine than the women, who tended to focus on a very narrow range of subroles for categorisation, as noted in Table 4.1. Atwater et al (2004: 198) also found that 'women had a 'more androgynous view of managers. That is, women are more likely than men to believe that a manager's job includes both masculine and feminine roles' (Brenner, Tomkiewicz & Schein 1989; Dodge, Gilroy & Fenzel 1995; Norris and Wylie 1995 in Atwater et al (2004: 198)). The women sampled for this study certainly leaned towards this conceptualisation of management.

For some participants, however, there appeared to be gendered attitudes at play. For example, Martin, the manager who constructed his management identity, in part through the careful use of silence, noted:

> *Motivating and inspiring, oh it's definitely a man's role; communicating and informing - women are much better at that. Problem solving (intake of breath)… I think either can do that but in different ways; women are much better at working, punishing, supporting, that can be either really, yeah...*

From Table 4.1, in which male responses are recorded in blue and female responses in red, it can be seen that there are several areas worthy of particular interest, although because of the small sample size, these differences cannot be verified as being statistically significant. There were six areas where there are differences between male and female responses and in the discussion around them: developing and mentoring personnel, managing conflict, consulting others, strategic decision-making, communicating and informing and networking. Each of these management subroles will be considered individually in the following section.

Developing and Mentoring Personnel

This category of subrole is of interest because all men and one woman (four out of six) interviewed felt that developing and mentoring personnel was a feminine aspect of management. This could be for the reason that developing and mentoring could

be said to more closely reflect the skills perceived as required for mothering and therefore more closely linked to stereotypical expectations of the roles of women. This finding is somewhat at odds with the commentary of two of the women participants, who both said they had relied on male mentorship to guide and encourage their career development.

Atwater et al (2004: 197) suggest that the developing and mentoring subroles are consistent with role congruity theory in that ''relationship-oriented' behaviours are seen as more suitable for women'. This is of some interest, if we consider that this type of assumption

> *may have implications for the jobs each sex is seen as capable of performing effectively, and it may reinforce perceptions that women are more suited for lower level management positions or staff rather than line management jobs* (Atwater et al 2004: 197).

Martin, in interview, commented

> *Yeah, I think you need some men in the team…Otherwise, you are going to lose some lecturers and the danger is that you…that gender stereotyping will start….you know, you've gotta be aware of it to counteract its worst manifestations, if you will.*

Pressed on what these 'worst manifestations' would be, Martin responded:

> *Well, men are pushy and stroppy and trying to dominate and the women are too social and caring and…they forget the objectives and that kind of thing. Let's be nice to people and there are times when you can't be. You've gotta say, 'Well, I'm sorry. You've gotta do what we see is necessary for the College or the team...*

There is implied criticism of women managers in this extract, as Martin suggested that women focus so much on caring for people that they lose sight of the strategic objectives. This attitude is reflected in the work of Brewis (2001:293), who noted that 'the discourse of gender difference positions women as 'irrational, emotional and inevitably subjective in decision making'. Martin acknowledged the negative effects of the 'dominating' style of men, but he also used this characterisation of the male manager as a positive thing: 'You've gotta do what…is necessary for the College'

(perhaps implying a stereotypically male cognitive approach). Interestingly, Martin slipped in a shift from second person (You) to first person plural (we), which could possibly signal his own commitment to getting the job done. This script seemed to be at play in Martin's mind, as he considered the taxonomy.

As all the men and one woman in this study suggested that developing and mentoring personnel was best situated in the category of feminine subrole, there appears to be, amongst this sample at least, a potential crossover in social roles from mother to manager. Halford and Leonard (2001: 108-109) and Kanter (1977) mapped out four legitimate women's social roles; the first of these is 'mother', whereby women give emotional support and care for their colleagues and subordinates. There is concern that women who adopt this social role at work (consider Martin's reference to women being too social and caring) risk 'being assessed as too emotional as opposed to being professional' (Mullaney 2007:44). Similarly, Atwater et al (2004: 197) also found that the 'supporting' subroles were seen by both men and women as more feminine.

On the other hand, Wodak (1997: 367) posits that in recent years there has been a transition with respect to the 'mother role', arguing that it has become legitimised. Indeed, in education and education management, the mother role is more acceptable, as there is already a caring, nurturing expectation built into role responsibility, through which 'authority can be enacted in a professional workplace without experiencing negative evaluation' (Wodak, 1997: 367). It would appear that Martin did not value the maternal role in the workplace, focussing instead on the negative stereotype of emotional, irrational women, although he also offered a negative male stereotype of the dominating male, suggesting that he possibly draws on gendered role stereotypes in his thinking.

The most senior woman manager also wrestled with categorising management subroles, despite the easy option offered to assign them to the 'neutral' category. She struggled to explain her reasons for allocating 'roles' to particular categories:

> *…the, the, the allocating resources I just see a man with that which is again, quite odd… uuuum…. you know, like a storekeeper or something… um… and*

> *developing and mentoring personnel, I think it's that… um…intellectually I know that males make good mentors, so intellectually I know that's not the case, but the image I get is of – it feels a female thing to do…*

Interestingly, Atwater et al (2004: 194) also found in their study that allocating resources was identified as being a more masculine subrole. The very nature of the 'gut feeling' chosen over what she acknowledged 'intellectually' might suggest that Donna was drawing on a long-standing stereotyped script about gendered roles and applying them to management. She herself noted that this reaction was 'quite odd'. This statement was particularly revealing as Donna was mentored in her current role by a male senior manager, and yet she still felt that mentoring was a female role. Thinking through this issue appears to be a painful process for Donna; there are eight breaks in the expression of the ideas. The only complete and uninterrupted thought in this section is the last one: 'it feels a female thing to do'.

Mick, a male senior manager, in trying to complete the taxonomy and despite being told that he could assign subroles to the neutral category, was concerned that doing so was 'opting out'.

> *I'm trying to help you really, rather than opting out. Evaluating an employee: if I was going to be consistent, then feedback and evaluation and developing and mentoring they all feel to me like Feminine, but I don't like the stereotyping that that implies.*

These statements were interesting. Mick (like Donna above) eschews the rational option of assigning subroles to the neutral category and preferred to go with visceral 'feel', even though intellectually he said he felt uncomfortable about doing so. Mick stated that categorising management behaviours as neutral would be 'opting out', so even though he mentioned trying to help the researcher (despite assurances that the researcher was looking for 'gut reaction' to the classification task, including neutral attitudes in relation to management discourse), his choice to categorise as feminine the nurturing aspects of management (feedback and evaluation; mentoring and developing) would seem to imply that some managers find it difficult to assign certain subroles to the neutral category. They seemed to be unable to rationalise why they had chosen to assign particular subroles to particular genders and they recognised that it was not rational, but they remained committed to the choice, even after discussion.

When introducing the blank taxonomy for completion, the researcher was careful to explain that interviewees were to be as honest as possible about the categorisation of subroles exercise. The neutral category was pointed out and interviewees were urged to use it when they felt it was appropriate. One interviewee, a woman, automatically ticked the 'neutral' category against every subrole, and there is some evidence in the literature that women no longer gender-type the role of manager (Stevens and DeNisi 1980; Van Fleet and Saurage 1984; Shore 1992; Spence and Buckner 2000; Atwater et al 2004).

Of course, the desire to 'please' the researcher must be acknowledged; however, the extracts above of their decision making, voiced as they completed the task, seemed to reflect their own attitudes. It is, however, important to note that the desire to please the researcher cannot be entirely ruled out, although the researcher attempted to mitigate for this effect through careful instruction prior to commencement of the categorisation task.

Managing Conflict

All men interviewed felt that managing conflict was a feminine subrole, whereas all women said it was neutral, again suggesting that men are more likely to gender type management subroles than women (Atwater et al 2004: 193). Exploring this dichotomy further revealed some interesting attitudes, ranging from worry that some women avoided resolving conflict as they did not want to upset people and therefore resorted to gossip, to some men avoiding conflict because they did not like the discussions that might ensue if they tackled it, as well as the reference to male anger and physicality.

For example, with reference to women and conflict management, despite indicating that managing conflict was a feminine subrole, Martin commented:

> *I know they [women] avoid a conflict which needs resolving because otherwise it will upset people. That means they don't resolve the conflict, because they go and talk to each other and get their backs up.*

Therefore, even though Martin felt that women did not manage conflict in a direct, assertive way, he still felt it was a feminine role and there was some dissonance in

this response. It also potentially echoed the stereotypical expectation that women gossip, a term which usually has, according to Jones (1980), pejorative connotations. This type of all-female talk, according to Martin, appears to contrast with the historical, important talk of men (possible repetition of the cultural script). Even though Martin says he believes that some women were better at managing conflict, he interpreted this strength in a negative way, through the pejorative stereotype of the gossiping woman.

Mick also felt that managing conflict was a feminine subrole, but he qualified his thoughts as follows:

> *Well, managing conflict. I think that in general blokes ignore conflict even where it implies you have to do something about it, so depending how you interpret managing, recognising and rewarding employees; that's something that women get more than blokes from experience because they recognise the non-tangible levels of support….*

Mick's statement that managing conflict was a feminine subrole because 'blokes ignore' it was almost a default to the feminine category, i.e., if men do not do it well, women must do it better, and this assumption could be erroneous. He was also critical of men's approaches to conflict resolution, but he did recognise some of the other, underpinning skills that accompany conflict resolution skills.

Nathaniel, the youngest middle manager, also categorised managing conflict as being feminine in nature.

> *… I think that females are better at managing conflict. I have got dragged into conflict where the male side takes over and gets a bit… um… what's the word – the testosterone, shall we say, arises – females are better.*

The fact that all male managers interviewed felt that managing conflict was a feminine subrole was of much interest and potential concern. It must be noted that Martin felt women managed conflict by 'talking to people' and, although he seems to view it negatively (with an indirect and then a direct reference to gossip), the other two male managers recognised the role of support, communication and discussion in resolving conflict, and it is these aspects that appear to be construed as feminine. It

is quite possible that managing conflict is seen as 'feminine' and also reflects, in some cases, the legitimisation of the more traditional, woman-as-mother role in the workplace. Tannen (2009: 161) suggests that 'our primary images of female authority come from motherhood' and yet she also suggests that 'the way many middle-class American [and perhaps British?] mothers talk to their children helps create the image of mothers as relatively powerless' (Tannen 2009: 162). Thimm et al (2005: 539) note that avoiding or preventing conflict was usually dealt with by women by changing the topic, vagueness, mentioning external sources (appeal to authority) and softeners, in an attempt to allow those involved to save face. While these strategies are indirect, they are often effective. The male managers interviewed for this study acknowledged the strength demonstrated in managing conflict by some women, even though one (Martin) seemed to feel that talking about conflict exacerbated it.

Miller at al (1986), in their research studying conflict, found that boys' main objective in resolving conflict was 'to get their own way'. Girls, on the other hand, used mitigating strategies, such as compromise, evasion or acquiescence. Girls were much more concerned with being able to retain harmony in the group. These skills are very useful for all managers and are steadily becoming more valued above the autonomous, confrontational style that might once have characterised masculine 'one up, one down' leadership and management behaviours.

Consulting Others

Five out of the six managers interviewed felt that consulting others was representative of a feminine subrole. It is possible that there are ongoing links here with the talkative woman myth. However, this finding is at odds with the study carried out by Atwater et al (2004: 194), in which 'networking' and 'consulting' were interpreted as neutral management behaviours. It is interesting that most participants at Forestside College have interpreted 'consulting' as a feminine subrole.

Donna comments:

> *Sometimes, I think, you know, men will… um… tell rather than consult*.

This comment was interesting, particularly spoken by a woman, as it might have suggested that some men attempt to maintain the hierarchical difference between them and their subordinates by emphasising the importance of their jobs (Tannen 2009: 188) with the ease of giving directives, while women seek to flatten the management structure and work in a more collaborative way with subordinates. The statement above is hedged (sometimes) and softened (I think), with two pauses of 2 seconds and a filler (um) before the actual verb 'tell' is uttered. The combined effect of the lexical and prosodic choices in this sentence was to soften the message: Men tell, not consult. Stated thus, it becomes a rather bold and direct statement, so it was softened to the point of vagueness. It is interesting that a senior manager (and an 'elite' respondent) felt the need to soften communication in this way. Holmes and Schnurr (2006) in Coates and Pichler (2011: 217) suggest that individuals draw on a range of linguistic and discursive resources to construct their identities as professionals in workplace interaction. These choices 'index particular stances' such as 'authoritative, consultative, deferential' which construct not only their particular professional identities or roles but also their gender positioning (Holmes and Schnurr (2006) in Coates and Pichler (2011: 319) (see also Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Kendall 2003, 2004).

Consulting others involves communicative competency, which appears to be the overarching theme in terms of men's attitudes towards women in the workplace: some women are seen to be better communicators. While she was able to soften messages, Donna was clear about consulting:

> *It is interesting. I think the consulting others… um… I think that would be to me a more feminine trait in terms of being consultative… um… the women are sort of wanting to get that feedback, get people all in the same place and they are probably less comfortable… um… you know, if people aren't in vaguely the same place.*

Consulting, in this case, appeared to mean a 'check' that everyone was on board, rather than a commitment to acting on the feedback from the consultation. In other words, the 'appearance' of consulting seemed to take precedence over the substance of the actual activity. This could be another area where some women are keen to appear to do the 'right thing'. Atwater et al (2004: 194) found no statistical

differences between men and women respondents in terms of consulting and networking, a finding which is at odds with the findings of this study. It is important to recognise that some researchers (Lord and Maher 1991 and Eagly and Johnson 1990) have found that 'perceptions of managerial roles vary as a function of context, i.e. military, education, business) (Atwater et al 2004: 198) and the context of education might account for the difference in this finding. Holmes and Schnurr (2006) in Coates and Pichler (2011: 317) suggest that

> organisations which dealt directly with clients, or with people-oriented, social issues, or with education, tended to be perceived as more feminine places to work.

The fact that Forestside College is an educational organisation, and that women have traditionally been more heavily represented in education, is likely to be a factor. For example, the discourses in an educational setting would very likely be quite different from those of manufacturing or business settings (Mullaney 2007: 212), and it is possible that 'consulting' might be viewed differently in those contexts.

Strategic Decision-making

All men interviewed and one woman (the most senior manager) felt that strategic decision-making was a masculine subrole, thus concurring with the findings from the study by Atwater et al (2004: 196) in that male respondents were significantly more likely to see strategic decision making as masculine in nature. It was interesting that Martin (who had earlier defined himself as a strategist and tactician) continued his use of the military metaphor when discussing the concept of strategic decision-making:

> *General Dreadle comes in and his favourite way of judging things is we can get a black eye out of this; we can get a feather in our cap, you know, and that was his way of encouraging the troops.*

Martin's discourse appeared to be very much in the form of the male 'one up, one down' discourse. Risky behaviours can earn either reward or punishment, but they will be noticed. Martin constructed himself and his approach to management, in general, using the 'dominant masculinized perspective' (Mullaney 2007: 43).

Penny, the woman middle manager who felt that she struggled to be heard in management meetings, was quite clear: 'Strategic decision making – I think that's male'. The statement was made without hesitation or mitigation. When pressed for clarification, Penny was unable to explain why she felt that strategic decision-making was a masculine subrole. It is possible that she was drawing on a subconscious gendered schema or indeed the cultural script that she could not consciously qualify or explain. It is noteworthy that, according to published research (Page and Tornow 1987; Yukl 2002), planning, strategic decision-making and resource allocation are more important at higher levels. It is possible that participants at Forestside College have subconsciously drawn on the subroles associated with higher level managers and identified them as being masculine – 'men traditionally hold the top management positions, and thus roles expected of top managers may be seen as more masculine' (Atwater et al 2004: 192).

Communicating and Informing

All men and one woman indicated that the activity of communicating and informing was feminine by nature, most likely because of the people-centred nature of the activity. Again, this activity requires talk and exchange of information, so it was viewed by two-thirds of all managers interviewed and <u>all</u> of the men interviewed as a feminine subrole. Martin commented:

> *I've known females who end up in a little coterie of ladies who you know have all the influence on them because they have access to all the gossip, don't they? They communicate much more than… uh… with a male.*

Martin returned to the long-standing theme of gossip, once again acknowledging the cultural script and the concept of verbosity. This comment was perhaps a pejorative reference to 'women's talk'. Talbot (2005: 483) suggests that despite all the recent overt claims about the superiority of women's facility as communicators, it would appear that the stereotypes involving female fluency and male inarticulacy revert to the older versions without much thought. This reversion seemed apparent in Martin's comment. The comment also implied criticism of groups of women who held influence because they 'have access to all the gossip'. It could be that Martin

(and some other men) felt excluded by the apparent closeness of women through their talk, as was communicated by one male respondent, who felt he had been excluded from a small meeting because two women had positioned themselves in close proximity and through their paralanguage had not provided opportunity for him to comment or to contribute. The manager commented on this exchange, because it was the first time in his career that he had felt disempowered by women – it is possible that attitudes are changing.

The previous statement provides a male view on the concept of the communicative competency of some women that is based on the notion of socialisation into the use of 'women's language'. It is worth noting that girls' friendships are based on talk, whereas boys' friendships tend to be based on joint activity (Coates 2004:160). From a young age, girls are quite sophisticated in their communicative competency. For example, Maltz and Borker (1982) suggest that, through their talk, girls

- Create and maintain relationships of closeness and equality.
- Criticise others in acceptable, face-saving ways.
- Interpret accurately the speech of other girls.

Boys, on the other hand, use talk to
- Assert a position of dominance.
- Attract and maintain an audience.
- Assert themselves when another speaker has the floor.

Thus, it might be seen that girls' talk is 'collaboration oriented' and that boys' talk is 'competition oriented', and it is to this difference that Martin appeared to refer. However, it is important to note that **all** managers are required to use a wide repertoire of talk to be effective in their roles. Marra et al (2006:241) argue that

> *despite the predominance of the stereotypical view of leadership as masculine, a 'complete leadership "package", which includes both transactional and relational goals, and thus a combination of stereotypically masculine and stereotypically feminine strategies, is found. They argue that their data show how effective leaders 'do leadership' by invoking strategies which have been associated with both normatively masculine and normatively feminine ways of talking.*

Donna, the most senior woman manager, echoed Marra's comment when she suggested:

> *There can be a perception that you can say things to a man and they'll take it better than you can say things to a woman… Um… and it is about actually thinking about them as people, 'cos I notice it, because I've got a whole male management team… um… and I know I will treat some of them in a different way because of how they react to certain forms of feedback or language that I know the others would feel more uncomfortable with.*

It would appear that Donna was aware of drawing on a range of linguistic strategies in carrying out her professional role and differentiating her communication accordingly. In the interview, she commented that when the situation called for it, she was quite willing to 'talk over, interrupt and put down' anyone who was trying to dominate – these are examples of speech characteristics that have traditionally been associated with masculine leadership. It is possible that Donna's awareness of her communication strategies, ability to differentiate linguistic style appropriately for context and knowing when to use particular strategies (which differ from those of the two other women managers interviewed) as well as her confidence in doing so, have enabled her to break through the glass ceiling. It is noteworthy that she was the only woman who spoke about using language (and silence) for particular purposes in managing and that she was the most senior manager in the College; however, it is also recognised that there may well be other individual differences that account for Donna's success in breaking through the glass ceiling and that this study cannot categorically link language use to levels of management through the data presented here.

It is interesting that all men who were interviewed and two out of three of the women (five out of six) respondents categorised communicating and informing as feminine rather than neutral management subroles. This finding concurs with the work of Atwater et al (2004: 194) where 75% of respondents 'believed that communicating and informing and supporting were feminine in nature'. The gender-typing in relation to these subroles appears to continue to exist in this small sample at Forestside College, although there is recognition that a wide repertoire of skills is needed for effective management.

Networking

All three men interviewed classed networking as a feminine subrole; all women classed it as neutral. Again, this result seems to hark back to the talkative woman myth, discussed under the previous heading, rather than the realities of networking. It might make the stereotypical assumption that women enjoy talking and that they spend a significant amount of time networking. As discussed in Chapter 2, however, women spend less time talking in public; they hold the floor for shorter periods and on fewer occasions than men. Despite this fact, the perhaps stereotypical perception of the men interviewed seemed to be that women talk more and that they were therefore better at networking. In real terms, it is very difficult for women to break into the old boys' network (Koppers and Anthonissen 2005: 130), although these networks (often based on sporting activity) work very effectively for men (Collinson and Hearn 2001: 159), particularly the dynamics of these networks, which can reflect what is sometimes described as a 'locker room culture' sustaining certain types of masculinities that emphasise emotional detachment, competitiveness and the sexual objectification of women (Bird 1996; Collinson and Hearn 2001) . Bell and Nkomo (2001) found that one of the major barriers was limited access to social and informal networks in their organisations (in Yukl, 2013: 359). Further, in a culture that still assumes that the running of the family is largely a feminine role, there are other constraints on women's networking:

> *Things have changed since I had my child – the informal networking goes on out of work hours and I can no longer be involved. So in a way I have consciously restricted my career aspiration.* (Constantine-Simms et al 2006: 40)

It is therefore interesting that all the men interviewed for this study said networking was a feminine subrole, perhaps connecting the concept of *talking* with *networking*, which is in itself potentially a stereotypical assumption. However, given that managers at higher levels spend more time networking with others (Luthans, Rosenkrantz and Hennessey 1985), it is also possible that women were seen to be capable of the subroles that are often linked with higher levels of management . Further, other researchers have found that higher level managers actually perform a greater variety of activities, while lower level managers tend to be more concerned with monitoring employee performance (Yukl 2002 in Atwater et al 2004: 193).

Summary

In summary, the meeting and interview data revealed some linguistic variation in the ways that the men and women in this sample perceived their management roles and constructed their professional identities, particularly with respect to line management activities, such as directing and evaluating staff. Women appeared to use types of linguistic softeners, including conditional phrases and modal verbs (would you, could you), hedges (of which a great many were heard and recorded in the interviews), overt politeness, prosodic emphasis, softening particles (maybe, perhaps) and diminutives (such as *little*) to minimise the size or impact of an issue. All of these linguistic strategies have been recorded in the interviews and meetings in this study.

In the meetings and in interviews, men, in particular, constructed their performative identities, using powerful, heroic language, while the women constructed more passive, supporting identities (one stopped a meeting to discuss how frustrated and powerless she felt). Further, all women interviewed felt some discomfort at being required to direct colleagues and expressed a preference for collaborative working, whereas the men expected directed, competitive working relationships. Men in the sample also drew on more traditional leadership images of military and sport and the concept of hierarchy was of greater importance to them, whereas the women were prepared to disregard hierarchy, in preference for working collaboratively with others. It is important to note that the youngest male, middle manager took pains to describe himself as a collaborative manager, although he was critical of his own line manager for working in such a way and there is some dissonance here.

Silence in the workplace was viewed differently by the men and women in the sample, with the women responding to prolonged silence with dismay at the 'social malfunction', feeling the need to fill the silence and the men taking a more objective view of silence as a 'system malfunction' or a strategy for asserting one's own management identity.

The women interviewed at the three different management levels seemed to portray a possible lack of confidence in their abilities to 'do the job' effectively and their linguistic strategies around this issue reflected their concerns. It is also possible that

they more accurately presented a modest construction of their performative identity, rather than an under-confident one. They all (even the most senior woman manager) felt they needed the support and guidance of a male to encourage them to apply for a management role. No such worry was evident in the interviews with any of the men. Low confidence levels, or what appear to be low confidence levels, and the manner in which women constructed their identities could conceivably contribute to false perceptions of some women's efficacy. There were differences in how men and women managers constructed their professional identities in their daily interactions. It is possible that the ways in which some women project their management identities could mean that they are not considered as senior management material, but it is also important to recognise that all of these women were already working in management roles, including one in the most senior role in the College.

Finally, the discussion around the scoring of Yukl's (1989) Taxonomy of Management Subroles seems to reflect some evidence of lingering stereotypical beliefs about a limited range of management subroles. More specifically, the men in the sample rated five management subroles (and confirmed their rating through discussion) as feminine, while they rated strategic decision-making in their comments as masculine. In particular, the behaviours/activities associated with looking after people, talking, communicating and managing conflict were attributed to the feminine category, while the more 'serious' tasks of strategic management and allocation of resources were still seen by some as being masculine, despite the 'talk' about neutrality. Consistent with the work of Atwater et al (2004: 193) women were less likely to gender type management subroles. However, while women were reluctant to 'score' subroles as masculine or feminine, there were nonetheless some interesting comments that reflected some evidence of gender typing in the taxonomy-related discussion with some of the women. While Atwater et al (2004: 198) concluded that men and women gender-typed some management subroles, this study has found that the male managers were more likely to gender type than the women, who seemed to take a more androgynous view of management subroles. This is a positive finding in that the women in this sample did not appear to limit their own development through the perception that management is for men. It is of some note that in this sample men saw five roles as clearly more feminine and

one role (strategic decision making) as more masculine.   However, the women in this study were very reluctant to identify subroles as being masculine or feminine. Therefore, the author concludes from the data that women construct their management identities in different ways from men; there remains the persistence of some gendered attitudes evidenced through discussion around gender typing of a small range of management subroles and comments by one male Head of Department who commented on the emotional nature of women and their tendency to gossip; however, it is unlikely that the gendered attitudes revealed would place women in an antithetical position to executive power, unless they chose not to challenge the attitudes. It is also clear that the strengths around communication and relations-oriented behaviours (Yukl et al 2002: 15) traditionally attributed to women are becoming more highly valued in the workplace in all managers, and this is a positive trend.

Finally, the data from the meetings and interviews, including the discussions related to Yukl's taxonomy have been grouped according to themes. These themes in turn have been compared with Priola's gendered discourses (2004). Three of Priola's four gendered discourses (people and communication skills; the ability to focus on support and care for the staff; the implementation of a team-based approach rather than an authoritarian style) have been evidenced in the data. The fourth one, multi-tasking, including the ability to manage multi-tasks, including administration, was not observed.

This chapter has presented the findings of the research in light of the literature. The next chapter will consider these findings in relation to the research questions, discuss the limitations of the study, consider avenues for future research and make recommendations for the conceptualisation of continuing professional development programmes in the area of communication in leadership and management.

Chapter 5

Summary and Conclusions

Problem Restatement

The literature review introduced the concept of the persistence of attitudes that place women in an antithetical position to executive power.   One avenue for exploring these attitudes is to examine how men and women construct professional identities or representations of themselves as managers through their discourse. A central assumption underpinning this social constructionist approach is that   '…the world …is constituted in one way or another as people talk it, write it, and argue it' (Schwandt 2000: 198). Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine and interpret the words and interactions used by managers, both male and female, in natural management contexts and in interviews, with a view to identifying possible gendered attitudes in their discourse to determine whether women approached management differently, i.e. in ways that reflect their social identities as women. Further, the study also focussed on determining whether women might disqualify themselves from senior management posts by the way in which they discursively construct their identities. If this were the case, then it might not be gendered attitudes that directly disservice women and place them at a disadvantage in the workplace, but rather women's conceptualisations of themselves as managers, indirectly reflecting gendered attitudes. One of the possible reasons for the endurance of the glass ceiling is that 'there is often no systematic or transparent route in organizations for promoting candidates' (Powell and Graves 2003 in Mullaney 2007: 14). Another key reason, according to Powell and Graves (2003: 194) is the 'cognitive processes of those in decision-making positions, which includes stereotypes, prototypes and preference for similar others'. Mullaney (2007: 15) argues that 'if those already at the top of the ladder are male, other males will be preferred for promotion as they are similar to those currently occupying the gatekeeping positions'.   Atwater et al (2004: 191) suggest that 'men see management as more traditionally masculine in nature than do women'. An underpinning assumption weaving throughout the thesis is that the discourses used by managers to create their professional identities present clues to the values, attitudes and beliefs of managers within the organisation.

Chapter four has presented the findings from the study. This chapter summarises the findings in relation to the research questions and the literature, identifies the limitations of the study, makes recommendations for future research and identifies possible areas for inclusion in leadership and management programmes, thereby raising awareness of issues around communication and gender dynamics.

1.0 How do managers (both male and female) use discourse to construct their management identities?

In terms of the first research question, the men and women in the study appeared to evidence slightly different linguistic discourse strategies to construct their performative identities as managers. Women, in particular, seemed to want to minimise or down play their authority, while some men appeared to be keen to present themselves as confident and capable - in one case a male manager used the epithet of 'Caesar' to define himself. This construction of male as military hero or sporting hero is acknowledged by Tannen (2009: 161), where she notes that 'men in authority are as likely to suggest a military commander or a sports coach or captain (in itself modelled on the military metaphor)'. Further, some women's reluctance to embrace the authority associated with a management role could be perceived as a lack of confidence. The findings of this study, admittedly with a small sample, are consistent with the literature on this issue, with many studies echoing women's claims that their management style was not authoritarian (Tannen 2009: 187). Tannen (190) suggests that wanting to be liked may be one of the reasons that women are overtly polite when they are in a position of authority in an effort to reassure co-workers that they are 'not throwing [their] weight around'. Several examples of this type of hesitation were uncovered in this study. The overt politeness could be interpreted as a lack of self-assurance or self-belief, translated into the language they used and often resulted in hedged statements or fillers which made some women appear to be uncertain or hesitant about what they were doing/saying. While this strategy of hedged politeness and indirectness could potentially be seen by some to represent some women negatively, it is also conceivable that this indirectness actually fosters relationships and positively contributes to collaborative working. Indeed, the strategies of: deference, listening, hesitation, collaboration are seen as being attributes that contribute to transformational leadership (Yukl, 2013: 360) as they allow face saving and foster

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positive relationships, the latter being hinted at by the male managers in this study who commented that women mentor and support staff and manage conflict in a 'better' way than men.

Moreover, it may be conjectured that the rivalrous behaviour of some males, ostensibly learned in the socialisation process of the playground, which focuses on hierarchy and on creating and projecting a position of strength, which has long characterised hegemonic, masculine management behaviours, is at odds with modern management environments that depend on egalitarian principles, collaboration and team working. While the established hegemonic ways of talking and being possibly learned by boys in the playground, with the concomitant focus on hierarchy, appear to be evident in the male managers sampled, it would seem that they have also developed an appreciation for the strengths that some women bring to the management table. One must therefore question the extent to which the traditional male advantage still exists, although Yukl (2013: 358) suggests that the 'belief that men are more qualified to be leaders still persists in segments of the population'. However, a growing body of research (Book, 2000; Carr-Ruffino, 1993; Grant, 1988; Hegelsen, 1990; Rosener, 1990), also raised by male managers in this study, suggests that 'women are more likely than men to possess the values and skills necessary for effective leadership in a modern organisation'. According to Yukl (2013: 359)

> *The difference is a result of childhood experiences, parent-child interactions, and socialization practices that reflect cultural sex-role stereotypes and beliefs about gender differences and appropriate occupations for men and women (Cockburn 1991). These experiences encourage 'feminine' values such as kindness, compassion, nurturing, and sharing.*

Yukl (2013) posits that proponents of the 'feminine advantage' theory are more focussed on collaborative, inclusive patterns of working that rely on strong interpersonal relationships. The women in this particular study talked about wanting to work in a 'flatter' way with subordinates and to share power with them; one must ask, however, about whether this desire to work collaboratively is because it is a sound management strategy or whether it is generated by women wanting to be liked. Tannen (2009:190) comments:

Wanting to be liked may be one reason many women find it appropriate to be extra nice when they're in a position of authority, assuring others that they are not throwing their weight around.

Tannen (2009: 191) believes that in order to deal with the potential dislike of co-workers, some women fall back on verbal strategies to denigrate their own accomplishments and possessions. She cautions: 'while it may work well for them by making them more likable, this ritual can work against them by interfering with a demeanor that exudes authority'.

Further, as discussed in the previous chapter, all women interviewed felt some discomfort around directing colleagues and expressed a preference for collaborative working, whereas the men appeared to expect directed, competitive working relationships. Drawing on more traditional leadership images of military and sport, the concept of hierarchy was of greater importance to men; indeed, women were more prepared to disregard hierarchy, in preference for working collaboratively, thus reflecting another of Priola's (2004: 424) discourses related to femininities, that of the favouring of the team-based approach rather than an authoritarian, hierarchical style.

While Chapter 4 concluded that there was some linguistic variation in the construction of performative management identities of the men and women in the sample that suggested gendered discourses at play, together with some associated gendered attitudes towards management subroles, it is most important to note that these conclusions cannot categorically split men and women into rigid categories. Individual differences between and within groups of women and groups of men could also identify linguistic variation in association with construction of group identity. Indeed, Mullaney (2007: 35) suggests that the dominant discourse of gender difference seeks to emphasise *homogeneity* within singular categories of femininity and masculinity, stressing instead the differences *between* women and men, as opposed to the differences *within* groups of women and groups of men Mullaney (2007: 35)[original emphasis]; therefore, it becomes very difficult to generalise 'women' and attention should be focussed on the linguistic strategies and how they are used, rather than on individuals.

In addition, it is of interest that the youngest male, middle manager was very keen to

describe himself as a collaborative manager, although he was critical of his own line manager for working in such a way. It would appear that there could be some lingering tension here between the patriarchal, hierarchical, task-oriented management identity and the collaborative, supportive, developmental manager.

Silence in the workplace was viewed differently by the men and women in the sample, with the women responding to prolonged silence with personal dismay (as a personal malfunction of communication) and the men taking a more objective view of silence as a 'system malfunction' or a strategy for asserting one's own management identity. Based on these findings and for future consideration in professional development, it may be important for women managers to become apprised of men's use of silence to construct their identity, so that women are not encouraged to 'fill the silence'. As Tannen (2009: 235) notes,

> *When you talk to others who leave longer pauses than you expect, you become uncomfortable and start speaking to fill in the pauses, with the result that you do all the talking…*

Two women from this study were particularly sensitive to silence and felt the need to fill the pauses, to their extreme discomfort. It would be useful to raise women managers' awareness of how the use of silence could potentially put them at a disadvantage through their own response to the discomfort it engenders.

2.0 Are there implicit attitudes linked to gender and management embedded in the discourse?

As noted above, the discussion around the scoring of Yukl's Taxonomy of Management Subroles (1989) seems to reflect some evidence of lingering stereotypical beliefs about particular management behaviours. More specifically, the behaviours/activities associated with looking after people, talking, communicating and managing conflict were attributed to the feminine category, while the more 'serious' tasks of strategic management and allocation of resources are still seen as being masculine, despite assumptions about neutrality.

Interestingly, according to Eagly and Johnson (1990; in Yukl 2013: 360) when role requirements for different types of managerial positions were identified, male managers were more effective than women managers in positions that required strong task skills, and women managers were more effective in positions that required strong interpersonal skills. In another study, Eagly and Johnson (1990 in Yukl 2013: 360) conducted meta-analyses with managers and they found no gender differences in the use of task-oriented behaviour or supportive behaviour, as would seem to be suggested by the data from this study. They did find, however, that women used participative leadership slightly more than men. Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and Van Engen (2003 in Yukl 2013: 360) found that women used more transformational leadership behaviours than men, particularly in the area of differentiating support for individuals. This work is consistent with the findings of this study, where all of the women spoke of differentiating their management approaches in dealing with subordinates. From a female senior manager*:*

> *I really do think it's important… because people are just different and you know what gets the best out of one person won't necessarily get the best out of… other people.*

And from a female head of department:

> *Everybody likes to be treated differently…um… some people like flowery emails or what I call flowery emails, you know, with personal content and a…' what do you think' kind of approach; other people are quite happy for me to actually just say, 'I would be grateful if you could' and then just list actions; um… actually one of my male members of staff actually prefers me just listing… and then I've got another member of staff that gets upset and offended if I make it too bold , so it's trying to adapt how you deal with each person. That's taken me a while.*

Differentiation and concern for individuals (one of Priola's four discourses 2004:24) is evidenced at Forestside College at first-line management level and at senior management level. Both of these women differentiate their communication strategies for their teams. However, both are concerned to consider these subordinates as 'people' rather as male or female managers. One explanation may be that they are already providing some examples of transformational leadership behaviours by differentiating their discourse both for the individual and for the context.
Strategic leadership continues to be a crucial organisational function and of

significant importance to male managers; one male manager was critical of his senior manager for not providing strategic direction; the women, however, with their focus on collaborative working, paid little attention to the concept of strategic leadership. In fact, in talking about scoring the taxonomy, all the men interviewed and one woman identified strategic leadership as being a male construct; it would appear that there are possible latent gendered attitudes at play here as managers of both genders seem to co-construct a paradigm of male dominance around both strategy and resources. This would certainly be consistent with Alvesson's (2002) contention that gender schema draw on a society's discursive history and cultural scripts, the narratives of childhood, to function at a subconscious level. In other words, our cultural ideas both frame and restrain what men and what women should think, feel and do. Having reviewed the literature and the gendered attitudes embodied within British culture and tradition, it would be surprising if there were not still some lingering areas influencing role expectations of both male and female workers.

It is likely that as societal gender stereotypes change and evolve over time, these gendered role expectations will become more blurred. Unfortunately, according to a number of studies (Brenner, Tomkiewicz, and Schein 1989; Epitropaki and Martin 2004; Powell, Butterfield and Parent 2002 in Yukl 2013: 359), social change around gender stereotypes has been slow, particularly amongst male managers, and, the slowness of this change can be seen in some of the comments made by male managers in this study, particularly around some women's perceived emotionality and the assumed male ability to 'get things done'.

Therefore, the author concludes that there remains the persistence of some gendered attitudes and beliefs about some management subroles; however, as these attitudes and beliefs were mostly positive and also emphasised the strengths that women could bring to management, it is not likely that they would place women in an antithetical position to executive power. It is also clear that the strengths around communication demonstrated by some women are becoming more highly valued in the workplace and this is a positive trend. The feminine discourse around people and communication skills is also evident to some extent within the College, yet another of Priola's (2004: 424) four feminine discourses.

It would, however, be remiss of the author if other barriers to women's advancement to positions of higher authority in the workplace were not also discussed here, in particular lack of encouragement and opportunity for developmental management activities; lack of opportunity for effective mentoring and *particularly* women's lack of significant efforts to gain access to leadership positions, amongst others.

Tannen (2009: 192) suggests that women are often not given roles of authority because 'they do not act as if they want or deserve it before others grant them the position' and some comments made by all the women in this sample corroborate Tannen's contention. In other words, women often disclaim interest in promotion in order to avoid seeming too ambitious (they might not be liked), and to save face if they are not offered one. Given that two out of the three women managers interviewed for this study had at first denied any interest in their current management roles until a male manager had reassured and encouraged them, this self-imposed barrier created by the deferential demeanour adopted by some women could potentially work against them, although there was no evidence that it had done so. As Tannen (2009: 192) explains, those appointing to leadership positions look for leader-like behaviour, as well as evidence of a desire to be promoted. Women often do not display leader-like behaviour because of the deferential demeanour they have created through their discourse. Borrowing again from the cultural script, the writer is reminded of a story heard long ago about a woman at a party who is approached by a waiter offering her a tray:

> *'Have a promotion,' he says.*
> *'Oh, no, I couldn't possibly,' replies the woman.*
> *'Go on. It's ok. Have a promotion,' he presses.*
> *'Really, I shouldn't,' she says.*
> *'Go on. Have a promotion,' the waiter insists.*
> *'Perhaps, just this once. Thank you!' smiles the woman.*

The woman responds in much the same social way as if the waiter had offered her a fattening *hors d'ouevre* – she shouldn't have it. A similar exchange to the one above is found in the construction of the male hero in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Caesar was offered the crown three times by Mark Antony, and he set it aside three times, amidst the clamour of the crowd, although 'he was very loath to lay his fingers

off it'. Caesar was so overcome by the episode that he had an epileptic fit. When he came to, he bared his throat for the crowd to cut, if they did not want him as leader (Seward 1992: 25). Far from the feminine polite, deferential refusal of a promotion in the first story above, Shakespeare's hero is constructed of flesh and blood; he wanted the leadership role so passionately that he was overcome; in fact, he was prepared to lay down his life to be leader. This character gave his all to his leadership role. If men still construct the leadership and management identity in relation to military heroes and sportsmen (and this study has identified some evidence that this might still be the case, with one senior manager actually referring to himself as Caesar), then some women's reluctance to embrace the role (again evidenced in the findings) is at odds with this construction. Indeed, much like the story above, one woman head of department interviewed for this study was asked three times to apply for the head of department post before she agreed. This reluctance to signal an interest in promotion or ambition is also recognised by a number of other researchers (Ragins *et al* 1998; Schein 2001; Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy 1994 in Yukl 2013: 359). Similarly, a study by Babcock and Laschever (2003) found that women were uncomfortable asking for promotion and initiating the types of negotiation likely to bring it to fruition. Further, Lyness and Heilman (2006) found that women need more of the required skills than men to advance to executive positions, and the difference was greater for the types of positions traditionally held by men (Yukl 2013: 361). Thus, there is some evidence that women might create a barrier to promotion through the demeanour created by their discourse, but there might also be the corresponding male bias that draws on gendered cultural schema and operates on the assumption that leadership and management are still in the male domain. It is possible that there is continued co-construction of the circumstances under which women advance to senior roles. It would appear that women need to try to discard their fear of being disliked, make clear their ambition to progress and assume the mantle of authority by using authoritative discourse, not softening and hedging statements and directives, which are sometimes interpreted as weak and confusing.

> *..it would appear that informal networks and mentoring support, improved confidence and self-belief were key factors in determining whether women chose to progress.* (Constantine-Simms et al 2007: 50)

Further, given that women at Forestside College do not always have the opportunity

to gain the skills and experience that might be required to advance, and as they sometimes do not take the initiative to ask for it (playing down their ambition), a positive development would be the setting up of shadowing, mentoring and confidence building activities for women to widen their awareness of opportunities at senior management level. These experiences would perhaps provide them with insights around what senior management roles involve. According to Constantine-Simms et al (2007: 55), 'providing shadowing and mentoring opportunities might….give them [women] the confidence in their own abilities to undertake the role'.

The women at the three different management levels evidenced a perceived (not necessarily actual) lack of confidence in their abilities to 'do the job' effectively and their linguistic strategies around this issue reflected their concerns. There is evidence from the findings to suggest that they felt they needed the validation of a male to encourage them to apply for a management role. No such worry was evident in the interviews with any of the men. Low confidence levels, or what appear to be low confidence levels, and the manner in which women construct their identities could conceivably contribute to false perceptions of the efficacy of women managers by male co-workers.

3.0 Is there evidence that there are gendered discourses at play in the organisation?

The literature review identified several patterns below, outlining the discourses observed by Priola (2004: 424) as generally being associated with femininities:

- The ability to manage multi-tasks (including administration).
- People and communication skills.
- The ability to focus on support and care for the staff.
- The implementation of a team-based approach rather than an authoritarian style.

Three of these discourses were observed in this study. Discourse around multi-tasking was not observed or raised in any interview with individual managers. However, the three remaining relevant discourses are considered within the

discussion of the individual research questions. Figure 5.1 presents a graphic representation of the discursive themes identified through thematic coding and extracted from the findings in relation to Priola's (2004) three gendered discourses, as manifested through the language used in the meetings and in the interviews. There still appears to be some overlap with the 'mother as manager' discourse and perhaps this is a reflection of the fact that there have always been more women working in the sphere of education; however, the three discourses identified by Priola and evidenced in management discourse at Forestside College are also discourses promoting positive leadership traits. While there is some evidence confirming differences in the ways that men and women construct their management identities, it would appear that both men and women draw on a range of both stereotypically masculine and stereotypically feminine styles.

This study has contributed to the development of the concepts outlined in chapters 1 and 2 by exploring existing theory in a further education context – other studies have been done in business and government arenas. Moreover, the study has deployed an unusual, multi-method approach that differs from the 'self-report' research that is more common in research on management. It has also explored management in further education through a sociolinguistic lens; the researcher can find no other studies of this nature in the FE context and the study is unique in this sense.

4.0 How might the findings contribute to professional development programmes in leadership and management?

In colleges of further education, managers are most likely to have been promoted from teaching roles (Randle and Brady 1997: 124). While teaching involves the management of students, requiring clear direction, enactment of authority, resolution of conflict and myriad other sophisticated management skills, it is often difficult for newly-promoted teachers (particularly, but not exclusively, women) to assume the role of manager of their peers. When they do so, they often attempt to enact authority without appearing to enact it (Tannen 2009: 183), which can sometimes create difficulties for them, as they can appear to be vague and uncertain.   This approach can occasionally allow the team to take the lead and for the manager's authority to be challenged. Again, we are reminded of Tannen's caveat (2009: 183): 'Wearing the mantle of authority lightly allows it to be more easily pushed off your

shoulders'.

It is likely that many managers, both male and female, are, to some extent, unaware of the language they use and how it might project their professional identity to colleagues. On the basis of the findings, raising awareness of the gender stereotypes that managers enact/make reference to and challenging them could sensitise the organisation to the discourses at play. Communications would be a useful addition to any management induction programme and would allow new managers to reflect on their attitudes towards authority, status, their own and others' communicative abilities and to consider other ways of speaking and interacting with work colleagues. It is possible that awareness itself could bring about some cultural change.

Some women need to be apprised of their potential strengths as managers: their potential people-focused, supportive style that nurtures and develops staff, as well as their emotional literacy and sensitivity to the face needs of others have emerged as crucial components of their verbal repertoires. Any management development programme for <u>all</u> managers would focus on highlighting and developing these strengths without reference to gender. Marra et al (2006: 242) argue that

> *effective leaders 'do leadership' by invoking strategies which have been associated with normatively masculine and normatively feminine ways of talking.*

Figure 5.1 Summary of Findings from Thematic Coding Aligned with Gendered Discourses

(Discourses Identified by Priola 2004)

DISCOURSES	THEMATIC MANIFESTATIONS IN LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES
1. People and Communication Skills	▪ Networking ▪ Communicating and informing ▪ Managing conflict ▪ Consulting others
2. Ability to focus on support and care for staff	▪ Developing and mentoring personnel ▪ Differentiating management style ▪ Indirectness (to promote face saving)
3. Implementation of a team-based approach, rather than an authoritarian approach	▪ Collaborative working ▪ Disregard for hierarchy ▪ Often silent and subordinate to male authority in public fora

At the same time, however, some women managers must also be taught how their deference and use of mitigating language can sometimes make them appear to be hesitant, unsure and sometimes unclear as managers; the performative identity that this discourse might construct is one of uncertainty, and this demeanour could disadvantage them in terms of promotion.

Returning to the statements of the women managers who both denied personal ambition and had accepted management roles only at the urging of male colleagues, it would seem reasonable that the College management training agenda should include dedicated mentoring and shadowing programmes for aspiring managers, as well as programmes for women returning from career breaks. These programmes would embed the theory pertaining to management styles. In other words, the College could send out a clear message that women and men are encouraged to participate at senior management levels and provide the training, mentoring and organisational support to 'grow' them into these roles.

Further, women managers could be made aware of their part in the co-construction of male authority to ensure that they can eradicate it from their ways of talking and behaving. They need to be able to convey the signals that construct the management persona they wish to project and also to be able to participate in development programmes that address their needs, so that they are not self-selecting themselves out of applying for the top jobs.

All managers could be taught in organisational development activities, possibly through role play, observation and discussions, about the how their discourse reveals their underlying approach to management and the assumptions under which they operate, as well as the links between discourse and behaviours and transactional/transformational management.

The evidence from the findings suggests that women in the College tend more often to use a collaborative, egalitarian style and as women are almost evenly represented at first and middle manager levels, the College supports this construction in practice. However, at senior management level where there are six male managers, the discourse strategies lean very much towards the masculine end of the continuum, with more emphasis on individualism, competition ('I will be Caesar') and directness. It is possible that the shift in discourse along the continuum from feminine at first and

middle manager level to masculine at senior management level is, in fact, one of the causes of the glass ceiling. It is also possible that the women who are able to use a range of discourse strategies, drawing on both traditional masculine and feminine forms, would be more likely to break through the glass ceiling. Therefore, it is also possible that the flexible use of discourse strategies could modify women's performative management identities and signal their ability to perform at senior management level.

Further, recommendations for College selection policies, awareness raising and staff development could be updated in the light of the research above and female staff could be supported through the establishment of mentoring and shadowing schemes that will give them the opportunities to observe senior managers and principals in their day-to-day routines (Constantine-Simms et al 2007: 56).

Yukl (2013: 362) suggests that

> *Female candidates are likely to be rated as less qualified than male candidates for many types of leadership positions unless accurate information about each person's skill and experience is collected and used in the selection decision (Heilman 2001; Heilman and Haynes 2005). To avoid bias from gender stereotypes and prejudice, a special effort should be made to ensure that the relevant skills are accurately assessed when selecting leaders.*

There is, it would seem, some work to do at Forestside College around management and organisational development, specifically relating to clarification of the message that women are invited to aspire to roles at senior management level.

In summary, as Yukl (2013: 363) suggests:

> *Success in today's highly competitive marketplace calls for organisations to make best use of the talent available to them. To do this, they need to identify, develop, encourage, and promote the most effective managers, regardless of sex.*

Mullaney (2007: 211) concludes that

> *If gender ideologies can be changed to ones where 'more positive experiences for women' are offered and encouraged (Philips 2003: 272), then this is a step in the right direction.*

Further Research and Limitations of the Study

Many of the findings from this study are consistent with the literature on gendered discourse. However, this study was undertaken in a very particular educational context (rural college in a predominantly white, middle-class location) with a small sample of managers (6) for interview and approximately 35 meeting participants. The human resource at the College is very low on diversity, with virtually all members of staff being white British. The sample for this study was drawn from this homogeneous group, which is likely to be atypical in many parts of a multi-cultural Britain. This study did not seek to investigate whether management discourse strategies used by non-white managers from different social strata reflected similar findings.

Further, the sample drew on interviews with managers from backgrounds in the arts and humanities, sport, business, language and the classics. There is therefore a strong possibility that populations sampled from science, technology and engineering may well present different findings. To investigate further, managers at other colleges could be studied and the results compared with respect to locale, size, gender and ethnic mix and balance within the management population and socio-geographical context, including inner city locations where managers might draw on a range of other language variations in the construction and enactment of their roles.

The results of this study, therefore, while finding some evidence for phenomena recorded in the literature cannot be generalised across further education colleges or other management contexts. The study has, however, made an empirical contribution to knowledge in offering the findings as relevant material to inform the development of managers in staff development programmes and to provide opportunity to develop existing and future managers in the further education college.

Critical discourse analysis has provided a rich data set that permits a view in some depth of the ways in which managers construct their identities at work. More published research using CDA in the further education sector could contribute to developing a deeper understanding of the link between gender and management. However, the researcher would recommend using both qualitative and quantitative methods (rather than just qualitative) to carry out another study with a larger sample, again using the multi-method approach. Employing statistical tests to determine

significance of some issues and for comparison between groups would be one way of gaining additional insight into the issues of language, identity and the glass ceiling.

Conclusion

Key characteristics of feminine discourse, such as the stylistic flexibility and sensitivity to the face needs of others that are features of the management styles of some women are emerging as crucial components of all managers' verbal repertoires. The author is, however, uncomfortable adopting the 'feminine advantage' theory, despite some evidence for its existence in the interviews with male managers in this study, particularly around the areas of collaborative working, minimising status differences and interpersonal relationships. Similarly, the 'male advantage' theory now seems outmoded. These theories do suggest, however, that modern management draws on a wider range of skills, of both a task and people-focussed nature, than might have previously been the case if we consider for a moment McGregor's (1967) comment:

> *The model of a successful manager was aggressive, competitive, firm and just – not feminine or intuitive in the womanly sense.*

There seems to be a general moving away from directive, authoritarian hegemony towards the use of a range of discourse strategies. Indeed, it is likely that the most effective managers will draw from a management toolkit that enables them to adopt both people- and task-focussed linguistic strategies, as the need arises. The data from the study seem to suggest that first and middle managers at Forestside College engender the more feminine, collaborative, supportive, egalitarian, indirect discourses identified by Marra et al (2006:244), but at senior management the (CofP) discourses appear to move towards the masculine end of the continuum: those of a team frequently enacting competitiveness, challenges to one another and individualism (Mullaney 2007: 45). The researcher would ask whether there are two discourses at play, i.e. the two tiers of management: one more towards the feminine end of the continuum and one towards the masculine end of the continuum. Further, the question must be considered whether managers adopting the linguistic strategies

to manage competition and challenge would support more women in breaking through the glass ceiling into senior management.

The language of gender stereotyping seems to suggest that men are task-focussed and that women are people-focussed, but both stereotypes perform a disservice to leader-managers everywhere. Therefore, while children in Britain continue to be socialised into specific gender roles and expectations, it is clear that there are both positive and negative effects for male and female managers resulting from these performative stereotypes.

In terms of developing future professional management development programmes, it may be necessary to first construct a view of leadership with counters the traditional emphasis on individualism and hierarchical relationships. Further Bensimon and Neumann (1994) assert that the body of knowledge about women and women's ways of knowing and thinking is particularly relevant to the reconceptualization of leadership and, by implication, to the design of any leadership and management development programme.

In reporting back to the Principal on the themes that arose in the findings and 'bringing them to the direct attention of the managers' (Mullaney 2007: 214) the research can begin to impact on the organisation being researched. Reporting back required some negotiation between the researcher and the researched. The findings were received by the Principal with much interest and possible organisational development strategies were discussed. As a direct result of feeding back in a careful and considered manner, the researcher was then asked to chair the College Equality and Diversity Committee and to set the strategic direction for the College in terms of equality. This development has meant that the researcher is able to gather data on diversity (of both staff and students), but also information about applications for positions and interrogate it for trends of inequality in relation to gender, ethnicity, age and other protected characteristics. There has also been opportunity to gather information about career progression on return from maternity leave and other aspects of equality-related data; organisational developments have begun to redress some of the issues of under-representation. There has therefore been the opportunity, as a direct result of this study, to guide the work of the Equality and

Diversity Committee and to report on it to the Planning and Advisory Board and to the Governing Body, thus raising awareness of the issues more widely across the organisation. Further, the researcher has been asked, on occasion, to hear grievances about issues of equality and diversity: one of which related to a woman manager and one of which related to a clerical worker returning to work after maternity leave. It could be said that the research has enabled the organisation to take a critical perspective on issues of equality in the College and to raise the profile of these issues.

The author would argue that women managers, working from the starting point of male hegemony, are making significant progress in pushing against the glass ceiling. Their numbers in management have increased consistently since the 1960s, when women were truly working at a cultural disadvantage to male hegemony and while representation at the highest levels of management is still not on a par with men, the gap is steadily closing. Considering the findings of this study, there is more work to be done at Forestside College in terms of women's progression to senior management roles. Systematic support for this development to 'grow' senior women managers would contribute significantly to improving representation at the highest levels of management.

In conclusion, the researcher believes, as does Lakoff (2003: 177) that there is positive change on the horizon. Considering the distance travelled since the 1960s, women have seen immense social and political changes that 'would then have been thought unimaginable' (Mullaney 2007: 211); the researcher remains optimistic about opportunities for more women to grow into effective and well-rounded leaders and managers at the highest levels.

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Summary of Responses to Categorisation Task

(Male responses in blue; female responses in red)

Leadership/Management subrole	Masculine	Feminine	Neither Category
Providing corrective feedback	X	Xx	Xxx
Allocating resources	Xxx		Xxx
Planning and organizing	X	X	Xxxx
Evaluating employees		X	Xxxxx
Developing and mentoring personnel		Xxxx	Xx
Delegating	Xxx		Xxx
Managing conflict		Xxx	Xxx
Recognizing and rewarding employees	X	X	Xxxx
Disciplining	X		Xxxxx
Consulting others		Xxxxx	X
Motivating and inspiring	X	X	Xxxx
Strategic decision-making	Xxxx		Xx
Communicating and informing		Xxxx	Xx
Problem solving	Xx		Xxxx
Networking		Xxx	xxx
Punishing	X	X	xxxx
Supporting		Xxx	xxx
Monitoring work activities	X	Xx	xxx
Clarifying roles and objectives	X	Xx	xxx

Yukl, G.A. (1989). *Leadership in organisations.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

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Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: Gendered Discourse in Practice: An Exploration of Language and Professional Identity in Managers in the Further Education Sector

Researcher: Jill Lueddeke
Ethics number: 7963

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

As a middle manager in a further education college, I am interested in exploring how women construct their professional identities in management contexts and whether the linguistic strategies for doing so are similar to/different from those used by male managers in the further education sector. This study will form part of the Doctorate in Education postgraduate qualification.

Specifically, I am looking to determine which discourse patterns are used to carry out management tasks such as chairing meetings (and participating in them), issuing directives, providing feedback and monitoring performance. The study will also explore whether there are critical periods when performative 'masks' might be dropped. (For example, do managers in some situations and in some contexts let go of a carefully constructed identity and allow personal preferences to emerge?) Further, the study attempts to identify whether there are implicit attitudes linked to gender and management embedded in the discourse and to identify areas that might inform professional development programmes in leadership and management.

The study is self funded, which means that there is no bias in terms of needing to meet the needs of a funding agency.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been approached to participate in the study because you are an experienced manager in a further education college. Your views on management tasks and the language that you use to describe your role and the roles of others are important to the research project. You have been selected for a follow-up interview because of the interest in a discourse strategy used to convey a point of view in a recent meeting. In the interests of

triangulation of data, the researcher is seeking to corroborate whether her interpretations of the event (and the associated discourse) are valid.

What will happen to me if I take part?
Your contributions to wider meetings will be recorded and illustrative excerpts might be selected and transcribed. If your contribution is selected, you will be asked to participate in a tape-recorded interview that explores some of your views about the event, as well as your role as a manager and your perceptions of management.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?
Your contributions will add to the understanding of management discourse within the further education college and also add to the body of knowledge of sociolinguistics in further education management. There may be no benefit to you, other than the opportunity to share your views or to discuss a particular meeting/interaction and to explore the forces at play within that meeting.

Are there any risks involved?
There are no risks to you as an individual.

Will my participation be confidential?
The study complies with the Data Protection Act (1988) and also with the University of Southampton's ethics policy. The transcript from the interview will be identified by a number, rather than by name. The information will be stored on a flash pen and locked in a secure location, not saved on the College or University network system. It will be viewed only by the researcher on a password-protected computer. Anonymity of your contribution is assured.

What happens if I change my mind?
You have the right to withdraw your data from the study at any time. There will be no consequence of your withdrawal from the study.

What happens if something goes wrong?
In the unlikely event of concern or complaint, you should contact the Head of the Ethics Committee at the University of Southampton.

Where can I get more information?
Contact the researcher on 07962 015665 or at jlueddeke@aol.com should you require more information about the study.

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CONSENT FORM

Study title: Gendered Discourse in Practice: An Exploration of Language and
                    Professional Identity in Women Managers in the Further Education
                    Sector

Researcher name: Jill Lueddeke
Study reference:
Ethics reference: 7963

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet (31st March 2011/
Version 001) and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the
Study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to
be used for the purpose of this study.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw
at any time without consequence.

Name of participant (print name)……………………………………………………

Signature of participant…………………………………………………………..

Name of Researcher (print name) ………………Jill Lueddeke……………………

Signature of Researcher…………………………………………………………..

Date…………………………………………………………………………………

Interview Instrument 1

Interviews for the Exploration of Illustrative Exchanges

The following questions have been designed to explore the illustrative exchanges that have been identified in the six management meetings. The discussion ensuing as a result of the questions will be audio-taped and transcribed.

You have been selected for a follow-up interview because of the researcher's interest in an exchange in a recent management meeting. I would like to explore the discussion from the meeting in more detail with you now. *(Researcher to identify the specific discussion, providing a transcript if it is available.)*

1. Would you mind describing the discussion/exchange from your perspective?

2. Can you explain how you were feeling about the exchange at the time?

3. How do you feel about it now, having had time to reflect?

4. What do you believe was the catalyst for the exchange?

5. Are you happy with the outcome of the discussion?

6. Would you handle it differently if a similar situation occurred in future?

7. Did you experience any personal dilemmas during the meeting, i.e. a debate with yourself whether to speak up or not?

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Interview Instrument 2

Participant Number _____   Gender (please circle)   Male   Female

Age range (please circle):   20 – 29
                                     30 – 39
                                     49 – 49
                                     50 – 59
                                     60 – 69

Number of years in a management role (please circle):
                                     1 – 10
                                     11 – 20
                                     21 – 30
                                     31 – 40

Yukl (1989) constructed a taxonomy of leadership and management subroles, as set out below.
Please classify the subroles: tick the appropriate box that categorises the subroles that you perceive to be Masculine, Feminine or Neither category.

Leadership/Management subrole	Masculine	Feminine	Neither Category
Providing corrective feedback			
Allocating resources			
Planning and organizing			
Evaluating employees			
Developing and mentoring personnel			
Delegating			
Managing conflict			
Recognizing and rewarding employees			
Disciplining			

Consulting others			
Motivating and inspiring			
Strategic decision-making			
Communicating and informing			
Problem solving			
Networking			
Punishing			
Supporting			
Monitoring work activities			
Clarifying roles and objectives			

Yukl, G.A. (1989). *Leadership in organisations.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

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Categorising Management Subroles

Participant Number _____   Gender (please circle)   Male   3   Female 3

Age range (please circle):   20 – 29
                                 30 – 39
                                 40 – 49 (1)
                                 50 – 59 (2)(1)
                                 60 – 69 (1)(1)

Number of years in a management role (please circle):
                                 1 – 10   (1)
                                 11 – 20 (1)(2)
                                 21 – 30 (1)(1)
                                 31 – 40 (1)

Yukl (1989) constructed a typology of leadership and management subroles, as set out below.

Please classify the subroles: tick the appropriate box that categorises the subroles that you perceive to be Masculine, Feminine or Neither category.

Leadership/Management subrole	Masculine	Feminine	Neither Category
Providing corrective feedback	X	XX	XXX
Allocating resources	XXX		XXX
Planning and organizing	X	X	XXXX
Evaluating employees		X	XXXXX
Developing and mentoring personnel		XXXX	XX
Delegating	XXX		XXX
Managing conflict		XXX	XXX
Recognizing and rewarding employees	X	X	XXXX
Disciplining	X		XXXXX

Consulting others		xxxxx	x
Motivating and inspiring	x	x	xxxx
Strategic decision-making	xxxx		xx
Communicating and informing		xxxx	xx
Problem solving	xx		xxxx
Networking		xxx	xxx
Punishing	x	x	xxxx
Supporting		xxx	xxx
Monitoring work activities	x	xx	xxx
Clarifying roles and objectives	x	xx	xxx

Yukl, G.A. (1989). *Leadership in organisations.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

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Debriefing Form
University of Southampton
School of Education

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Title of Research: Gendered Discourse in Practice: An Exploration of Language and Professional Identity in Managers in the Further Education Sector

Purpose of research: To inform Postgraduate qualification

Investigator: Jill Lueddeke

Supervisor: Professor Jacky Lumby

Thank you for participating in this experiment. This experiment forms part of a final year assessment for a Doctorate in Education at the University of Southampton.

In this study, I am investigating which discourse patterns are used to carry out management tasks such as chairing meetings (and participating in them), issuing directives, providing feedback and monitoring performance. The study will also explore whether there are critical periods when performative 'masks' might be dropped. (For example, do managers in some situations and in some contexts let go of a carefully constructed identity and allow personal preferences to emerge?) Further, the study attempts to identify whether there are implicit attitudes linked to gender and management embedded in the discourse and to identify areas that might inform professional development programmes in leadership and management.

You will have had the opportunity to participate in semi-structured interviews to present your views on gender and management. Previous research has found that there are some gendered patterns of language use extant in management discourse. This study seeks to determine whether these patterns of language and the associated management behaviours are reflected in the further education management context.   If you are interested in the results of the study, or if you have any other questions, please contact me on the following email address: jlueddeke@brock.ac.uk.

Your participant number is _____. If for any reason, you wish to withdraw your data from this experiment at any stage, you may contact me and provide this participant number. Any further concerns into how this study may have been conducted can be addressed to the Head of Research Governance at rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can contact the Head of Research Governance in confidence by writing to:

Dr Martina Prude
Head of Research Governance
University of Southampton
Highfield Campus
Southampton
SO17 1BJ

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Once again, thank you for your time.

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Coded Data Extract

Interview with 'Diane'

11.01.2012

Int.:   Can you just give me a little bit of information about what it means to you to be a manager and about what you have found being a manager in a further education college.

D: I started, I think this is my fourth year, the first year I started was, um , accidental because I was asked to take it for a temporary period of a term, so I think in the beginning my attitude was different from how it has developed. Because I didn't really know how long I was going to be doing it for; it would only be a term, so I was just trying to keep… my main aim was to get students into classes and tutors into teaching, like, that was my main aim to start with… Um… I wasn't doing any long-term thinking, or long-term projects or um planning beyond that because I thought I would be doing it till the Christmas, um, then I was asked to continue for the whole year so then, I think, it did change. Because then I was involved in the brochure for the following year um even then I thought it was only going to be for that year. Um I actually think for me it was a good way to do it because I would never have had the confidence to have applied for it in the first place if I hadn't, because I had to be persuaded to do it anyway, and I didn't think – I wasn't sure – if I could do it, so I think it would have, um, I didn't apply for the original post because I didn't have to confidence to apply, so for me to actually go through the process and learn as I was going was a really good way for me to do it. Otherwise, I probably would never have applied.

Int: It was interesting that you wouldn't, I mean, you're, you know, a very competent teacher, very competent co-ordinator um… very well qualified; and that you wouldn't think you could take that and apply.

D: I think it's probably my personal background because I come from a family without any Level 2 qualifications so going to university, I was like one of the first in my family, in fact I think I'm the only one on one side of the family, so to have the confidence then to go into management jobs was another level beyond what any of my family had done in the past. It actually took managers here to convince me that I would be able to just try it. I'm glad they did make me do it. That was Mark.

Int: So do you think then that mentoring of managers, both male and female, is important, or does gender not make any difference?

D: I don't think gender, I think it's personality and confidence levels and experience levels. I couldn't have done that first year without you and Mark supporting me the way you did. I really appreciated both of you doing that and I think that gave me more and more confidence as I went along because I knew that if I had any concerns, there was no problem me asking either of you what to do and that made a huge difference. I think for the last and it was also because of another issue that was difficult was because I had been part of the team for

Int.   Yes

D: how many years? Probably 12 years? Um beforehand. I was taking on a different role with teachers who were very experienced, very capable people some of them with very strong personalities and my role had changed, so how I dealt with them had to be done very carefully um and it's, I'm not, I don't think I'm ; I think I'm assertive, but quietly assertive but it was moving – that first year I had to move from being their colleague to a manager, so it was quite nice to be temporary, because they didn't see me as a threat to start with; I don't think they see me as a threat now, but it was a different…I mean there were one or two people who were experienced, so they could perhaps have taken on the Department um so I had to tread very carefully that first year, so I was juggling staffing with learning how to actually deal with the processes of things as well and also trying to do my own teaching because I think that year there were quite a few – I can't remember, but I think there was quite a lot of – wasn't that the year the high level of students came in? - I can't remember. But there was quite a lot of juggling going on…

Int.:   What do you think some of the big issues were? You said you had to adjust your management style?

D: Yeah. Um

Int: that first year. What were some of the big issues?

D: Everybody likes to be treated differently. Um some people like flowery emails or what I call flowery emails you know with personal content and you know um what do you think kind of approach; other people are quite happy for me to actually just say,'I would be grateful if you could' and then just list; um actually one of my male members of staff actually prefers me just listing and let me know and then I've got another member of staff that gets upset and offended if I make it too bland , so it's trying to adapt how you deal with each person. That's taken me a while

Int: So you differentiate your style for the individual?

D: Yeah. Definitely, cos they all need it done differently.

Int: That's really interesting. Very interesting.

D: It's more how I would deal with students actually. It's the same thing; some students need a bit more encouragement. They've got it there, but they need it, a bit more encouragement. You know, what I mean. I also put them as another class

Int: Well, management is at all levels, isn't it? You manage your students, you manage your staff, you manage your family. It's actually all at different levels.

D: And I think they are all experienced, just as students are, they all have strengths; they all have things that I can't do that they can do so I think it's important that all of those are brought out and cos some people have got more experience that I haven't got experience in, like teaching Maths, for example. So you have to rely on their expertise and their advice.

Int: that's the thing with management; it's fine when it's your specialist subject so to speak, but then when you are relying on someone else

D: but it's guidance. I mean I don't…I do rely on what they're telling me, but I also have to look at the bigger picture and what other influences there are and what other situations there are so I do take it into account; I don't ignore it but I do modify it depending on what other things I need to think about, which they probably don't realise what I have to think about

Int: Are you modifying messages from both sides, then, from above and below?

D: Yes, Anne and I always say that we're the jam in the middle laugh because we get pressure about numbers and retention and achievement and then the other way I get pressure from tutors with students saying things like 'I need my Level 2 to start a nursing course in September'. We know that student's not ready to take it level 2, so they're getting pressure from the student and they pressurise us for petrol and hours and things like that – you get – well, you're in the middle. As you well know.

Int.: I do. Um you took over the role in a custodial way first year, from someone who had sort of half-heartedly dipped her toe in the previous year. What were the challenges associated with really having had a blank year where not much happened? How did you pick up those threads?

D: well, I had the advantage because you were the previous manager, so I'd been , you know, I had worked with you for um 8/9/10 years whatever it was, so my first thing was just to reinstate everything that you had already set up: the ILP moderations, all that kind of stuff and made sure that the newsletter and that sort of familiar stuff we were used to was back in place um because that's like the security. They knew what was happening in the Department and there was continuity then um ; the previous manager didn't make decisions very quickly or effectively and we didn't know where we were um so I did actually make it quite – my first priority was – if I didn't know the answer, I would find out the answer. If I didn't know the answer, I would ask someone directly and quickly and then I think they felt a bit more confident about um what was happening and the fact that if they did come to me I would try and sort it out whether I had to go to you or to Mark for help, um but I think I was committed if there was a problem to trying to sort it out well, previously we had been left to sort of do what we felt really.

Int: So really what you are saying is that management is about supporting

D: Yeah

Int: first and foremost before you can do anything else.

D: then you just are a support system; they needed to know where they were and where they were going and that basically everything was alright and that it was going to continue as it had um we just felt as if we were floundering; the numbers had gone down and nobody really. I don't know what – I didn't see the results but I don't think they were very good either – but I just think the whole feeling was that it had just fallen apart um so I was just trying to pull it all back to where it was i mean I mean I felt very conscious because everyone had a very high opinion of a former manager and how the Department had worked before, so I was very conscious – not intimidated – but I wanted to have a high standard as well, so I wanted to bring back everything that she had put in

place and the main thing was to get people into class and get tutors back on track the first term. It was just putting it back together basically. I didn't try and do anything innovative or change anything. I just tried to put back what there had been. I think I sort of built people's confidence again. I hope I did. I think I did, but that was all that was in my head. I wasn't trying to um do great things (laugh).