Communication in institutionalized settings in Oman: Gender, discourse and the politics of interaction.

A Thesis submitted to the Management School, The University of Sheffield, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dedication

To my late Grandfather, may his soul rest in peace, who believed in me and in my abilities to overcome challenges.

To my mother who prayed day and night for me to reach this point in life.

To my husband and children who helped me through the hard times.

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with exploring to what extent gendered behaviors in interaction are situated and constrained by the situation and the context in the Omani workplace. One of the most important aims of this research was to study the influence of the context on the communication process, and why some rules of interaction are reproduced and others resisted. Therefore, I used social constructionist epistemology that assumes that social categories such as gender and power are constructed through the talk and not taken for granted or independent variables as was previously assumed by the essentialist approaches (Burr, 1995).

Within the social constructionist epistemology I used two different frameworks to analyze the data: critical discourse analysis of Fairclough (1992) and the discursive psychology approach. The two frameworks both served to answer my research question as the (CDA) framework provided me with a research tool that combined linguistically oriented discourse analysis with relevant social and political aspects (Fairclough, 1992) while the (DP) is a discourse analysis approach that is concerned with analyzing the talk in interactions (Fitch and Sanders, 2005).

The analysis of a meeting between male and female librarians revealed that the participants did not enact gender and they did not interact according to their gender category but according to their group membership as they talked as one group: "the librarians group". The second conclusion drawn is that in every interaction participants try to achieve particular goals and to achieve their goals they may use more interactional control features, identify themselves with specific identities and reject others, they may take up a specific social position in the discourse and they may reject others, and they may join a specific group or distance themselves from the group.

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Thesis Overview

Introduction

In order to provide a coherent rationale for the questions that the thesis seeks to address, this overview outlines the changes that occurred in my thinking throughout the course of the development of this thesis.

I began this thesis with the intention to answer two research questions: do men and women employees in an Omani workplace use different communication styles? Do these communication styles differ from those prescribed by Western theorists such as Tannen (1990). I was interested to discover whether there are differences in the ways men and women communicate, especially in a context like Oman which has traditional ideas of men's and women's social behaviors. These ideas include, for example, that of the necessity of segregation between the two genders in social life settings and many professional life settings, for example, single sex schools and segregated waiting rooms in hospitals and private clinics.

When I joined Sultan Qaboos University in 1999 as an undergraduate student in the College of Commerce and Economics, it was the first time that I had experienced a professional setting where male and female students were required to communicate with the opposite gender to fulfill their courses requirements, through mixed gender team work and so on. The university setting is like all other professional settings in Oman in that male and female colleagues communicate regularly to fulfill their job requirements. However, the only difference between communication in social life settings and professional settings is that in social life settings gender is always salient, with the interaction between males and females prescribed by certain rules that are identified by the culture. For example, women are required to show modesty and to be conservative while men must show respect and keep the

conversation within the formal boundaries that are also prescribed by the culture. In contrast to social life communication, in professional setting communication the gender rules that prescribe the interaction between men and women are rarely followed and the gender element is hardly ever salient because other elements, such as professional position, are more relevant to the context than gender. Therefore, I knew that there are other relevant elements that can influence the communication process but I found it difficult to understand the full picture using the essentialist approaches on which most gender and language researchers have in the past been heavily reliant.

The theoretical frameworks that informed my initial thinking can be broadly classified as essentialist; the two cultures approach of Tannen (1990) and the dominance approach of Maltz and Borker (1982) are the most cited approaches. They state that men and women use different communication behaviors that are attributable to the nature of the individual. They also note that norms of conversations are learned within the gender group to which the individual belongs and these norms are completely different for males and females (Tannen, 1990).

I struggled to apply these essentialist frameworks because: first, they take for granted natural differences between males and females, which are seen as an explanation for what happens in the interaction process. Second, they also propose that individuals perceive their interaction norms as a set of rules that must be adhered to and any flouting is unacceptable (Maltz and Borker, 1982). Third, they assume that men's and women's communication can be categorized according to an existing system of meanings that fits in any context.

I realized that the tenets of the two cultures approaches and the dominance approach could not meet the needs of my research because they always assume that gender is salient and individuals will communicate according to their gender. I also realized that the essentialist

approaches would provide me with only with a limited answer to my research questions because their assumption that men's and women's communication can be categorized according to an existing system of meanings that is applicable to any situation neglects the influence of the context.

Looking at the data I realized that there is much more going on in these meetings and the tenets of the essentialist approaches could not provide me with a comprehensive explanation of what happens in an interaction if gender is not relevant or salient. Also, what happens in these interactions if people appear to be following rules that actually are not prescribed by anything particular to the individual, such as gender? If different discursive practices do occur, how do we account for that? For example, why is the interaction between colleagues in a meeting different from interaction between family members?

Because one of my research aims was to study the influence of the context on the communication process, I concluded that I should look for a theoretical framework that could focus on the context in which the talk takes place and provide explanations for why participants use some communication strategies and not others.

Therefore, I turned towards social constructionist epistemology, which proposes that interaction is situated according to the situation and the context (Burr, 1995). It also assumes that social categories such as gender and power are constructed through the talk and not taken for granted as was previously assumed by the essentialist approaches.

Therefore, based on the tenets of social constructionism I shifted my research focus towards explaining the extent to which gender behaviors are shaped and constrained by the situation and the context. I wished to know if there are rules that prescribe the communication process between individuals in a specific context, and if so, what are these rules and how are they prescribed? Also I wanted to explore whether such rules exist in the context of the formal

workplace meeting that is the focus of my analysis, and if this was found to be the case, which rules would be transformed and which would remain unchanged and why.

Chapter 1: Literature Review: The essentialist approaches

1. Introduction

This chapter covers the theories that have been used by researchers to analyze the communication and gender topic. The chapter will highlight how these theories have been applied and discuss how they are viewed by other researchers. The aim of covering these theories is to demonstrate how my understanding of communication and gender changed over the course of this project. Second, reviewing these theories provides a comprehensive understanding of the area of communication and gender and how it has been approached over the last three decades. Doing this will enable me to pinpoint the issues that were overlooked by these theories and thus guide me towards the appropriate approach to answering my research questions.

1.1.2. What is my thesis about???

When I started this research I was interested in studying how men and women communicate in the workplace; I was interested in discovering whether the western theories about men's and women's communication styles are applicable in my culture, or whether men and women in my culture communicate in a different way from those identified by western theories.

What drives me to study men's and women's communication styles in my culture is the cultural differences between western cultures and Arab cultures. Arab and Omani cultures have traditional ideas of men and women. Some of these ideas, for example, relate to the necessity of segregation between the two genders in social life settings and many aspects of professional life settings, for example, single sex schools, segregated waiting rooms in hospitals and private clinics.

When I joined Sultan Qaboos University in 1999 as undergraduate student in the College of Commerce and Economics, this was the first professional setting that I had experienced

where male and female students were required to communicate with the opposite gender to fulfill their courses requirements, for example, mixed gender teamwork and so on. What I expected in these interactions between male and female students was a very formal and conservative communication process similar to the one in social life settings. However, the interaction process was different in that males and females communicated less formally and less conservatively.

The university setting is like all of the professional settings in Oman, male and female colleagues communicate regularly to fulfill their job requirements. However, the only difference between communication in social life settings and professional settings is that in social life settings gender is always salient, with the interaction between males and females prescribed by certain rules that are identified by the culture, for example, women are required to show modesty and to be conservative while men have to show respect and to keep the conversation within the formal boundaries that are also prescribed by the culture. In contrast to social life communication, in professional setting communication, the gender rules that prescribe the interaction between men and women are rarely followed and the gender element is scarcely salient because other elements, such as professional position, are more relevant than gender to the context. Therefore, I knew that the communication process between male and female in social life settings and professional life settings are not identical and cannot be applicable in every context, and I knew that the context influences the interaction process and influences what social categories are salient in a specific interactional context. So, based on these different issues, my research questions changed from exploring the differences between male and female communication in the workplace to exploring the influence of the interactional context on male and female communication.

In order to discover this I had to overview the theories that highlighted men's and women's communication styles: what characterizes them, how they are applied and how they are viewed by other researchers.

1.1.2. History of gender and language research

The field of language and gender is interdisciplinary and covers fields of communication, linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology and sociolinguistics (Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003). These disciplines appeared during the feminist movement in the 1960s and developed rapidly in the mid-1970s (Thorne and Henley, 1975). Since then, there has been a rapid increase in the number of studies that have attempted to theorize a link between language and gender, and many researchers have attempted to characterize women's and men's speech styles in different contexts.

One of the most important questions in feminist research concerns whether women and men use language differently. From the 1970s until the1990s researchers simply tried to compare the language used by men and women to discover differences or similarities (Canary and Dindia, 1998). The results provided much advice in the form of books aimed at helping women improve their own ways of speaking, for example, *The new assertive woman* by Bloom et al. (1975). However, despite the huge amount of research into gender differences in talk, no definitive answer was provided as to the existence of such differences (Crawford, 2003). Therefore, many feminist researchers have suggested that this area of research should be disregarded. Other social researchers have asserted that research in this area is significant because it can dispel the myths and stereotypes about women and can offer information to feminist and anti-feminist theorists (Eagly, 1994).

This troublesome issue of gender differences in talk has remained theoretically significant. Researchers have followed three approaches to provide explanations for gender differences in

talk. The first approach is the dominance/power-based approach, which stresses the hierarchal relations of gender and provides theoretical frameworks for exploring gender and language relationships (Lakoff, 1975; O'Barr and Atkins, 1980; West and Zimmerman, 1977). The second wave of research introduced the two cultures approach, which attributed the differences in communication between men and women to cultural differences and early socialization (Maltz and Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990; Gray, 1992). The third approach is the social constructionist approach, which views gender as a system of meanings that organizes interactions and directs access to power (Crawford, 1995). This approach encourages researchers to focus on an interaction as a whole, rather than isolated features of it (Stanback, 1988). It also conceptualizes language as dynamically fluctuating in response to speakers' goals and intentions in particular social circumstances and speech communities (Crawford, 2003).

This chapter will critically review the dominance/power-based approach and the two cultures approach to research in gender communication. It is essential for the development of my thesis that I review these two specific approaches for a number of reasons. First, they consider interactional behaviors of men and women in different settings and contexts, e.g. the workplace (Tannen, 1995) and social context (Holmes, 1985). Second, reviewing these approaches will enable me to identify the areas that are relevant to my research but were neglected by these approaches.

I will start with a brief history of each approach, then review some of its applications and trends, following this with a presentation of the challenges and critiques of the approach and, finally, common characteristics.

1.1.3. Overview of the dominance/power-based approach

During four decades of research on sex differences in speech behaviors, a number of researchers have noted the shifts in analysis in this area (e.g. Cameron, I985; Coates & Cameron, I988; Graddol & Swann, I989; Henley & Kramarae, I99I; Johnson I983; Kramarae, I990; Spitzack & Carter, I987; Thorne, Kramarae, & Henley, I983). For example, the early articles on sex differences described women's language as inferior compared to the norms or the standard of men's language; for example, using direct language, using less hedging and less interruption were standard norms of language mainly used by men, while women's use of language, containing, for example, more interruptions, questions, hedges and qualifiers, was described as inferior. The nature of women's language was attributed to their psychological and personal traits (Geperson, 1922).

The shift in the analysis in this area took place after the beginning of the women's movement of the 1970s, when researchers started to focus on the notion of female subordination and male dominance in speech behaviors, and it was introduced in academic and popular media (Uchida, 1992). The dominance/power-based approach set the male language as the standard and the norm of language (Shibamoto, 1985). The male language that is used in the dominance/power-based approach complies with the idea of the "canonical" speaker: whose use of language is considered as the standard and norm; for example, the canonical speaker in the United States is the adult, middle class, white male (Shibamoto, 1985). Therefore, the dominance/power-based approach identified women's speech on the basis of its difference from male norms (Uchida, 1992).

The dominance/power-based approach in communication and gender was discussed by Lakoff (1975), who attributed women's use of language to the unequal treatment of society towards women and not to genetic reasons as had been claimed earlier. Her contribution was

in describing women's speech style as inferior and deviant from the norms (i.e. men's speech behaviors). She mainly focused on how women make much use of powerless language such as hedges, qualifiers, empty adjectives, polite forms, and so forth, to assert their subordinate position in society. Since then, many comparative and empirical studies have examined Lakoff's claims.

Researchers using the dominance/power approach have utilized Lakoff's hypotheses in various ways. Some have dealt with isolated variables of speech such as counting the frequency of tag questions, interruptions, etc. (e.g. Trudgill, 1975) while other studies have examined these variables in contextually situated interactions, such as Fishman's (1975) research on couples' interaction and West and Zimmerman's (1983) research on interruptions on mixed sex interaction. These studies have postulated the sexual division of labor in language research, where male dominance is not only a cause of the difference but also the difference that maintains the dominance. According to the dominance/power-based approach, power and dominance are not only considered attributes of male members of a society, but also the society grants power to male members which is expected to be reflected in the way they speak (West and Zimmerman, 1983, 1985). For example in U.S society and many other societies men have control of the resources, tend to make more money, and occupy more authoritative and higher social positions. Therefore, this form of power is manifested in conversational rules and cultural values. As Henley and Kramarae (I991:I9-20) noted, hierarchies in society and in institutions determine whose communication style will be considered normal and who will be required to learn that communication style, whose language style will be considered deviant and inferior and who will be required to imitate the individuals at higher levels of a hierarchical communication style in order to fit into the society.

West and Zimmerman (1983, 1985) were regarded as the main proponents of the dominance/power approach, but they added that the sex difference does not happen in a vacuum but within a context of interaction. This view of sex differences is considered as a development stage of the dominance/power-based approach because, as I discussed earlier, the dominance proposed by Lakoff assumed the female style to be deviant and inferior to male norms of speech. However, this type of dominance/power-based approach assumed that the female speech style was not deviant or inferior to the male style, but it related sex differences to power differences, with West and Zimmerman (1983) assuming that sex structures and power structures are tied together. Here sex differences in speech were equated with power differences, so this form of the dominance/power approach conceptualized sex or gender in terms of power and it assumed that power is the only factor that differentiates the sexes (Uchida, 1992).

1.1.4. How researchers used the dominance/power-based approach

Sociolinguists who have followed the dominance/power-based approach in speech differences between men and women have argued that these differences in relation to language, both in systematic matters like pronunciation and in the dynamics of conversation interaction, are due to male power and female submission (Eckert & Ginet, 1992). The following section will cover the studies that have used the gender and power framework to explain the differences in interactional behaviors according to a power construct. The underlying reasoning of these researchers is also discussed.

The most popular theory in the dominance approach was parent-child interaction theory. This theory relates male and female interactional behaviors to parent-child interaction. Goffman (1976) stated that females are equal to subordinate males and they are equivalent to children in terms of power relations in interactional behaviors. Goffman maintained that the way

males communicate with females is similar to parent-child communication strategy. For example, Sacks (1974) observed children's conversation and he discovered that children use the form of question "do you know what?" to initiate a conversation with the adults. The answer to the question comprises permission from the adult to start a conversation. Usually, adults answer this question by using another question containing the word "what", which gives the child an opportunity to start an utterance (West and Zimmerman, 1975). This form of conversation was found to be conducted between a male and a female speaker, where the male speaker performs as an adult speaker in parent-child communication strategy and the female speaker's responses are similar to those of children (Sacks, 1974).

Fishman's (1975) observation of three couples' conversations supported the parent-child interaction theory. The results uncovered that women initiated a conversation by using the question "do you know what?" twice as frequently as men. Overall, in this study women asked questions three times as frequently as men. The author suggested that women's reliance on questions might stem from their role in conversation as co-conversationalists with men. Again, this result reflects the popular tendency of researchers at that time to assert the imbalance of power between men and women in different social practices.

Similarly, Zimmerman and West (1975) illuminated the equivalence of women's and children's interactions by comparing the results of their (1975) study, which highlighted the interruption patterns and turn taking in same sex conversations and cross sex conversations, with data from parent-child verbal interaction. The results revealed similar findings between male-female interactions and parent-child interactions. The interactional episodes observed by the researchers involved eleven adults in male-female exchanges, ten adults in male-male and ten adults in female-female. The exchanges were recorded in a coffee shop, drug stores

and public places in a university community (Zimmerman and West, 1975). The same sex transcripts revealed equal distribution of silence and overlap among male-male and female-female speakers. By comparison, the cross sex conversations showed differences in interruption rates among the speakers, male initiated interruptions and more overlaps than among females. On the other hand, female speakers showed a tendency toward silence when exchanging with males.

Similarly, five interactions of parent-child conversation were recorded in a physician's office. The results showed twelve instances of interruptions by parents out of fourteen instances (Zimmerman and West, 1975). The results by these researchers almost overlap and the male-female interaction was described as similar to parent-child interaction, in the way they use interruption patterns and the turn taking process.

Researchers have tried to provide reasons for the imbalance in power relations in parent-child interactional behavior theory. The first proposed reason was the lack of social competence that individuals with less power may encounter during the conversation, in this case children and females (West and Zimmerman, 1975). A child is considered as a social actor whose verbal and nonverbal interactions are under the scrutiny of adults (parents). Similarly, women are considered as social actors who lack social competence due to submissive personality attributes.

The dominance/approach researchers described female-male conversation strategies as child-parent conversation because they asserted that children and female speakers share similar speech behaviors. Goffman (1976) described it thus: "*it turns out that in our society whenever a male has a dealings with a female or a subordinate male (especially a younger*

one), some mitigation of potential distance and hostility is quite likely to be induced by application of child-parent complex, which implies that ritually speaking, females are equivalent to subordinate male and both are equivalent to children. (p.73)

However, after a decade of comparative and empirical studies that perceived women speech's as powerless (Lakoff, 1975), O'Barr and Atkins (1980) found that features of linguistic variables are related to social powerlessness rather than the gender of the speaker. They investigated the speech patterns in a court room of three men and three women of different social status, from relatively low to relatively high. The results revealed that the speech patterns of individuals with high power status (the sample was made up of women doctors and male executives) exhibited less low-power language, e.g. hedges, tentativeness. Individuals from lower social status positions, conversely, (the male sample was made up of subordinates and the female sample was made up of housewives) used more low-power language (O'Barr and Atkins, 1980). Therefore, these studies assumed the individual's social ranking would define which type of language would be used; this explanation seems to be essentialist in that it assumes that our attributes determine the sort of language or communication behavior we use.

Additionally, the validity of powerful/ powerless language was questioned by Grob, Meyers and Schuh (1997). In their research they examined four language forms that are supposed to assert powerlessness or powerfulness. These four forms were interruptions, hedges, disclaimers and tag questions. This research contradicted the findings of previous researchers who pictured women speakers as using powerless language and men speakers as using powerful language. Women used more of the supposedly powerful language and men used more of the supposedly powerless language. Therefore, agreeing on one unified definition of which forms of language could be described as powerful and which forms could be powerless was a difficult task for language researchers to perform.

Before I review the criticism of this approach, I will provide a summary of the propositions of the power-based approach. The main proposition was that in speech power structure and gender structure are tied together. Therefore, this approach set male language as the standard and norm. However, it did not attribute women's use of language, which was described as inferior, to genetic reasons, as had been claimed earlier, but to the unequal treatment by society of men and women. This approach assumed that male members are granted institutional power and control of resources in the society which put them at a higher level of the social hierarchy than women and because of this unequal treatment, men are assumed to use a communication style that reflects their high position in the hierarchy. Therefore, it is proposed that individuals at higher levels of the hierarchy in society will use communication styles that later will be considered normal while individuals at lower levels of the hierarchy are required to learn the communication styles that are used by individuals at higher levels, and sometimes imitate these communication styles in order to fit into the society.

This approach divides language according to the level of power, for example, the use of powerful language and powerless language defines who dominates and who is dominated.

Parent-child interaction theory was heavily applied in this approach, in which the theory linked interactional behaviors of individuals to their power relations. For example, there is a power difference between parent and child and because of this power difference the parents tend to use interactional behaviors that reflect this power whereby they control the utterances of their children. Researchers using the dominance/power-based approach compared the results of male-female interactional behaviors with data from parent-child interaction. The findings showed similar patterns of interaction between parent-child and male-female. Researchers provided reasons for the imbalance in power relations between males and females, attributing it to personality traits of the individual, for example, because of their

submissive personality attributes women tend to use interactional behaviors that resemble their low social competence.

In the next section, a critical review of this approach is presented and the reasons why it is not adequate to answer my research question will be provided at the end of the chapter.

1.1.6. Criticism of the dominance/power-based approach

The power and dominance framework has been of great significance to feminist researchers; however, it lacks clear conceptualization of power and status (Crawford, 1995). Power is one of the issues that is difficult for psychologists to theorize (Griscom, 1992). Although power is a term in everyday usage, its meaning is often implicit in psychological research. The reason underlying this uncertainty in defining the concept of power is that it is measured as a direct variable that can be possessed by discrete individuals (Kitzinger, 1991). The concept of political and social power is almost absent in most psychological research and if it is mentioned it will be used as a "rhetorical flourish" or as a generic explanation of research results (Kitzinger, 1991).

The conceptualization of how power and status are expressed and reproduced in talk has retained much of the dualistic nature of the dominance/power-based approach; men use talk to dominate and women are dominated by talk (Crawford, 1995). It is not clear whether women lack control of language because they lack social power or whether, if they gain control of language first, then they can gain social power (Cameron, 1985). The conceptualization of power is perceived as a fixed strategy that does not shift according to the context.

Moreover, feminist psychologists tend to end research papers with a warning about the social and political contexts of male power but the majority of these researchers do not provide a clear understanding of these contexts in the data analysis. Therefore, the concept of power is

not explored in its own right but it is presented as a supporter to psychological discussion (Kitzinger, 1991). For example, Janet Sayers (1986, 37) concluded a chapter by saying '*individual psychological change is not enough, social change is also required if women's hysterical misery is to be converted not only to uncommon happiness but in to the happiness women need, desire and want'.* However, the chapter was entirely devoted to providing suggestions for how women can change their individual psychology but without mentioning social and political change.

On the whole the dominance/power based approach focuses attention on issues of power and dominance in language (Crawfords, 2003). For example, some differences that had been linked to gender differences were later attributed to status and power rather than gender. For example, Cameron (1998) stated that linguistic strategies always have opposite potential meanings. For example, interruption can be status linked denial of someone's speaking right or an indicator of high involvement that supports affiliation rather than power. Therefore, the explanation of interruption strategies provided by the dominance approach is misguided because it reads interruption as dominance rather than providing alternative explanations.

Another criticism is that the notion of power that the dominance approach is based on is not clear; even researchers who used this approach criticize its generalizability and taken for granted assumptions that some sorts of language are linked to power and others are not. For example, Wetzel's (1995) observation of Japanese communication behaviors is an example of the differences in power display in language. His research showed that the conversational pattern associated with women and powerlessness in Western culture occurs among men in Japan. For example, assertion of dominance, interrupting while others have the floor, challenging others' utterances and making direct declarations of opinion, are all strategies

that have been characterized as illustrating powerful communication styles. However, in Japanese communication styles these same strategies are understood to resemble immature or childish behaviour (Wetzel, 1995). Wetzel criticized the way in which the power notion is allocated to one sort of language that might be not related to some social context.

The dominance/power-based approach has been criticized for ignoring dimensions to power other than gender, such as race, occupation, education, age, etc. (Uchida, 1992). Most of the studies that used this approach do not reflect how aspects of participants' identities other than their gender may influence their interactional behavior in cross sex interaction. For example, West and Zimmerman (1985) and Fishman (1983) focused mainly on white middle class educated men and women. Therefore, these studies overlooked the importance of the context and assumed that white, middle class male dominance is the norm and the standard that the analysis should be based on. This implies that these researchers took the white middle class system as for granted knowledge that should not be questioned, so the white middle class system of sex organization was examined in its own right.

The dominance/power-based approach has been described as an essentialist approach because it views gender as a fundamental aspect of the individual. As described by Bohan (1993) gender is a noun, it is something that men and women have or are. Therefore, according to this definition, essentialism views gender as a group of proprieties that reside in personality and traits (Bohan, 1993).

Essentialism does not imply biological determinism for gender specific characteristics. Rather, what defines essentialism is the location of the characteristics within the individual. Essentialist models portray gender as internal, persistent fundamental traits that are separate

from the ongoing socio-political interactions and these fundamental traits are perceived to define gendered roles and actions (Bohan, 1993).

The dominance/power based approach claims that female speakers' lack of the skills to speak assertively and their extensive use of powerless language are essentialist in nature (Crawford, 1995). This essentialist stance perceives men's and women's speech styles as uniform across all situations.

1.1.7. Summary

The overview of the dominance/ power based approach demonstrated that this approach is an essentialist approach that attributes the use of powerful or powerless language to the gender of the individuals. First, this approach is not satisfactory to answer my research question because it ignores the context wherein the interaction process take place whereas my research focuses on examining to what extent gendered behaviors are shaped and constrained by the situation and the context.

Second, it conceptualizes power as a fixed strategy that does not shift according to the context but resides within the individuals; for example, males use dominant language because they are in a more powerful position, granted to them by the society. Therefore, to treat power as a property of a group of individuals (male members in this case) is to overlook the possibility that power might be exerted by individuals regardless of their gender.

Third, this approach assumes that specific use of language is an indicator or practice of power, for example, using more interruptions and initiating a topic is an attribute of a dominant participant in the interaction. However, the studies that criticized this approach demonstrated that we cannot conclude that the use of certain linguistic variables by individuals can provide confirmation of his/her power in that interactional context.

Therefore, in the next section I intend to overview another approach to exploration of the area of gender and language to discover whether it has the potential to fulfill the requirements of my research.

1.1.   The two cultures approach in communication and gender

The dominance approach that was discussed in the previous section has been criticized by feminist researchers on the grounds that it blames men for dominating and women for being dominated due to their biological nature. Therefore, researchers diverted their attention to the two cultures approach in explaining gender differences in speech. Unlike the dominance approach, the two cultures approach does not cast blame on either sex; however, it views men and women as members of different cultures and contends that the miscommunication that could occur is due to cultural differences and early socialization but not to dominance. This chapter will strive to provide an overview of the approach and its application and will finally discuss studies that have been critical of it.

1.2.1. Overview of the two cultures theoretical approach:

"Boys and girls grow up in different worlds, but we think we're in the same one, so we judge each other's behavior by the standards of our own" (Tannen,1990:254). This statement summarizes the main arguments of the two cultures approach in explaining the gender difference in interactional behaviors.

This approach was first proposed and applied to the speech of North American men and women by Maltz and Borker (1982). The approach asserted that cross-sex communication is equivalent to cross cultural communication. It assumed that women and men *come from different sociolinguistic subcultures*". These sociolinguistic subcultures are formed and shaped during childhood and adolescence, when girls and boys learn and acquire the rules of

informal interaction through dealing with their peers of their own sex (Maltz & Borker, 1982:200).

The two cultural approach is based on Gumperz's (1982) interethnic communication approach, which highlights the miscommunication that individuals may encounter when they are interacting with somebody from a different ethnic background. In this approach, miscommunication is attributed to differences in the assumptions and rules that individuals may use during conversation. Maltz and Borker (1982) provided the same justification to miscommunication between men and women. They argued that men and women apply the same patterns of interaction they learned in their childhood during conversation with members of the opposite sex, so conflicts may arise because rules and assumptions differ between the two sexes. These differences were always related to personality traits or cultural stereotypes (Maltz & Borker, 1982).

Although these arguments have been supported by many research studies, the consequence has been the production of a gender dichotomy of males versus females. It is not accurate to say that in each study that examined gender differences the contexts have been the same; however, this is what the two cultures model asserted. It explained communication between same sex speakers, mixed sex speakers, communication between partners, between friends (Aries & Johnson I983), colleagues, and university students always by means of one interpretation: the gender of the speaker has the greater influence in the communication process.

1.2.2. Application of the approach:
This approach attracted much research during the 1990s. The most popular research that applied this approach was conducted by Tannen (1986, 1990a,1990b, 1990c). Tannen's main argument was that men and women interact with each other as living in different subcultures

because of early childhood socialization. She maintained that boys and girls develop the ability for friendly conversation between the ages of 5 and 15 years because during this time, gender segregation is at higher levels. Because both boys and girls learn the meanings of conversational interaction in different social contexts they tend to use language in different ways (Tannen, 1990a). For example, girls use words to achieve three goals: to maintain and create a close relationship, to criticize others in indirect ways, and to interpret other girls' talk sensitively. In contrast, boys will use words to assert their position in the hierarchy, to attract an audience and to gain the floor if another person has it (Tannen, 1990b).

Researchers postulated that Tannen's explanation of sex differences in communication helped to solve communication problems by raising individual's awareness and facilitating cooperation (Ploetz, 1991). Tannen's theory, as described by Troemel-Ploetz (1991:490), is "*non-threatening to the status quo.*" Compared to the dominance approach, which urged women to acquire specific communication behaviors, e.g. assertiveness and directness, this approach did not ask individuals to change their interactional behavior because even though women have a different communication style from men, the interaction should not be affected because they are considered to be social equals.

This approach to gender differences is considered as an alternative to the dominance approach because the latter explains differences in gender communication strategies in terms of unequal social power; whereas the two cultures approach attributes gender differences to acquired dispositions. In this account, there is no intention to dominate imputed to men nor are women seen to be deficient in some way. As stated by Maltz and Borker (1982: 200) "*even if both parties are attempting to treat one another as equals, cultural miscommunication results*". Having examined the formation of the main tenets of the two

culture approach it is now necessary to consider the most important development in the approach and its effects on gender and language research.

Different and sometimes contradictory reasons were provided to explain sex differences in interactional behaviors in the two cultures theoretical approach. First, Eckert and Ginet (1992) assert that it is not separation that distinguishes the linguistic behavior of the two genders, but their social position and content of their gendered personalities. According to this idea the language variable is seen as a marker for the speaker's position in the socioeconomic hierarchy of the society. Therefore, speakers use this language variable to affirm membership of their own social group (Eckert and Ginet, 1992). Sometimes speakers make strategic use of the language variable to claim membership to a social group they desire (Eckert and Ginet, 1992). For example, working class people are said to use colloquial speech to claim the local goods and services due to authentically local people (Labov, 1966); however, when they desire to claim membership to the middle class they use formal language.

Similarly, the two cultures approach explains that the language variables that are used more by women signal their female identity, and as men use those variables rarely, by default they signal their male identity (Labov, 1966).

For example, it is assumed that women use some sort of language to assert their influence in society because they are always considered the family brokers in interaction with outsiders (Holmes, 1997). It is more often women who are required to interact with schools, shops, neighbors and family rather than men (Tannen 1990). This wide range of interactions with others allows them to be responsive to a variety of pressures and they have the ability to accommodate to the speech of others more than men (Coupland and Coupland 1991).

Similarly, in some communities language is one of the tools women can use to challenge societal norms (Weedon, 1987).

This view goes hand in hand with the essentialist model that portrays gender as a set of internal, persistent fundamental traits that are separate from the ongoing socio-political interactions and these fundamental traits are perceived to define gendered roles and actions (Bohan, 1993).

The applications illustrate the defining characteristics of the two cultures approach: the imposed dichotomy between the two genders that always assumes differences between men and women's interactional behavior. Research has perpetuated the dichotomy through the way in which the research questions are asked (Stokoe, 1998). For example, why do women use more interruptions, hedges and tentative language more than men? Or why do women use rapport talk and report talk? These forms of questions are accused by Cameron (1998) of locating gender in individual subjects rather than in social relations and processes. Bing and Bergvall (1996: 3) have asked "*Why are questions that strengthen the female-male dichotomy so frequently asked, while those that explore other types of variation evoke much less interest? How much of this apparent dichotomy is imposed by the questions themselves?*" Traditional research questions that explored the relationship between gender and language implied that males and females are essentially different (Bing and Bergvall, 1996).

1.2.3. Critiques of this approach
Having examined applications of the approach, the following section will present critiques of the two culture approach. The two cultures approach has been heavily used in gender and language research for many decades (Crawford, 1995). However, for a number of reasons, it

has been viewed as invalid on epistemological grounds and it has had demonstrable negative consequences (Crawford, 1995). First, researchers who used this approach assumed that if the variables under study were clearly defined and accurately measured, the results should reflect observable facts with clear meanings. However, differences fluctuate. Even much highlighted gender differences turn out to be applicable only to specific groups and may not be replicable in other studies (Unger, 1992). As described by Crawford "They *have a now you see them, now you don't quality that seems inconsistent with using them as fundamentals of human nature* (Crawford, 1995, P.4). Even if the differences were accurately observed, their meaning is not socially neutral because they are culturally produced. For example, in Gapun, a remote village on the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea, coarse and unpleasant expressions are a feature of female speech. In this community, women are expected to use a monologue characterized by highly abusive terms and often of considerable length (45 minutes is average) when they are annoyed by someone's behavior (Cameron, 2008). Unlike in Western culture, directive and assertive expressions in Gapun culture are not traits of skilful leaders and people with authority but traits of uncooperative and belligerent women (Jepersons, 1998).

 Similarly, Keenan's (1974) ethnographic research on Malagasy men in Madagascar revealed distinctive results from the universal generalizations of interactional behaviors supposedly used by men. In this society, maintaining harmony in social relations is extremely important, therefore men avoid any confrontation and even ordinary actions like asking someone a direct question are considered impolite. This form of talk is called kabary talk and only men are capable of using it (Keenan, 1974). Therefore, they leave communicating unwelcome information and direct messages to women because the communication style of Malagasy women is direct and assertive, which gives them the responsibility for buying and selling in

the local markets. However, this dominance in economic activity does not privilege them with authority and influence in their society because the public and political influence of males is more valued in Malagasy culture (Keenan, 1974). The results emerging from these studies and many others do not fit the gender stereotype that is proposed by the two cultures approach.

The second critique of this approach is that differences are polarized due to an existing system of meaning. This system is ideologically influenced and elusive (Crawford, 1995). A very popular example is the performance of mathematical tests by the two genders. The media tend to over emphasize how men outperform women on standardized mathematics ability tests, and attribute this to the idea that estrogen destroys female spatial ability. However, Hyde and her colleagues (Hyde et al., 1990) have provided convincing examples of the invalidity of this test because it has been interpreted outside its social context. For example, white males do slightly better than white females in the test. However, for African-Americans and Asian-Americans the difference is smaller, and in terms of age variables the girls outperform boys until adolescence (Hyde et al., 1990). The research on mathematics ability tests is similar to most of the research that explores the gender differences in social issues. They are trying to dichotomize the genders even if the similarities are much greater than the differences.

Research that dichotomizes gender differences with respect to conversational analysis involves value judgments (Crawford, 1995), including, for example, judgments about how large the sample should be before we label women and men as more different than similar. Value judgments are also involved when researchers try to study the "big picture" of gender differences by comparing the results of studies that explored similar behaviors. However, these studies assume that what is true for, say, a North American college student is applicable

for all, even if the sample is drawn from different age and ethnic groups, social classes and cultures.

There is a difficulty in separating gender from other factors that are relevant to society. The most cited problem in social research is the pervasive number of variables that interact with gender or sex (Jacklin, 1981). This interaction, in many cases, leads to confusion, where the effects of two or more variables are mixed and it becomes hard to decide which variable is causing the effect (Crawford, 1995). For example, if a researcher is examining whether men or women are using more polite speech styles in a public place, where people are categorized by social groupings other than gender (such as status), it would be difficult to determine which variable is causing the effect (using polite speech): gender or status. More importantly, even if the researchers manage to study men and women in identical situations, the influence of other social reactions to them as men and women may vary (Crawford, 1995).

Kiesling (2004, 2007) criticized the way in which men have been characterized in research that focused on gender and language. He disapproved of how men were characterized in some approaches that attempted to explain the differences between men and women, and argued that they oversimplify processes that in reality are much more complex. For example, in the dominance approach, all gender differences in speech behavior are related to one idea: male domination and female subordination. While in the two cultures approach, the differences are seen as arising from socialization processes, it simply describes misunderstandings between women and men as attributable to different social goals. Kiesling (2007) asserted that for the last two decades the field of gender and language has treated men as a default category abbreviated to WHMC. This stands for white, heterosexual, middle class men. Clearly, Kiesling's arguments suggest that WHMC men are treated as

invisible when researching the relationship between gender and language. As a result, he argues that the dichotomy of men's and women's interactional behavior is not valid. Instead he suggests that masculine and feminine behavior is performed in speech, so it is something that can be 'put on' by anyone – male or female. He asserts that masculinity and femininity are socially constructed; they are not inherent to men or women but are performed. Based on this there are social practices that become associated with men and they then become accepted as masculine practice, for example, being aggressive. This explanation goes hand in hand with that of the performative nature of gender that will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2 of this thesis.

Further criticism of the two cultures approach has arisen from its nature as an observational approach (Uchida, 1992) because every researcher has a certain standard for judging the behaviors of people and this ability to judge people could be developed through living in a certain culture and interacting with specific people. Therefore, the standards for judging male and female interactional behaviors depend mainly on the culture researchers are coming from. For example, what one researcher might interpret as assertive behavior in speech might be interpreted differently by another researcher. As a result, we could count all the views of the two cultures approach as depending on the researchers' background.

Moreover, the two cultures approach seems too simplistic because children do not solely interact with same sex peers but they similarly interact with peers from the other sex (Uchida, 1992). Therefore, they are exposed to patterns of interactions with the opposite sex and they learn the rules of how girls and boys are supposed to differ in their conversations. Based on the two cultures approach, boys and girls will face difficulties when interacting with the opposite sex, so their real cross cultural encounter is similar to that of Japanese and American

automated robots who have not previously been exposed to each other and when they meet the real encounter will occur.

Another problem with the two cultures approach is the term two cultures itself because it implies fixed criteria that "*can only lead to lengthy lists of comparative differences between countless cultures; the results of which are impossible to digest or apply in any* meaningful way" (De Francisco, 1990a:2). Therefore, this fixed criterion of comparing men and women's speech leads researchers to study isolated variables of speech regardless of how the conversation is formed and irrespective of other variables that might affect the conversation rather than the gender of the speaker. It also assumes that it is not worth doing research about women's communication behavior unless it is to be compared with men's and vice versa.

1.2. Summary of the previous approaches to communication and gender and conclusions

Coates and Cameron claimed that both "the dominance approach, which stresses the hierarchical nature of gender relations, and the difference approach, which stresses subcultural differences between women and men", are needed for sociolinguistic research on sex difference (I988:72). However, having examined the dominance approach and two cultures approach in this review it is obvious that they both lack a holistic and multidimensional view of gender differences in speech behaviors because they assume that the three concepts of gender, power and culture are independent of each other and can be examined separately

From the review undertaken above in this chapter, the two cultures and the dominance approach seem to be essentialist approaches that view gender as a fundamental aspect of the

individual. Essentialism is defined as "the set of fundamental attributes which are necessary and sufficient conditions for a thing to be considered a thing of that type" (William and Mary, 1999, P. 274). They have been described as essentialist approaches that view gender as a fundamental aspect of the individual that resides in personality and traits (Bohan, 1993). Gender is seen as an emergent feature of social interactions, and not an individual attribute (Kessler and Mckenna, 1978; West and Fenstermaker, 1993).

As described by Bohan (1993) gender is a noun, it is something that men and women have or are. Therefore, according to this definition, essentialism views gender as a group of proprieties that reside in personality and traits (Bohan, 1993). The essentialist approaches portray women's and men's speech styles as uniform and consistent in all situations (Crawford, 1995) and it minimizes or overlooks the importance of the situation and context to communication strategies.

Another essentialist view presented by these approaches is the view of social category membership as defining and influencing the interaction process. Similarly, the norms of conversation are learned from conversations within the gender group that the individual belongs to and these norms are completely different for males and females (Tannen, 1990). The dominance approach and the two cultures approach have been shown to be essentialist viewpoints that enhance the taken for granted knowledge and assume a predetermined hypothesis. They also claim that males and females will perceive their interaction norms as a set of rules that should be adhered to by other members and any flouting will attract disapproval (Maltz and Borker, 1982).

These approaches categorized men and women according to pre-linguistic variables that were biologically assigned to them at birth (Kramarae I986). They failed to look at gender as a social construct, as is clearly demonstrated by West and Zimmerman's assertion (1987, p.17)

that gender is "a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment". Therefore, gender is not what an individual is but it is what one does, we do gender through gendered activities (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Gender is also what an individual does repeatedly in interactions with others. Thus, an individual's behaviors will be attributed to the rules and context of the society that define gender. For example, in US society part of being female is to be the weaker sex and the dominated group (Uchida, 1992). Gender is a social construct that organizes our life, is something we do in interaction and not something that is based on biology or nature. It also depends on other social factors like ethnicity, age, religion, and sexual orientation (Uchida, 1992).

As demonstrated above, the criticisms of previous approaches to explanation of the relationship of gender and language confirmed their insufficiency in this respect. Therefore, the social constructionist approach is expected to provide more explanation and a better understanding of the relationship between language and gender.

The social constructionist will argue that gendering a friendly conversation will be a product of social agreements of appropriateness of specific behavior for men and women. The essentialist views suggested that there are discrete and identifiable emotions such us anger and hatred and human beings are programmed to apply certain words to describe every set of these emotions (Burr, 1995). By contrast, the social constructionist view suggests that the framework of language gives our experiences of life and our internal states a meaning that is different and stands out from one context to another (Burr, 1995).

The previously discussed approaches and the social constructionism approach differ in the way they look at gender, language and power. The essentialist approaches treat these variables as independent variables that are fixed and discrete and their influence in the interactional process is neglected; this is because they focus on certain communication

strategies that have already been identified and will then be attributed to the individuals who use them. However, the social constructionist approach assumes that gender, language and power are socially constructed in the interaction process and they are defined by the rules and context of the society wherein the interaction process takes place. The social constructionist approach tries to provide explanations of why certain groups use specific interactional behaviors and what they are trying to achieve by the use of this interactional behavior, so it does not treat gender as a background explanation or a reason why certain individuals use one specific linguistic behavior and not another.

In the next chapter a detailed overview of the social constructionist approach will be provided.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: The social constructionist approach

2.1. Introduction

The review in the previous chapter of the other approaches to gender and language identified them as essentialist approaches that view gender as a fundamental aspect of the individual that resides in personality traits (Bohan, 1993). Also they were criticized for their taken for granted assumptions about power relations in language, because they assumed that some sorts of language are linked to power and others are not. For example, the language forms can be divided into two categories, powerful language and powerless language, and then the use of these forms of language can be attributed to the individual's occupation or rank in the hierarchy and, most often, to the individual's gender (Wetzels, 1995; Lakoff, 1975).

These taken for granted assumptions treated gender and other forms of social categorization such as race and occupation as analytical strategies that can explain the specific use of some language forms and not others. For example, linguistic behaviors that convey dominance are used mainly by men and those that convey submission are used by women because of the different cultural attributes that these two groups inherit (Tannen, 1990c).

The problems with these assumptions are, first, that they assume that social categories such as gender, race and occupation rank in the hierarchy and these and many other attributes of the individuals are always salient to the conversation and they are the main reasons for the interaction process happening in a certain way. Second, they overlook the importance of the context and its influence on the interaction process by assuming that linguistic strategies have only one fixed and defined meaning regardless of the context (Cameron, 1998).

Similarly, these studies assumed that identity pre-dated the conversation or the interaction process, with the participants in the interaction process having a predetermined identity that steers the wheel for the conversation and this identity is fixed and defined by cultural and social factors. For example white middle class men are expected to speak in a way that reflects their identity (Kitzinger, 1997).

Because my research aim is to explore the extent to which gender behaviors are shaped and constrained by the situation and the context, the essentialist approaches that I reviewed in the previous chapter are not going to give me a comprehensive answer as they treat gender and other social orders such as power relations as analytical categories or variables that are fixed regardless of the context and the orientation of the participants.

Therefore, this chapter will explore frameworks that approach gender and language from a different perspective and understanding. I was aiming to find a framework that would treat gender, language, and identity not as fixed variables but as elements of a process, and that this would enable me to discover how situation of participants' talk in a particular way allows them to achieve their interactional goals.

Therefore, I needed to review the studies that considered elements of the interaction process such as gendered behaviors, identity, power relations, as fluctuating according to the participants' interactional goals.

The social constructionist view of gender, language, power relations and identity as socially constructed according to the situation and the context will be discussed in detail in the next section.

2.2. What is the social constructionist argument?

Social Constructionism is a theoretical orientation that supports a number of new approaches in psychology and social psychology as well as other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Examples of these new approaches are critical psychology, discourse analysis, deconstruction and post structuralism (Burr, 1995). There are no specific features to define a social constructionist position; however, there are key assumptions that describe it. First, social constructionism is critical of taken for granted knowledge. It cautions observers to be suspicious about their own assumptions about how the world appears to be; it questions the categories through which human beings are assumed to comprehend the world.

The second key assumption in social constructionism is that all methods of understanding the world are culturally and historically relative (Burr, 1995). These ways of understanding the world are products of social and economic arrangements that exist in a specific culture at a specific time. For example, in U.S. society during the 17th and 18th centuries, there were religious, economic and political concerns about increasing the population. Therefore, whilst heterosexuality was considered as abnormal presentation of sexual appetite because it connoted sex as pleasure, at that time the thinking on sexual activity was that married persons who were seeking to reproduce should engage in sexual activity.

The third assumption that describes the social constructionist approach is that knowledge is sustained by social processes. Knowledge is constructed among people through their daily interactions. Therefore, people's understandings of the world are not based on an objective observation of it, but on the social processes that people perform constantly with each other. Language is fundamental among these processes. People use language to produce and reproduce knowledge as they perform different roles within different contexts (Mumby and

May, 2005). Similarly, people use language to internalize socially constructed meanings because language allows people to share experiences and meaning with each other (Mumby and May, 2005). For example, in U.S the dominant discourse about aging is negative, because aging is portrayed as an undesirable state of decline (Weatherall and Loong, 1997). Therefore, when people internalize this negative construction they tend to pass it on to others.

By placing interaction as a central point in producing knowledge, language is perceived as a form of action that is described as "performative". The performative nature of language will be explained in section 3 of this chapter.

Unlike the traditional psychology that looks inside the person to provide explanations of social phenomena and assumes that attitudes, motivations and cognitions are responsible for what people say and do, social constructionism focuses on social practices engaged in by people and their interaction with each other. Therefore, explanations are based neither on psychology of the individual nor on social structures but on the process of interactions that occur between individuals.

The performative nature of language and the view of gender as socially constructed will be particularly highlighted because they are the two topics that are most relevant to my research interest. I have selected these two different approaches because they overlap in the sense that they both criticize the previous approaches to gender and language that I described in detail in chapter one.

2.3. Social constructionist perspectives on gender

Interaction between the two genders is acknowledged to be more frequent than interaction between people on opposite sides of the class and race divide (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999). The reason underlying this high frequency is the fact that interaction among individuals is determined partly availability and gender divides people into two equal sized

groups, maximizing the likelihood of cross gender interaction (Blau & Schwartz, 1984). This frequency of contact between males and females makes interaction a powerful area in the gender system and also affects the basic rules for framing the interaction process (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Ridgeway, 1997).

Schegloff (1997, 1998) and Wetherell (1998) made a significant contribution in the area of gender and language research by pointing out that it is not desirable to invoke gender as an analytical category when it is not salient to the participants who are engaging in the interaction process. Schegloff (1997) suggested that it is a self-indulgent act for researchers to restrict themselves to categories of data that preoccupy them. From the review in chapter one of the two cultures approach and the power-based approach in language and gender we saw that the emphasis was upon defining speech styles and then attributing them to men and women. These theoretical approaches were aiming to explain why men and women talk differently. Through their forms of questioning researchers were already assuming that men and women were different (Kessler and McKenna, 1978). These researchers treated gender as an essential, fixed category of individuals that resides within them.

However, critical thinking in the field led to new understanding of gender and language research which showed that interacting with others needs cultural definition of self and others and it showed that sex categorization (e.g. labelling as male or female) is the most used cultural definition. People use sex categorization when interacting with others because it is simple, fast and habitual (Brewer & Lui, 1989). Even if other cultural definitions are available, such as teacher-student, sex categorization is used more frequently. Sex categorization in everyday interaction is said to be a social process that relies on cues and behaviors that are culturally supposed to define physical sex differences (Kessler and Mckenna, 1978; West and Zimmerman, 1987). But, despite the fact that gender is involved deeply in the interaction, people also use other definitions to define self and others, such as

age, ethnicity, and institutional role. Therefore, using gender categories in defining behaviors in different contexts is said to be too diffuse because people are many things in interaction in addition to their gender (Brewer & Lui, 1989; Stangor et al., 1992). Because gender is nested in the fundamental understanding of a person's identity, it is always used as a background identity that modifies other identities which may in fact be more salient than gender (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999).

However, these essentialism views of gender have been challenged by many disciplines, including social constructionism. The social constructionist view sees gender as not fixed and dependent on the context; it also assumes that language constructs and produces individuals' experiences of themselves and of the context (Burr, 1995). Researchers who utilize the social constructionist approach treat gender as a fluid element and they focus on how gender identities are achieved through the interaction process (Speer, 2005).

Bohan (1993) provided an example that illustrates the differences between essentialist and social constructionist modes of thoughts. She distinguished between the personality trait in a person as being friendly and the nature of the conversation as friendly. The essentialist sees gender as similar to describing a person as friendly while the social constructionist perceives gender as an analogue to friendly conversation. If we apply this description to gender, based on the essentialist view, women could well be friendlier than men because of their biology. However, the social constructionist will argue that gendering this friendly conversation will be a product of social agreements of appropriateness of specific behavior for men and women.

The studies of language and gender shifted from studies that correlate language use to demographic variables and assume that men speak in this way and women speak in other

ways, to studies that focus on processes: processes of how language users produce and reproduce talk as males and females, and how speakers orient to or construct gendered identities in their talk.

The focus of the social constructionist in this chapter is on the performative nature of gender and how people do gender in a routine accomplishment of talk (Butler, 1990; West and Zimmerman, 1987). These two different approaches are selected because they overlap in the sense that they both criticize the previous approaches of gender and language that I described in detail in chapter one.

Garfinkel, Kessler and Mckenna (1978) were among the first researchers to demonstrate that gender is a situated accomplishment, and they analyzed the taken for granted methods in the interactional process that enables us to create the fact of the two sexes world. West and Zimmerman (1987) developed the "doing gender" theory from Garfinkel, Kessler and Mckenna's work. The term ''doing gender'' (West and Zimmerman,1987) reflects the social constructionist view of gender, which is of a salient social and cognitive category through which information is filtered, selectively processed, and deferentially acted upon to produce self-fulfilling prophecies about women and men. "Doing gender" involves creating differences between men and women that are not biological, essential or natural (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Gender is seen as an emergent feature of social interactions, and not an individual attribute (Kessler and Mckenna, 1978; West and Fenstermaker, 1993). Speakers do gender in front of individuals who may orient towards its production. When people orient towards gender in talk they tend to produce and reproduce the social order as they interact with one another and engage in on-going meaning making work (Speer, 2005). This contradicts with Parson's idea of order, which assumed that order is achieved when individuals' behaviors are based on an internalized system of social norms (Parsons, 1937).

The social constructionist approach encourages researchers to focus on interactions rather than isolated features of speech. This analysis opens up means of exploring how social grouping, power relations and hierarchies structure on-going interactions. It also facilitates discovery of how the social feedback that the speakers receive is affected by the above mentioned factors (social grouping, hierarchies and power relations).

2.4. The Performative nature of language and gender:

Social constructionist researchers such as Butler consider gender in terms of its performative nature. Butler (1990) theorizes that gender is created through performances. She defines gender as a socially constructed category, and only feminine and masculine performances can create the ideology of gender. Butler argues that gender roles are not predetermined entirely but are established and created within the performances. Butler (1990) also explains that by agreeing to "perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions . . . the construction 'compels' our belief in its necessity and naturalness" (p. 178). Based on this explanation, gender is not based on biological and functional conceptions; rather it is represented within the performances.

The most important feature of the social constructionist approach is that it views language as a system that works and interacts with other social systems. As stated by Stanback (1988;192) *"Racism, sexism and classism are not just talk, but racist, sexist, and classist talk are forms of racist, sexist and classist action; oppressive talk reinforces and recreates oppression in human relationships".* This quote links language to action; for example, language has a performative nature and is able to do things.

The traditional view of language and person perceives language as a means of expressing the person (Burr, 1995). For example, when people talked about their personality or about their experiences it was assumed that the personality and the experience existed and the words

were used later to describe it. Therefore, language and people were seen as essentially independent things because people used language to describe things (thoughts, feelings, etc.) that existed in themselves or in the world.

The social constructionist view and specifically the performative view are in opposition to the traditional dialectic relationship and see the relationship between language and person as possibly one made by the other. A person cannot pre-date language because language brings the person into being in the first place (Burr, 1995). Language provides a person with a tool for structuring his/her experience about him/herself and about the world they are living in. Language does things; it does not simply reflect what is: rather, it creates what is. In other words, language is not transparent.

The description of language as not transparent is used frequently by social constructionists. This means that language is not just a pure medium that transfers our feelings and thoughts to others; it is more than that. As Sapir (1947) hypothesizes, language defines the thoughts and concepts which are shaped by language. For example, if there is no way to describe a specific concept in a specific language then the concept cannot be used by the people who speak that language. The definition of language provided by social constructionists has two implications: first, the concepts involved in being a person (such as having loves, being motivated by different drivers, having a personality) are not essential in human nature but are available to us through language when we structure our experiences through language (Burr, 1995). The second implication is that in our world, where there are an enormous number of languages and different ways of understanding the world, the construction of the personhood and the views of the world vary considerably.

The essentialist views suggested that there are discrete and identifiable emotions such as anger and hatred, and human beings are programmed to apply certain words to describe every

set of these emotions (Butler, 1990). By contrast, the social constructionist view suggests that the framework of language gives our experiences of life and our internal state a meaning that is different and stands out from one context to another (Butler, 1990) .

Some examples will help to explain the social constructionist view of language. Descartes divided human experience into a physical versus mental dichotomy. For example, being in pain or feeling hungry could belong to the physical sphere while the mental sphere could be day dreaming or being in distress. This started as a novel idea but then it became embedded in our language and started to structure the understanding of our experiences.   This dichotomy in human experience led people to conceptualize the physical and the mental spheres as separate but related ideas. It also led people to ask questions about how the two spheres might affect each other, such as "does physical illness affect an individual's state of mind?" and "can positive thinking cure cancer?"

The above example of the mental/physical dichotomy shows how a specific understanding or concept becomes embedded in language and then provides a particular understanding to human beings and their experiences. Similarly, the "time is money" metaphor has come to structure the way we view time, how we spend, save it, etc. (see Tietze and Musson., 2003).

From a social constructionist perspective language is seen as dynamic and fluctuating in response to the speaker's goals and intentions in specific social situations. This view of language encouraged researchers to utilize specific research methods to analyze language, such as ethno-methodology, speech act research and discourse analysis (Todd and Fisher, 1988). A detailed discussion of the approaches to be utilized in this research will be provided in chapter three.

Similarly, Butler's view of gender is in common with the social constructionist view, because she regards gender as an "actively constructed performance rather than a pre-existing role"

(Bucholtz, 1999, p.7). Butler did not start with the assumption that men and women are different groups but challenged the sex differences research and she overcame the determinism associated with essentialism. Therefore, according to Butler, women are not powerless actors who are rehearsing the social and linguistic roles that are assigned to them at birth. Instead they can resist these constraints and by doing so a new configuration of gender can be created (Speer, 2005).

As I develop my first argument, I resist the idea of treating gender as a fixed category and rely more on the social constructionist view that gender categories are an emergent feature of on-going social interaction. Therefore, my argument is that within the interaction process some social categories such as race, class and gender become salient and others become sidelined, depending on the influences on the interactional context and the social categories that the participants draw on.

2.5. The importance of context to my research:

Dijk (2006) noted that there was a tendency among discourse analysts to primarily focus on text and talk "itself". These researchers ignored the contextual aspects of talk to avoid the necessity of describing text and talk in endless and boundless ways, and instead chose to describe text in its own terms. However, for the social constructionist the main focus is on the socio-cultural context, and that is why it is very relevant to my research.

 Context is defined as a mental construct of salient aspects of a social situation that influence what people say and how they say it (van Dijk, 1998b). It consists of categories such as situation, setting (time and place), participants from different communicative roles and their mental representations, such as goals, knowledge, ideologies and attitudes. Most importantly, it consists of discourse and discourse genres. Discourse is defined as the spoken written and verbal utterances or a particular way of talking that defines specific vocabularies and

meanings (York University). Foucault described it as 'regulated practice which accounts for a number of statements' (Foucault 1972: 80). For example, medical discourse, legal discourse, academic discourse and so on. Describing a discourse as a regulated practice implies specific characteristics for each discourse; for example, the interaction between a call centre operator and a customer is highly prescribed and constrained by regulations that define what can be said and what is not (Cameron 2000). Genre is defined as a type of text, including the journal article, media piece, government policy paper, public speech, manual, textbook, conference paper (Huckin, 1997).

The notion of context assumes a direct relationship between situational, societal, cultural and political aspects of the text on one hand and the structure of discourse on the other. We see that contexts not only explain what people say, but also how they say it. Van Dijk (2006) suggested that speakers in the same situation may speak in different ways that result in individual variations. This is because context not only accounts for social, political and cultural constraints but also for personal and locally emerging interactional constraints, such as the person's knowledge about a specific topic, opinions and attitudes. So context mainly accounts for what is relevant to the participant in a specific interactional context.

Context controls discourse production and all levels and dimensions of text and talk, such as the selection of appropriate topic, change of topic, semantic description (general versus specific) and many other aspects of discourse (Van Dijk, 2006). For example, powerful members of a group may decide on the discourse genres to be used, such as a judge or teacher who requires a specific answer from a suspect or a student, respectively. Similarly, genres have different categories and sometimes access to some of these categories is prohibited, depending on the convention; for example, a greeting in a conversation may only be available for individuals from a specific social group, age or gender (Irvine, 1979).

To sum up, context is not a direct cause but it is a construct that is created and updated on an on-going basis by the participants in the interaction, because as we realize from the above discussion of context it is a defined or fixed social condition in which we would find that all individuals in the same situation would speak in the same way (van Dijk, 2008).

The assumption by van Dijk that context is a participative construct created through interactions implies the uniqueness of every text or talk. Similarly, it implies the uniqueness of common ground of the participants and their shared social representation, which is mainly defined and constructed by the context. Therefore, contexts are described as being like human experiences in that each experience defines how we see the current situation and how we act.

Based on what has been said in the literature about the importance of the context to research into communicative behaviors of individuals in a specified context, it is important in my thesis to show how the context of this specific interaction between employees from different backgrounds and of different gender and age, influences talk. Therefore, the second argument of this thesis, focusing on the context of the interaction, is important because it will allow me to explore how gendered processes are practised and played out in this interactional context and how power is played out between the participants and how the context influences the participants to interact in one specific way rather than another.

2.6. A view of social identity based on social constructionism

Tajfel (1978, p. 63) identified social identity as '*that part of an individual's self concept which derives from his [sic] knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership'.* This mental state notion of social identity has been used by social psychologists for many years (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). This notion treated social identity as a cognitive reality whose effect on

people is obvious (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994). This view of social identity was based on the self- categorization theory of Turner et al. (1987) which stressed that individuals employ social categories to form their identities and these social categories are external entities (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998). Based on this view, individuals select particular self-categorizations that are suitable for a given set of circumstances (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998). Social categories are defined as devices that are used to make sense of the social environment and the location of oneself within this environment, for example, the individual´s identity in relation to the present social environment (Kärreman, D. and Alvesson, M. 2001).

If, for instance, an individual is Male, and a Supporter of Manchester United football team, suppose this individual was to attend two different meetings; the first meeting was a women's feminist discussion group and the second was a meeting of the (rival) Chelsea Football Club. According to self-categorization theory, this individual sense of self is going to shift from one context to another. So most probably this man's sense of self is going to move from focusing on his maleness to his loyalty to his football team.

This theory of self-categorization is considered the building block for the social constructionist view of social identity because it assumes that the construction of identity is available and the self-categorization is affected by the individual's social interaction. However, this self- categorization theory of social identity assumes that the social categories are objective and exist outside any given social interaction (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998).

This theory demonstrated how the social interaction is not relevant to the choice of specific self- categorization in a specific context by introducing the term salience. Based on this viewpoint, social interaction does not determine which form of self-categorization is relevant to the context and which is not. Rather, the features of the context define which of the

available social categories are most applicable to that specific context. (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998).

This salience notion of social categories and the self-categorization process were challenged later by conversation analysts who claimed that the salience notion cannot determine which social category fits the context. This is because the process of self-categorization is not a passive perception of self as assumed by the self-categorization theory. Rather, it involves a negotiation and active formulation in which that identity can be described as discursively constructed (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998).

Therefore, the social constructionists perceive social identification as a process that is context specific, where the participants attend to the sequential organization of their talk, keeping an eye out especially for how they propose, and respond to, orientations to social identity (Antaki, 1996).

Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) stated that identity is a resource that could emerge in people's affirmations rather than in categories that are imposed by the psychologists. Psychologists assumed that identity is a psychological mechanism of self-classification that is shown in individuals' social behavior (Bauman, 1977). Therefore, looking at identity as a resource means that language use does not comply with the social category to which speakers are assigned, for example, transgender identity, ethical and racial boundary crossing (Bucholtz and Hall, 1995). Hall (1997) used the example of a transgender group in India who are called " Hijras". These people are born male but they identify themselves as neither male nor female. They dress like females but they refuse to use some gender norms that describe femininity in India such as obscenity. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) demonstrated that Hijras have resources available to them such as the ability to distance themselves from masculinity

through linguistic behaviors and they use this resource to refer to themselves in a feminine form.

Similarly, ethno-methodologists recommended that researchers should treat identity as a matter of people's situated descriptions of themselves and each other. Antaki (1996) and Drew and Heritage (1992) demonstrated that the identity of the individual changes as the interaction proceeds. They showed that throughout the interaction, identities of individuals change according to their interactional goals. For example, individuals identify themselves as a part of a group or accomplish in-groupness in interaction when it becomes relevant to their interactional goals. Antaki (1996) showed how a doctor's identity changed according to the matter in hand, juggling between identifying himself as a successful student', then 'ambitious careerist' and then 'medical spokesperson'. The doctor invoked each of these three identities for a purpose or a goal that he wanted to accomplish in that specific interactional context.

According to the social construction approach, people construct specific identities within specific discourses according to the situation and the social context (Musson and Duberley, 2007). With identity as a continuing process of self-mirroring through discursive **practice,** (Humphreys and Brown, 2002), individuals identify themselves as independent entities through utilizing and attending to certain discourses. Humphreys and Brown (2002) studied how the control of identity formation by senior managers affected identity construction. Their study examined the narrative of stories in the organization and how these narratives created the organizational identity. They illustrated that individual and collective identities are constantly evolving products of reflexive processes.

Other studies of identity have examined how organizations support cultural construction of identity (Alvesson, 1998). Alvesson has examined how male workers constructed their work identity in organizations that demanded feminine skills such as emotion and intuition. He found that the existing power structure in the organization facilitated the gendered

construction of men by according them higher positions in the hierarchy which enabled them to recruit attractive females.

To achieve a coherent narrative that describes their sense of identity, individuals tend to adjust their identities by attending to some discourses and rejecting others (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, p. 627). For example, Musson and Duberley (2007) found that organization supervisors responded in a particular way to a participation discourse to manage their own subjectivity and to construct ideal identities for themselves and the organization. This construction of the ideal identity that was regulated by the management allowed them to perceive their work as rewarding. This research demonstrated how individuals can manage discursive change in a way that allows them to achieve their goals and meet their interests (Mumby and Clair, 1997). Overall, the supervisors managed their identity by utilizing subject positions that were made available for them in this discourse in a way that helped them pursue their plans.

The discussion above demonstrated that, based on the social constructionism tenets, identity is constituted through linguistic practices (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998). All interactions have impact on identity construction and what constructs or regulates an identity can be a specific form of conversation, narration or story telling (Alvesson and Willmot, 2002). Similarly, Kärreman and Alvesson (2001) claimed that identities stem from the individuals' attempts to construct their own selves and accord with present circumstances. Musson and Duberley (2007) showed that identity is something that individuals continuously work on and where they attend to aspects of social position in the available discourse.

Accordingly, my third argument is that to achieve particular goals out of the interaction, participants in an interactional setting will invoke certain identities and reject others and they may take up a specific social position in the discourse and they may reject others

according to the social positions that are made available to them. Also they may join a specific group or distance themselves from the group.

2.7. Institutionalization of interaction

Institutional talk, which began to emerge in 1970, was defined by Drew and Heritage as the talk that develops in a restricted environment where the goals of the participants are limited and institution specific; the interactional contribution is in force and institution specific inferential frameworks are used widely (Drew and Heritage, 1992). They pointed out that talk can be described as institutional only if *participants' institutional or professional identities are made relevant to the work activities in which they are engaged (*Drew and Heritage, 1992, P.4).

 Drew and Heritage (1992) demonstrated that discursive events are situated in a specific context where they are governed by rules. For example, formal events are governed by formal rules and formal roles (Button, 1992) whilst informal discursive events such as conversation between family members are likely to be less formal (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998). For example, Drew and Heritage discussed the institutionalized aspects of interaction between doctors and patients and they demonstrated that even when doctors attempt to equalize the relationship between themselves and the patients, the patients will use deferential markers to reproduce the power asymmetry between themselves and the doctors. For example, the doctor's diagnosis is authorized and valued more than the patient's diagnosis.

Similarly, Dick (2011) demonstrated how accounts of sexism in the police workforce were presented by the participants in certain ways, depending on the power relation between the participants and the researcher. She argued that this power relation plays a key role in understanding how the participants work up their account of sexism. This study illustrated

how power relations such as those claimed to oppress women are not fixed but they are always in negotiation within specific structured contexts (Dick, 2011).

Studies focused on the internal structure of doctor-patient interaction have assumed that the interactional structure between doctor and patient is an established means of studying asymmetry and power relations (O'Barr & Atkins, 1980). However, Mishler (1984) identified patterns within the doctor talk that are claimed to enable the doctor to control the interaction process. Some of these patterns related to the way in which the doctor interrupts patients to control the content and the structure of the consultation. Drew and Heritage's study (1992) demonstrated that patients will use different means to resist the control practised by the doctor; some of these means were successful in resisting the talk but some failed. Drew and Heritage attributed this to how the rules of talk were institutionalized in a specific context: the level of rule institutionalization will define which rules are transformed and which remain the same.   Therefore, my final argument is that within this formalized encounter power structures are institutionalized, some power structure rules are transformed and some are not. In this meeting, which is the main source of data for this research, this meeting is a regular staff meeting between librarians and a manager in an Omani university, they were discussing the problems of extra workload and their need a new section for text books distribution that is separate from the library department. Examples of resistance between the manager and the subordinates will demonstrate how some rules are reproduced but others are not, depending on how institutionalized these rules have become (see Drew and Heritage's study of doctors' encounters with patients).

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the social construction approach and how language and gender are conceptualized by the social constructions approach. This approach rejects the taken for granted knowledge about language and gender and urges researchers to look at gender and language as accomplishments and resources that the participants in the talk may utilize according to their relevance to the context.

Using the epistemology of social constructionism, I developed my arguments by drawing on the relevant literature. In the next chapter I intend to illustrate the different methods for analysis of data used to further develop these arguments. The methods to be explored in the next chapter fall within the discourse analysis domain. The chapter will highlight the reasons why specific discourse analysis methods are the most applicable and comprehensive for answering my research questions.

Chapter 3 : The analytical framework

3.1. Definition of concepts to be used in the chapter

Discursive practice: is defined as the spoken and non-spoken rules, norms and behaviors that are used to reproduce, receive and interpret a message. These rules govern and help the individual to speak in all social positions they occupy in life (Alveermann, Commeyras, Young, Randall, & Hinson, 1977).

The social context: refers to different settings where discourse takes place; it could be marketplace, workplace, office, family gathering. Each discourse has a determined set of rights and obligations (Huckin, 1997).

Genre: different types of text, including journal article, media piece, government policy paper, public speech, manual, textbook, conference paper.

Order of discourse: a network of different genres and discourse styles (Fairclough, 1992).

3.2. Introduction

In the previous two chapters the review of the literature demonstrated that to achieve the aims of my research I should apply the tenets of the social constructionist approach. An important aim of my research is to find research tools that will allow me to study gender, language and identity as elements of a process and not as fixed variables or an explanation of whatever is happening in the interaction process. The social constructionist view assumes that elements of the interaction process such as gendered behaviors, identity and power relations form an accomplishment that fluctuates according to the participants' interactional goals. It is also assumed that talk is situated and constructed according to the goals and aims of the participants in the conversation.

Discourse analysis is a term used as an umbrella for a growing field of research that covers different theoretical approaches and analytical emphases. What these approaches share is a social constructionist epistemology that implies that language is not only a mirror of the world and phenomena but also a continuous construction of ideas, social processes and phenomena that make up the world. The approaches that I am going to discuss in the chapter focus on the local and global context of discourse, and they focus on the discourse as a social practice and on how discourse users resist or use social and political stands (van Dijk, 1997). Within the discourse analysis approaches, critical discourse analysis focuses on how power relations and structures of inequality are reproduced or resisted in a discourse (Fairclough, 1992). Another stream of discourse analysis comprises descriptive studies that explore the discursive process of social construction, and this stream includes discursive psychology (Potter, 1997). Unlike CDA, discursive psychology focuses on talk as an interaction in a particular setting, where participants take up different positions to achieve their interactional goals, identify themselves or reject being identified as part of a particular group, or they pursue specific interests and stakes to achieve personal and institutional goals.

The chapter discusses the meaning of discourse from different epistemological standpoints and then provides a brief discussion of discourse analysis. Finally, the chapter offers a detailed discussion of critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology, their meaning, applications and why they are important to analysis of my data.

3.3. Discourse analysis

The main objective of this research is to understand the extent to which the cultural conceptions of how men and women should communicate are either reproduced or resisted in any given interaction and also to understand why this would happen in the specific interactional context that is the focus of my study. Therefore, I needed a research method that would allow me to examine how the cultural conceptions of male and female communication are reproduced or resisted in a given interactional context and also how the interactional context influences the way these conceptions are reproduced or resisted. I also needed a research method that would allow me to understand the relationship between the use of text and social practice.

Having decided to use discourse analysis, I will now describe this approach in detail, and will then explain fully how I will conduct the analysis.

3.4. Methods of discourse analysis

Dick (2004, p. 203) defined Discourse Analysis (DA) as 'a method that examines how individuals use language to produce explanations of themselves, their relationships and the world in general'. According to this definition, discourse analysis is a method that considers language as one of the key elements in constructing identity. This echoes Potter and Wetherell's (1995) definition of discourses as the building blocks of our realities.

DA examines the nature of social action by focusing on how actions and meaning are constructed through text and talk (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). DA researchers try to provide an understanding of how text and talk are organized in a way that demonstrates how social

life and institutional practices are reproduced and accomplished; for example, how people make sense of their individual and collective identities through the use of "us" and "them " in text or talk. Also, DA researchers may focus on the historical features of discursive formation, for example, how specific institutions such as universities have developed meaning making through time (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). Generally, DA researchers do not study topics such as attitude, emotions, institutional practices, and identity as abstract or separate from the interaction process. Instead, they approach these phenomena by analyzing how they are talked about and in relation to their social and interactional functions (Nikander, 2006).

The early studies that focused on discourse were trying to understand how talk was constructed in itself (Fairclough, 1992). Therefore, they focused on how people present arguments, make excuses or create turn-taking rules. However, my research topic would require discourse analysis to focus on specific interactions as well as the broader context. Fairclough framework (1992) is applicable to this research because it is multidisciplinary in nature and focuses in depth on social problems and political issues rather than current situations or paradigms. Most importantly, CDA focuses on how discourses structures are enacted and how they legitimate, reproduce or mitigate relations of power and dominance in society (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Detailed explanation of Fairclough's CDA approach is provided below.

3.5. Definition of Discourse:

Fairclough (1992) defined discourse more narrowly than did social scientists by referring to language use, written or spoken. His focus was upon language use as a form of social practice rather than an individual activity, as asserted by de Saussure (1959), or a reflection of situational variables, as asserted by Downes (1984). This definition of discourse has two implications; first, discourse has a mode of action whereby people act upon the world and

upon each other. Second, it implies that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure wherein discourse is shaped and controlled by social structure; for example, at the societal level it is shaped by social relations and class and by relations specific to a particular institution, such as laws, norms, education, discursive and non-discursive practices. Therefore, discourse comprises different dimensions of social structures such as organizations, groups, gender, race, etc. that consequently shape and constrain its norms, conventions, social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people and institutions that lie behind it. Similarly, discourse has constructive effects on the world of meaning. Three aspects can be described here; first, discourse can contribute to social identities and types of self (Weedon, 1987). Second, it helps in constructing social relationships among people, and thirdly, it constructs systems of knowledge and beliefs.

Fairclough CDA framework assumes a dialectic relationship between discourse and social structures and this implies that discourse as well as being determined by social structures also has an effect on social structures and contributes to the achievement of social continuity and change (Fairclough, 1989, p.37).

3.6. Critical Discourse Analysis

The critical discourse analysis framework devised by Fairclough (1992) argues that different settings bring about different discursive practices. Therefore, a formal meeting will bring about totally different discursive practices from an informal one. Fairclough's argument also states that whenever there is a particular setting there will be rules governing production, consumption and distribution of the talk; for example, who gets to say what, who is the intended audience, who is allowed to reply.

Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analysis research that explores how social power and dominance are reproduced or resisted by text and talk in the social and political

context (Van Dijk, 1998). The main aim of CDA is to identify the structures, strategies, properties of text and talk, and communicative events that play a role in dominance reproduction. Dominance in CDA is defined as the exercise of power by elite, institution or groups that leads to social inequality such as race, political or gender inequality (van Dijk, 1993). This is relevant to my research because I am aiming to analyze interaction between male and female employees and within the interaction forms of dominance (such as initiating topics, topic control and controlling question and answer cycles) might take place. The use of CDA will allow me to demonstrate whether any such exercise of dominance is related to gender or any other social category. In CDA the exercise of dominance is examined by systematic examination of the textual and contextual properties. For example, Van Dijk (1984) analyzed various properties of context such as setting, participants and access patterns and then he examined the properties of text such as topics, style and meanings. He subsequently focused on properties of text and context that exhibit the discursive properties of the exercise of dominance.

The main theoretical goal of critical discourse analysis approach is to bridge the gap between micro and macro levels of social order (Alexander, et al., 1987). Language use, discourse, communication and verbal interaction belong to the micro level, while power, dominance, inequality between social groups belong to the macro level of social order. As I am interested in studying the interaction process between Omani male and female employees and seeing if the cultural conceptions of gender are resisted or reproduced in the workplace at the micro level of language use, discourse is a useful level of analysis at which to address my research concerns about the interaction process among the employees. The macro level of CDA will provide answers to what is happening during the interaction and whether the gender conceptions are reproduced or resisted; more specifically the macro level will

highlight the aspects of Omani culture that are produced or resisted within the interaction process among the employees.

CDA as an approach has been applied both to specialized studies, focusing on linguistics issues and social practices, and studies dealing with discourse and power in more general terms. The specialized studies deal with at least one dimension of the relationship between discourse and power; for example, some studies have analyzed the ways in which power and domination is expressed and reproduced by text and talk in areas of gender, race and other social domains (van Dijk, 1998).

The main objective of this framework is to provide a research tool that combines linguistically oriented discourse analysis with relevant social and political aspects to explain and explore social scientific research and specifically social change (Fairclough, 1992). Using this approach will allow me to define the rules that govern the interaction between the manager and his employees in the meeting; it will also allow me to identify whether the cultural conceptions about communication between men and women are reproduced or resisted.

Critical discourse analysts reject the possibility of a value free science and argue that it is part of and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction. Therefore, the explicit awareness of their role in the society is central for critical discourse analysts (van Dijk, 1998). Critical discourse analysts recognize the importance of the relationship between scholarship and society, and they advise that such relations should be studied in their own right and that scholarly practices should be built on such insights (van Dijk, 1998).

Another important aspect of the critical discourse analysis approach is that it relies on the socio-political stance of the analysts, as they explain their perspectives and point of views within their discipline and within the context of the wider society (van Dijk, 1993).

Because CDA offers no specific direction for research, there is no single theoretical framework (van Dijk, 1998). There are different types of CDA analysis that have different theoretical and analytical concepts. For example, the critical analysis of conversation varies from critical analysis of new reports. Yet, based on the general aims of CDA approach, they all ask questions about the ways specific discourse structures are used in the reproduction of social dominance.

Norman Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 1995) framework focuses on various dimensions of power and emphasizes that language is socially constitutive in that it constitutes social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge.   What makes Fairclough's framework comprehensive and highly applicable to CDA research is that it not only focuses on text, specific interactions or discursive practice, but on broader concepts such as "order of discourse", as will be explained in more detail later in this chapter.

3.7. Review of the framework:

The three-dimensional conception of discourse has three analytical traditions that are indispensable for discourse analysis. These traditions are linguistic analysis, which focuses mainly on linguistics, macro sociological analysis, which focuses on social practice in relation to social structure, and micro sociological analysis, which perceives social practice as something people produce and reproduce in light of shared common-sense procedures. These three lenses of discourse analysis are explained in more detail below. Figure 1 below illustrates the three-dimensional conception of discourse.
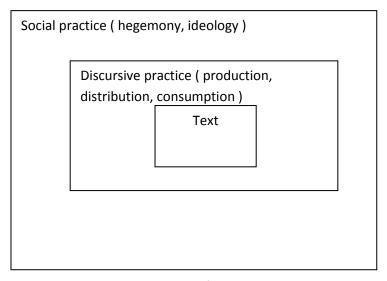
```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Social practice ( hegemony, ideology )                │
│                                                       │
│   ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐        │
│   │ Discursive practice ( production,         │        │
│   │ distribution, consumption )               │        │
│   │         ┌─────────────────────┐           │        │
│   │         │       Text          │           │        │
│   │         │                     │           │        │
│   │         └─────────────────────┘           │        │
│   └─────────────────────────────────────────┘        │
│                                                       │
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Figure 1. The Three Dimensional Conception of Discourse.

Fairclough's (1992) framework can be divided into two levels of analysis: text analysis and discursive structure analysis. The text analysis deals mainly with language forms and meaning; when analyzing text, questions of form and questions of meaning are always addressed. Therefore, the framework for text analysis is oriented towards language forms and meanings. As described by Fairclough (1992), it is the analysis of signs, which relates to words or sentences that carry meaning. The critical discourse analysis assumes that signs are socially motivated; for example, there are social reasons for combining a particular meaning with a particular word. For example, "terrorist" and "freedom fighter" are two different words that have different meanings and the difference between them is a socially motivated one.

Text analysis consists of four elements: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure. In addition, Fairclough (1992) added another three elements that will be used to analyze the discursive practice of the text: force, coherence and intertextuality. These seven headings or elements work together to analyze production, interpretation and formal properties of text, each of which is now explained in more detail.

3.7.1. Grammar:

The main focus in this element is the clause or 'simple sentence'. Every clause can imply multiple functions: ideational, interpersonal, identity, relational and textual meanings. Therefore, when people construct their text they choose clauses that signify their social identities, relationships and beliefs. For example, some newspaper headlines present the topic of the headline in the present tense and this implies that the topic or the agent is relevant and important to the reader. In contrast, if the passive clause or tense is used then this implies that the agent or the subject is unknown or already known but judged irrelevant. An example was provided by Fairclough (1992) in the headline "Gorbachev Rolls Back the Red Army". In this case the agent is "Gorbachev" and the present tense clause is about him and what he is doing. However, if the headline read as "The Red Army was Rolled Back", the deletion of the agent would imply the irrelevance of the headline.

3.7.2. Vocabulary:

The focus in this element is upon alternative wordings and their political and ideational relevance to different issues, such as how certain domains become more extensively worded than others and certain domains may be reworded according to specific political or social struggles. An example can be seen in the way different government offices introduced the event of the "sinking of the Choenan ship". China used a neutral tune by describing the event as "unfortunate" whereas the White House described it as an "act of aggression". However, the North Korean government, in denying responsibility, called it a "fabrication" (Faulkner, 2010)

The second focus of this element is metaphors and the conflict between their meanings.

3.7.3. Cohesion:

This implies how clauses are linked together into sentences and how these sentences are linked to form a text. Linkage is performed in different ways; first, through using vocabulary from a common semantic field, through repeating words, and use of synonyms. Second,

linkage is achieved through using conjunctive words such as therefore, however, and. Foucault described the cohesion process in discourse analysis as "*various rhetorical schemata according to which groups of statements may be combined, how descriptions, deductions, definitions, whose succession characterizes the architecture of a text, are linked together*"(Foucault, 1972:57). As these schemata vary according to discourse type, discourse analysis explores such variations and the different modes of rationality. For example, one form of cohesion is personal reference when referring to a person, organization or even government. This personal reference replaces use of the full name or professional position of a person or a group, for example, when the North Korean Government is referred to as Pyongyang (Faulkner, 2010)**.**

3.7.4. Text structure
Text structure is the final element of the textual analysis and it deals with the overall structure of the text to be analyzed, focusing on how different types of texts combine together within one text (Fairclough, 1992).

3.8. Discursive analysis:

This element of Fairclough's framework is intended to link the Social Practice with the Textual Practice and uses three additional sub-headings: *force of utterances, text coherence and intertextuality* (1992: 75).

3.8.1. Force of utterance
The **force of utterance** of a text is its actional component: the speech actions that are being performed (persuade, give order, motivate, etc.). In terms of force, it is argued that parts of the text will be ambivalent, because they may have much 'force potential'. Therefore, in order for the interpreter to reduce this ambivalence, the sequential position of a text in a specific context should be pinpointed. The effect of sequential context depends upon the

discourse type. For example, in classroom discourse, questions strongly predict answers, whereas in conversational discourse among family members, questions may be unanswered. Therefore, this emphasizes the importance of investigating the interpretative principles that are used to provide meaning for the political and ideological aspects of discourse type.

3.8.2. Text Coherence

This is the second important aspect of text interpretation. A coherent text is a text whose constituent parts, such as sentences and episodes, are related, so the text as a whole makes sense (Fairclough, 1992). The text 'makes sense' when the interpreter uses the same logic as the text producer.

3.8.3 Intertextuality

Fairclough defined this as the interrelationship of discursive features in a text (1992, 117). He distinguished between two types of intertextuality: manifest intertextuality and constitutive intertextuality. Manifest intertextuality comprises intertextual elements such as presupposition, negation and irony while constitutive intertextuality or interdiscursivity is the interrelationship between discursive features of the text such as genre, form and structure (Fairclough, 1992).

This involves processes of text production distribution and consumption; the nature of these processes differs according to the type of discourse and its social factors. For example, text production of a newspaper article may go through a complex routine process undertaken by team members who have different rules according to the stage of production. The consumption process of a text also varies according to the social context because it depends on the intensity of the interpretative work, which might involve close scrutiny or semi-focused attention. Consumption and production processes may be individual or collective, for example, love letters or administrative work. The distribution process for a text might be simple or complex, depending mainly on the producers of the text, for example, text

produced by political leaders is distributed across a range of different institutional domains, which each has its own patterns of consumption. Text production involves 'socio-cognitive' dimensions, which interplay between resources that discourse participants bring with them to the text processing and the text itself. These processes are performed automatically in a non-conscious way.

The above mentioned aspects of text production help in narrowing down the potential ambivalence of a text, e.g. the interpreter may provide interpretation of a social practice of which the discourse is part, and this interpretation may help to provide predictions about meanings of the text by excluding some possible meanings. However, the reduction of ambivalence occurs in every discourse. Therefore, to provide further explanation of reduction of ambivalence, Fairclough introduced the concepts of 'force' and 'coherence'.

3.9. Social practice analysis:
Social practice analysis deals with the macro-level analysis which attempts to analyze text from a social practice viewpoint.

Fairclough constructed his approach to CDA on the basis of this dimension (Fairclough, 1989). Sociolinguistic studies paid attention to the way in which power is exercised in the conversation, focusing on describing the process of power distribution in terms of sociolinguistic conventions (Ahmadvand, 2008). How the relations of power are shaped and the struggles to shape these relations were not explained by sociolinguistics but Fairclough's framework provided that explanation. His framework explained that relationships between discursive practices, text and wider social and cultural processes are factors in securing power and hegemony through focusing on power imbalance, social inequities and nondemocratic practices (Fairclough, 1992). It also demonstrated the ways in which dominant forces in society create versions of reality that meet their interests (van Dijk, 2003)

Fairclough uses a Gramscian approach to power and hegemony; he mainly focuses on the discursive practices as social struggles over hegemony and over order of discourse. The relation of discourse to ideology and hegemony is the main idea of social practice. A moment of ideological consent can occur when interpreters succeed in making sense of a discursive event (Fairclough, 1992). The ideologies that are embedded in discursive practices are effective only when they become naturalized and achieve the status of common sense. Ideology is defined as a set of socially shared beliefs between a group, these beliefs are acquired, changed in social situations and according to the interests of group members (van Dijk,1998) Ideology is located in two locations: first, in the structures constituted from past events and the conditions relating to current events. Second, it is located in the events themselves as they reproduce and transform their conditioning structures.

Not all discourses are ideological, since ideologies occur in societies that are also characterized by relations of domination based on different aspects, for example, gender, class and cultural categories.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony combines interest in the political economy of welfare practices and cultural and social dimension of social change (Marston**,** 2004   ). Hegemony is defined as leadership or domination of political, cultural and social aspects of a society (Fairclough, 1992).   Hegemonic struggle involves the power processes in which the discourse operates. It concerns the power that can be achieved by constructing alliances through consent so that "the *articulation and re-articulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle*" (Fairclough, 1992, 92).

Hegemonic change can be witnessed in discursive change. In other words, the way in which discourse can be represented and re-spoken can generate a new order of discourse that entails

a struggle over the normative resistance of power regimes. Fairclough (1992) identified hegemonic processes such as democratization, commodification and technologization.

I also needed a research tool that would help me to explain which discourses might be permissible in the context being studied. Fairclough's (1992) Critical Discourse Analysis approach argues that different settings bring about different discursive practices. Therefore, a formal meeting will bring about totally different discursive practices than an informal one. His argument also claims that whenever there is a particular setting there will be rules governing production, consumption and distribution of the text, for example, who gets to say what, who is the intended audience, and who is allowed to reply. The main objective of the CDA framework is to provide a research tool that combines linguistically oriented discourse analysis with relevant social and political aspects to explain and explore social scientific research and specifically social change (Fairclough, 1992).

Although CDA as a framework has been respected and applied by many researchers it has some pitfalls that I need to outline here. CDA treats discourse as a vessel where particular interests, standpoints, and voices are reproduced or resisted. Therefore, gender, power, interests and voices are explained as explanatory forces from the CDA point of view, and they are treated and viewed as separate from discursive construction. This view of CDA creates a boundary if the researcher wants to study how gender, voice, and power relations are discursively constructed. Second, CDA does not provide detailed information about the talk in interaction in a local context. This process of talk in interaction would be better approached using the **discursive psychology** approach which will be explained next.

3.10. Discursive psychology

3.10.1. What is discursive psychology?

Discursive psychology studies how psychology is constructed, understood, displayed in people's interaction in everyday and institutional situations (Wiggins and Potter, 2008). DP starts with the categories and constructions which individuals display in a specific interaction in a particular setting (Wiggins and Potter, 2008) .

The discursive psychology (DP) is a discourse analysis approach that is concerned with analyzing the talk in interactions (Fitch and Sanders, 2005). In DP, discourse is considered to include talk and text of any kind, with more emphasis on the naturally occurring talk that people use in their everyday life and when conducting their business (Potter, 1997).

DP offers a re-specification of basic psychological notions (Edwards and Potter, 2005). Re-specification means relocating the topics that were described as psychological topics in previous studies to discourse practices (Edwards and Potter, 2005). Therefore, instead of viewing people as carrying thoughts, attitudes, etc. that they produce on cue, DP views people as the formulators of the nature of events and actions through the way they talk (Edwards and Potter, 2005). The way of talking is perceived as constructive in the sense that words are chosen to bring a particular version of reality and it is also perceived as action-oriented in the sense that people negotiate to achieve interpersonal objectives in their conversation, for example, blaming, justifying and complimenting, etc. are means that people use to accomplish social actions (Whittle and Muller, 2011).

An example of re-specification of the notion of attitudes can be used to illustrate the problems of the traditional work features. Potter and Wetherell (1987) highlighted two problems; first, the problem of variability when the same speaker offers different evaluations of the same event in different contexts. This variability created problems for traditional

attitude researchers who perceived attitudes as inner dispositions. However, this variability created a new understanding for discourse researchers because it allowed them to identify the different activities that are involved with evaluating an attitude (Wiggins and Potter, 2008).

Unlike the cognitivist traditions that treat mental states as a cause for what is being said, the DP approach analyzes how direct and indirect appeals to mental states influence the interaction. For example, DP focuses on the interactional business performed within the process of complaining, complimenting or accusing (Edward and Potter, 2005).

DP also focuses on the activity sequence of talk, with the analysis not only based on single sentences but on a sequence of talk and series of turns (Edwards and Potter, 1992). The emphasis on turns and sequences rather than a single sentence has theoretical and methodological implications for discursive psychology. This is because people use the turn by turn development to enhance their understanding of the social activities and to make sense of what is going on, which allows the analysts to "proof procedure" the analysis (Edwards and potter, 2005). Another emphasis with theoretical and methodological implications for DP is that people talk rhetorically so they deny, resist or accept what is being said, and this allows the analyst to make sense of the action performed. Therefore, what forms the basis for discursive psychology is sequential and rhetorical analysis focused on people psychology.

3.10.2. Methodological implications of discursive psychology

The central topic in discursive psychology is discourse involving talk or text and its focus is on the importance of the social and relational nature of human life. Second, it is interested in the personal aspects of psychological phenomena, for example, feelings, ways of thinking, attitudes and how social life is organized institutionally.

In addition, the research focus is more about what people do in the social setting. Discursive psychology is distinct from other psychology research because it avoids and rejects using open ended or ethnographic interviews or questionnaires as a source for data. Instead it uses materials such as video or audio recordings of people's interaction in particular locations. The subsequent transcription of the materials tries to capture features of the interaction such as overlap, intonation, repetition, stress and any other feature that is relevant to the topic researched. DP is not concerned with individual lexical items such as laughter, sighing or crying.

The analysis focuses on standard patterns or exceptional features of talk that are used to develop understanding about the topic researched. Understanding of participants in the interaction is important for discursive psychology researchers as it helps to develop a picture of the participants' understandings and perception about the topic being researched.

Conclusion

The critical discourse analysts go beyond immediate issues of the day because their understanding presupposes more general insights and long term analysis of the issue and because it requires long term and sometimes indirect analysis of the causes, conditions and consequences of these issues (van Dijk, 1993). As I have been part of the organization that I am analyzing, having worked there as a research assistant and a lecturer for about four years, my understanding of the culture of the organization and of the forms of power structures and the practices of dominance means I have considerable insight into the context being researched. However, there is also a counter argument that the fact that I am an "insider" makes me as blind to the norms and values as everyone else in a given culture. However, as I have since spent more than four years in the very different social context of the UK I feel I am ideally situated to undertake this research.

Alongside Fairclough's CDA, I needed a technique that would allow me to pay attention to the flow of a narrative in an interactional context and discursive psychology provides a research tool for analysis of the talk in interaction and explains how social categories are negotiated, resisted or reproduced. Whilst DP provides a tool for analyzing how power relations and social categories are negotiated, its real value lies in examining the role of discourse in reproducing and challenging power relations, such as gender inequality (Wetherell et al., 1987). Hence DP enables the analyst to explain how the participants work within and around the available discourse in a flexible and creative way to accomplish practical actions. For example, Whittle and Mueller's study (2011) demonstrated how the participants deviated from one discourse to another to appeal to the recipients' self-interest.

In conclusion, I am utilizing DP to analyze my data because it will allow me to make detailed analysis of the micro mechanisms of production and reproduction of power through the actual operations of the discourse (Whittle and Mueller, 2011). As I am analyzing talk between a manager and male and female employees, DP will allow me to analyze how power is practised among the participants, how they negotiate their interests and how they defend their social positions within the interaction. This detailed analysis of the meeting and the sequence of talk and turns will demonstrate how the participants deny, resist or accept what is being said.

However, because the focus in DP is only on the local interaction and what the talk does in that specific context the broader context is overlooked (Whittle and Mueller, 2011). Speer's (1999) main argument was that DP analysts restrict themselves to the orientation, meaning, understanding, etc. of the participants and they do not read people's discourse through socio-political concepts. For this reason I decided to combine Fairclough's CDA with the DP of Wetherell and Potter (1987) in order to devise a comprehensive analytical framework.

In the next chapter I will provide an explanation of how CDA and DP are to be utilized in analysis of my data.

Chapter 4: Methodology chapter

Developing an appropriate methodology for understanding the communication process between men and women in the Omani work context.

4.1. Introduction

In chapters One and Two I argued that the previous research into communication and gender has been methodologically flawed in two key respects. First, it ignored the influence of the interactional context. Second, it used gender and other social categories as an explanation for whatever is happening in the interaction process, so gender is always salient in these studies. Therefore, I was interested to address these flaws. I wanted to explore how gender behaviors are practiced or may be resisted in a workplace context.

The social constructionist approach suggests, fundamentally, that there are multiple and sometimes conflicting cultural conceptions (discourses) of what it means to be a man or a woman. In talk, men and women will draw on these accounts to construct a particular identity -

the key in social constructionism is to understand how the social context motivates these constructions. In this research, there are cultural conceptions (discourses) about how men and women should communicate, and my research aim is to understand to what extent these conceptions are either reproduced or resisted in any given interaction and why this would happen - i.e. what it is about the interaction that produces the discursive practice that is observed.

In the previous chapter I explained that the best two methods to answer my research question are critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology and I provided a description of these methods and my reasons for using them to answer my research questions. In this chapter I will explain in detail how these two methods are to be used to analyze my data.

4.2. Research setting,

Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) was the first public university in Oman and was established in 1986. It consists of nine colleges and the College of Commerce and Economics is where this research took place. The meeting was videotaped in the information centre, which houses a specialized business and economics library, the college textbook area and technical and audio-visual service areas. Its main objectives are to provide reference resources and supplementary materials to faculty members and students, liaise with libraries worldwide, and supply students with textbooks.

Present at this meeting were the manager of the information centre, two employees from the information technology division and six from the library and textbook division. Only two of the participants were female. The employees at the information centre had been reporting their problem of extra workload to the dean's office for eight years. The problem lies in the fact that there are no specific employees to undertake the task of textbook distribution; this task has to be performed by the librarians. However, the librarians complain that textbook distribution is not part of their job and it is not listed in their job description. It is important to mention that at the beginning of each academic semester, they are required to distribute books to the first, second, third, final year and postgraduate students. This process takes about two weeks and requires the employees to go through the timetable for every student, list all the required books and then provide them to the student from the textbook division. The textbooks are given free of charge to all registered students to use within the semester timeline (approximately 4 months) and then the students have to return all the textbooks to the division, where they must be registered in the library database by the employees.

The dean's office responded to the information centre employees' concerns by hiring two employees in 2007, but this solution was not satisfactory as the number of students enrolling

in this college has increased rapidly in recent years: from 122 students in 1993 to 1,081 in 2007, and as a result the pressure on the textbook distribution division has increased.

This meeting, which lasted for 56 minutes, was held in September 2008 in the meeting room in the information centre and was videotaped. In this meeting the information centre employees again reported this problem to their manager and urged him to send a formal proposal to the dean's office of the need to open a new department called the "text book distribution department", to be staffed by specialist employees whose main job duties would be to perform the textbook distribution tasks.

4.3. Research participants

4.3.1. Description of the Sample

Participant	Age	Educational level	Years spent in this job	Job title
Manager	44	PhD degree	6 months	Manager of the library and book distribution department
Male 1	33	Postgraduate level	4 years	IT specialist
Male 2	28	University degree	2 years	Librarian

Male 3	34	University degree	9 years	Librarian
Male 4	36	University degree	13 years	Librarian
Male 5	34	University degree	9 years	Librarian
Male 6	27	University degree	1 year	Librarian
Female 1	37	University degree	9 years	Librarian
Female 2	33	University degree	4 years	Librarian

Table 1. Description of the sample.

4.4. How is the CDA analysis conducted?

Most discourse analysts would assert that immersion in the data and familiarization with what is said is essential for effective discourse analysis (Marsh, 2005). For me this meant watching the videotaped meeting and reading the transcript again and again. Because the meeting was in Arabic language, the process of transcribing and then translating the transcripts to English took 3 weeks.

In sum, the process of analyzing the text using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach involved the following steps:

4.4.1. Stage 1

1. Transcribed the videotaped meeting: the meeting was in Arabic language, the process of transcribing the Arabic language text took a while. Then, I translated the Arabic text in to English language, I was not careful about literal translation as much as keeping the intended meaning by the participants, being from the same culture and using the same dialects that the participants are using allowed me to deliver almost the same meaning that they meant to express. Overall the typed transcript filled about 12 pages.

2. Familiarized myself with the data by reading the transcripts again and again.

4.4.2. Stage 2

I then categorized the excerpts according to two groups: the manager excerpts and the librarians' excerpts. The method I adopted for analyzing the transcripts was based on procedures used chiefly by Mama (1995) and Potter and Wetherell (1995), called 'coding' or 'data sampling'. This involves repeated close reading of the transcripts for the identification of particular themes or discourses that were being used.

4.4.3. Stage 3

Looked for regular patterns in the manager's excerpts and the employees' excerpts, for example, in the manager's excerpts, referral to rules, direct talk, assertiveness were the most obvious characteristics of his talk. This involved a close examination of the vocabulary used when talking about a specific issue. For example, in the manager's excerpts he used some specific vocabulary that I used to define the discourse he was using; these words were regulations, rules, administration, proposal, lower level, higher level, accepted, rejected, follow plans, etc. Similarly, the employees' excerpts were characterized by excessive use of

challenging and resisting terms. For example, we cannot accept this, you need to change, we are tired, do something, stressful situation, etc.

4.4.4. Stage 4

After I had looked for a regular pattern in each category, I then labelled each discourse according to the most relevant label to describe the discourse. For example, the manager excerpts seemed to fall within the bureaucracy domain wherein his excerpts represented this organization's bureaucratic system so I named his discourse the bureaucratic discourse. On the other hand, the employees seemed to resists and challenge whatever was in the manager' bureaucratic discourse so I labelled their discourse as the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse.

4.4.5. Stage 5

Identified who utilized each discourse and attempted to discover whether there was a regular pattern of usage in terms of gender, age, occupation. In order to examine who utilized these discourses, I scanned the data for direct and indirect mention of the excerpts that fell within a specific discourse.

4.4.6. Stage 6

After identifying and labelling the discourse, I analyzed how the participants utilized the discourse; I considered the ways in which the participants referred to the discourse and whether they were trying to construct a reality about themselves or about the situation

4.4.7. Stage 7

Finally, I attempted to identify why the participants utilized the discourse. Answering this question required a subjective and speculative reading of each text and also a broader look at the social context to understand why a specific participant, for example the manager, chose to utilize a specific discourse. At this point the biographical data about each participant came in most useful.

My background as a university teacher in this particular university, and my familiarity with this workplace environment and culture, allowed me to reflect meaningfully on the culture and people to gain understanding of what was going on in terms of participants' tendency to utilize specific discourses and what they were trying to achieve through such utilization. However, there is a counter argument that because I am an insider I am as blind to the norms and values as everyone else in a given culture. But as I have since spent four years in the very different social context of the UK I feel I am ideally situated to undertake this research.

4.5. Discursive psychology

In chapter 3 I explained the necessity of using discursive psychology alongside critical discourse analysis to analyze my data, and the most important reason is that using DP principles will allow me to analyze the micro mechanisms of production and reproduction of power in talk.

Researchers who have utilized discursive psychology analysis have asserted that there are no hard and fast rules for discourse research; however, its main focus is in interaction as situated and orderly (Wiggins and Potter, 2008). The following section provides a general outline on conducting discursive psychology research; besides listing precisely the steps and rules that the researcher should follow it also describes the general steps that researchers should take before becoming deeply involved in the analysis.

The first step is to **devise research questions.** Usually a research question starts with a particular interest in a form of interaction such as telephone calls, conversation at a meal time, and the process and practices involved in this particular setting. For example, one researcher might be interested in how the nature of food is constructed through activities such as offers and compliments through an interaction during a meal time, and this leads to

possible interpretations of the interaction being tested through repeated examination of the data (Wiggins and Potter, 2008). Then, the researcher would refine their research interest to consider the use of evaluation through the meal time, the different forms of evaluation and the actions involved with this process. This example of research utilizing the discursive psychology approach implies that usually researchers in this field start with an interest in a particular kind of interaction in a specific setting and focus on a topic that is discussed in this interaction; then the research questions and interest can be refined to focus on narrower aspects on that research topic. In my research, my general research question is to what extent gender behaviors are shaped and constrained by the situation and the context, the setting for the analysis is an interaction between male and female librarians discussing work related issues in a regular staff meeting. Through repeated examination of the data my research interest was refined to focus on gendered behaviors in talk as used in this meeting. What are the different gendered forms that are practised in a workplace setting? Is gender always salient in workplace settings? If it is not, what is salient and why? Further analysis of the data could potentially give rise to more ideas.

The second step is to **gain access and consent**. Once the research question is set and defined, gaining access to data sources and getting ethical approval to record the data is the next step (Edwards and Potter, 2005). This can be achieved through social networks or a contact person who can provide links to the needed data source. In my case, I knew the manager of the library department in the College of Commerce and Economics in Oman, and he provided me with the dates on which the staff in the library department were conducting their regular staff meeting. After I fitted the most suitable date into my schedule, I presented an official letter stating my research question and aims and my research requirement to videotape a regular staff meeting. I also presented a supporting letter from my supervisor

which explained my research need to videotape interaction in a meeting and provided assurance that the information from this meeting would be confidential. In the UK ethical permission has to be obtained from all the participants in a recording, hence my research ethical form was signed by the manager and all the participants in the meeting.

The third step is **data collection and building a corpus**. In DP research it is important to have a clear recording of the interaction (Wiggins and Potter, 2008). I used a digital video camera with the capacity to provide high quality video of several hours of conversation. Moreover, the digital information recorded using this type of camera can be transformed to a PC easily. Managing the data is also an easy process as parts of conversation that need further analysis can be rerun and the speed of delivery of the data can be controlled as required. For example, parts where the participants are talking at high speed or where their talk overlaps can be slowed down. DP can be conducted on a small section of talk or text but it requires a close examination of similar instances (Wiggins and Potter, 2008) and this process is called building a corpus. The corpus building can be implemented through recording data repeatedly in a specific setting, depending mainly on the research interest and whether a particular location or setting is important to the research interest. For my research, the workplace was the setting of interest and so to build a corpus I videotaped this regular staff meeting which lasted for 56 minutes.

The fourth step is **transcription**; the same process of transcription that I followed in CDA was used here, except I was careful to use a transcription system suitable for DP, namely a system that focused on the features of talk that had been shown by studies of interaction to be relevant to the participants, such as emphasis, overlap, pause, and repetition. A large body of research has proved that these features of talk are fundamental when conducting discursive

psychology research or conversational analysis research in general (Wiggins and Potter, 2008)

The fifth step is **coding;** this step of DP analysis requires repeated listening to the recording and repeated reading of the transcript (Edwards and Potter, 2003). The coding stage is described as a precursor to the analysis and it involves shifting through the large amount of data and looking for instances of a phenomenon. Also, as the analysis continues the coding may need to be repeated as the researcher may find different instances of a phenomenon that were not included at the first time of coding. Hepburn and Potter (2004) noted that through the coding process analytical issues may develop or vanish. For example, in a study of explicitly food related talk, the researchers started to focus on two evaluative materials: 'nice' and 'like', but when they began the analysis they noticed the use of 'mmm', an alternative expression for assessing food. This led them to search for all the instances of 'mmm' and to incorporate it into their evaluations (Wiggins and Potter, 2008).

As this research focuses on the talk of male and female employees, when I started the coding process I was looking at male employees' talk and female employees' talk with an evaluative eye. I was trying to see how the female employees talk was different from the male employees talk when they were approaching the manager and explaining the problems of work overload, unpaid overtime, and their need for a new employee to help in book distribution tasks. There was no difference between male and female employees in the way they approached the manager when speaking about this problem. Therefore, I tried to look for something different in their talk; I looked at the manager's talk and the employees' talk to assess how they talked about the problem of extra workload and their departmental issues. Through this process many evaluative and analytical issues have developed.

The final step is **analysis;** the analysis stage involves a range of activities to be worked through, but in no specific order. These activities include how discourse is constructed

through different versions of events, how the discourse is situated in the interaction, and how it is connected with actions (Wiggins and Potter, 2008). Edwards and Potter (2003) listed guidelines by which discourse analysts can be seen to be going along the right lines or not.

These guidelines help the Discourse Analyst to avoid the pitfall traditionally associated with DA of "Anything goes". First, the researcher needs to avoid summarizing the data, as although, for example, summarizing themes of what participants might say in the interaction could be a good way to highlight important information, this is not considered discourse analysis. This is because summarizing could result in detail and discursive subtlety of the original data being lost (Edwards & Potter, 2003). A summary might be shorter and tidier but it is presented in the analyst's words, not in those of the original speaker or writer. Also, one of the summary's functions is to present the spoken words in a more consistent and briefer form, so this will distort the implications of the data. Therefore, summarizing the data should be avoided by researchers using discourse analysis.

Second, Edwards and Potter (2003) caution discourse analysts against taking sides when positioning themselves vis-à-vis their data. Taking sides involves showing sympathy and siding with the participants. Analysts could use extensive quotations from the participants' talk to show that they are being discriminated against or victims of some sort of phenomenon. This is not considered analysis as it aligns the reader's view with the participants against the abuser. Taking sides can produce flattening of the discursive complexity as the analyst will only select quotations that appeal to the reader's sympathy.

The third pitfall that discourse analysts should avoid when conducting analysis is that of parading quotes. When analysts list quote after quote and then provide a brief comment about them this is considered as under-analysis because by providing isolated quotations from the

text or over quotation the analyst is separating the text from its discursive context (Edwards and Potter, 2003).   The fourth mistake that discourse analysts should avoid is to unconsciously treat their findings as surveys. Some analysts tend to attribute certain uses of discourse or ways of speaking to certain respondents, and they treat one finding as applicable to all group members in that category (Edwards and Potter, 2003). In short, discourse analysis involves close engagement with the text and talk in an attempt to illuminate their meaning through insightful work.

When conducting DP analysis researchers must try to find features of talk that are used by the participants to describe a phenomenon or the topic of research. Then, they must try to highlight what the participants are trying to construct through the talk in the interaction. The validation of DP is built by both data collection and analysis (Wiggins and Potter, 2008). When the DP analyst provides lengthy analysis of the data as well as the transcribed data, the reader can recognize the coherence and plausibility of the analysis.

How the video data was used:

 When collecting the data for this research, the focus of the research was not finalized and framed. Therefore, it was wise to collect as much data as possible and one of the methods that I used to videotape the meetings that I am going to analyze in my research, because videotaped conversations provide me with verbal and non verbal data.

Although I had videotaped data, which demonstrate the verbal, and non-verbal cues of the participants, I used the verbal data more than the non-verbal data for number of reasons which are; for the purpose of this thesis I only chose to focus on the verbal elements of the talk because I assumed that the nonverbal elements would provide a lot of information that is enough for another PhD thesis, or I will be uploaded with a lot of information .

The second reason why I did not use the non verbal data was because both discursive psychology and Fairclough is focused mainly in the talk and my research focus was on exploring to what extent is gendered behaviors in talk is resisted or reproduced in the Omani context. Therefore, I only need to analyze talk in interaction in those meetings.

Although I used the verbal element of the meeting because of the focus of my research, the non verbal element was also helpful in providing better explanation for some of the utterances. For example, when the manager changed his tone when responding to the female employee's suggestions he also changed his nonverbal behaviors e.g. leaning forward towards the female employees when providing positive feedback to her.

The nonverbal element was also helpful Because I was intending to keep the participants identities in this meeting anonymous so I needed a visual data of who is talking at that moment, when I presented my data in the thesis I used numbers for example male 1, male 2, male 3 and so on

4.6. Conclusion

The description of CDA shows how using this method will allow me to identify the apparent discourses in the meeting and how the participants utilize the discourses, the ways in which the participants refer to the discourses and whether they are trying to construct a reality about themselves or about the situation. Also, CDA will provide the tools to identify why the participants utilized the discourse; answering this question will require a subjective and speculative reading of each text and also a broader look at the social context to understand why a specific participant, for example the manager, chose to utilize a specific discourse.

Similarly, as I am analyzing talk between a manager and male and female employees, DP will allow me to analyze how power is practiced between the participants, how they negotiate their interests and how they defend their social positions within the interaction. It will allow me to provide a detailed analysis of the meeting (local interaction) and how, through the sequence of talk and turns, the participants deny, resist or accept what is being said.

In the next chapter, which is titled the findings chapter, the tenets of CDA will be applied to identifying and labelling the discourses apparent within my data.

Chapter 5 : The Data

5.1. The story of the talk:

This meeting took place in the College of Commerce and Economics at Sultan Qaboos University, the biggest and the most highly reputable university in Oman. The meeting involved the manager of the information systems centre (Library) and the employees. The employees comprised both males and females; some of them joined the department recently (a year ago) and others have been working in this department since it was established 13 years ago. However, this manager has just joined the department, and before becoming the manager of this department he was working in the university administration. During the last 13 years, approximately six managers have occupied this position.

Usually the staff in this department conduct a regular monthly meeting at which they discuss outstanding issues in the department. This meeting was the April 2009 meeting and the first topic in the agenda was the problem of the extra workload the employees have had to deal with for the last few years; the aim of the meeting was to agree on a solution for this problem. The second topic on the agenda was to solve the problem of textbook distribution at peak times. The employees have been complaining about two major issues, first, the textbook distribution duties that the librarians were required to undertake due to a shortage of staff. The librarians believe that the textbook section should be in a separate department from the library or the information systems and they propose that it should be under the dean's office's direct management.

The librarians consider the textbook distribution duties as a major problem for many reasons. First, at the beginning of the academic semester the librarians are responsible for distributing textbooks to 1200 students. The distribution of textbooks to the students is carried out according to their academic year; for example, day one will be for first year

students, day two for second year students and so on. The students are required to bring a printed copy of their timetable on which all of the subjects that they will study during that semester are listed. So the librarians receive all the timetables and they ask students to come back to collect their textbooks later during that day. Then, the librarians prepare the required textbooks for every student and they hand them to the students that afternoon. This process lasts for two weeks, with the librarians having to distribute almost 6,000 textbooks to 1,200 students (average of 5 text books for every student). In this university, each academic year comprises autumn, spring and summer semesters, so the librarians have to go through this process three times a year.

Five or six librarians perform the job of textbook distribution and they complain that this number of librarians is not enough because they are responsible for many other library duties besides textbook distribution, such as bar-coding, book loans, and registering inventories of books. They complain that textbook distribution is not listed in their job description and it should not be part of their job.

However, the bureaucratic procedures of the university administration and the dean's office require that the employees report their problem in written form to their direct manager who then has to approve this proposal and send it to the dean's office for approval. From the dean's office it is sent to the university administration, proceeding upwards through different levels until it reaches the university vice president who could accept or reject this proposal. Therefore, the manager's job is to reflect this bureaucratic process and explain to the employees that it is not an easy process to open a new department for textbook distribution and the problem should be solved using the available resources and utilizing the current number of employees.

This meeting lasted for 56 minutes, during which time the manager and the employees participated equally in the conversation, except for two employees (Male 4 and Male 5) who were the dominant participants in the meeting. The librarians were expressing their discomfort and resentment at the current situation and they were urging the manager to take a further step towards solving the problem they were facing. However, the manager was acting like the representative of the bureaucratic system of this university and he was trying to explain how difficult it would be to change the situation. At the same time he was trying to convince the employees (librarians) to solve the problem within the department and between the librarians themselves. Hence, for the last eight years, although various managers have occupied this position and the librarians have tried to express this problem by presenting different forms of proposals, the situation has never changed.

5.2. The meeting:

The participants in the meeting were told that this research is examining the interaction process in the workplace; they were assured that the identities of the participants would remain anonymous. The manager of this meeting emailed me the agenda of the meeting one day before the meeting and he informed me that all the participants were aware of the videotaping for research purposes.

5.3. How I identified the patterns

I am presenting the meeting here in its entirety because this provides consistency and clarity to the analysis, while also complying with advice on achieving coherent and plausible analysis using discursive psychology (Wiggins and Potter, 2008). Therefore, the meeting is presented as I transcribed it, without subdivision of the data, and the patterns in the manager's and the employees' talk will be highlighted.

First, I familiarized myself with data by repeated reading; then I had to look for general themes or patterns in the talk, for example, what approach the manager was using to convince

the librarians about his point of view and what ways he was using to express the bureaucratic system and the university administration's policy. In the case of the librarians, I have tried to discover whether they were using similar approaches to convince the manager about their proposal or whether they differed. If they were found to be using similar approaches I have analyzed what made their talk follow the same patterns, and if they differed I have tried to analyze the ways in which they differed.

After identifying the patterns in the manager's and the librarians' talk, I looked at all the patterns to try to find a general description for all the similar patterns. These similar patterns create a discourse, and through this talk I managed to identify two discourses. Certainly it might have been possible to extract more discourses from the talk but I chose to identify only two so that each discourse and the reasons why the manager and the librarians were utilizing these discourses could be dealt with in detail. The description of the two discourses will be provided in the following chapter, chapter six.

Next, the data will be presented as it happened in the meeting to keep the coherence and the clarity of the meaning.

The Meeting

Male 5 : Now what Doctor, we spent a lot of time discussing this topic, we are very tired, tell us the bottom line. **Male 4:** honestly, we are very tired.	Emphasize the idea of tiredness as they had dealt with this issue for a long time
Manager: As I told you before and I keep telling you, this situation has existed for a long time, it cannot be changed in one go.	Emphasis that changing the situation takes time.
Male 3: OK doctor, we did nothing regarding this issue..................... **Interrupted by male 5**	Criticizing the manager for not acting.
Male 5: Dr, is this the first time you have heard about this issue? Since you were appointed as a manager me and my colleagues have been asking you to do something about it.	Emphasizing the idea of tiredness and accusing the manager of not acting upon this issue
Manager: I keep telling you, I am not ready and I am not able to send a proposal that I know will be declined from the first attempt. First I have to make sure that the issue will be resolved by applying step by step technique. For example, we ask for one employee and then we ask for another one, eventually a new division will be opened.	Assuming negative outcome when the employees initiated some solutions. Emphasis on step bystep techniques.
Male 5: Dr asking for one employee is .... **Overlap** **Male 3: Dr.... Dr....that means..... that means........................** **Interrupted by male 4** **Male 4: I .... I .... I would like to say something. Dr, you always say I cannot guarantee results, as my colleague (**	Emphasizing the idea of extra workload. Claiming nothing will change in the future unless something is done differently

Female1) suggested that the administration should provide us with employees who will be fully responsible for text books and we librarians should not be involved in this task, I mean text book distribution, this is a good idea. But what will happen is this, they are going to provide us with one employee only who will be responsible for distributing text books to 3,000 male and female students every semester, which is an impossible task to do within only one week, as a result we librarians will have to help him/her, this means that we go back to the starting point and nothing will change as we will have the same extra workload that we are not required to do.	
Manager: oh may god lead you in the right direction, you are rushing for results. **Male 3: Dr I would like to ask you..........** **Interrupted by manager.** **Manager: you have been doing this task (distributing text books) patiently for how long?** **Male 3: years.** **Manager : Ok years, but you are always rushing for results, I told you we are following a plan.**	Suggesting slowing down.
Male 3: OK Dr when are we going to see some changes, we have seen nothing. **Overlap --------------------**	Criticizing the manger's approach by accusing him of doing nothing.
Male 5: it has been 8 months. **Manager: let it be 8 years.**	Suggesting slowing down.
Female 1: but the employees have rights and needs, it has to be	Criticizing the

accomplished, they are very tired, now it's years since this hassle started and no one is listening.	manger's approach by using the employees' needs and feelings as a tool.
Male 4: so Dr... so what Dr ....so what now?	Using sarcasm to criticize the manager's approach. (direct challenge).
Manager: this is one of the needs that we need to fulfill for our employees, decrease the workload but gradually.	Urging the slow down policy.
Male 4: when Dr? Gradually when? After 3 years? **Manager: hopefully it won't be years.** **Male 3: Dr, wait a minute.................** **Interrupted by male 4** **Male 4: Based on our experience...... and what we went through........**	Using sarcasm to criticize the manager's approach. (direct challenge).
Interrupted by manager **Manager: I will give you a hint, this is what is going to happen, we are going to open a new division and we will move some employees to this division, then we can say that we have a shortage of employees in the old division. However, if we apply now for new employees to join this division they are going to say that we have 6 employees and they have been doing all the work for the last 8 years without any problems, so our proposal will be rejected easily.** **Male 4: excuse me DR, I respect your point of view ... But** **Interrupted by Female 1.** **Female1: But Dr .... this is ....** **Interrupted by male 4**	Assuming negative outcome if the employees do not follow the plan

Male 4: we are reaching a dead end point, to avoid rejection of the proposal you should divide us according to our job specifications 2 in indexing section, 2 in the periodicals section, and 2 in the supply section so you have no one in the text book section, Dr you are putting us in an embarrassing situation by saying you have 6 employees in the division, you should divide us into different job specifications (description) like any other library or infor mation centre here in the university, so if you divide the existing employees into specific jobs you will end up with a shortage in the number of employees and your proposal will be approved. **Manager:** we are not talking about job description here, but this is a temporary situation. …………………………………………………………………….	Providing suggestions for the manager using direct language (You should do this, and you have to do that)
Male 4: you.. you...you even if it is a temporary situation it will give the administration an excuse not to approve the proposal and provide more employees. In every library here they divide their employees according to job specification. I don't understand why you are not doing this, for example, if you phone any library and ask for the referencing section they are going to refer me to a specific person who is responsible only for the referencing section and....... **Interrupted by manager**	Criticizing the manager' approach and supporting this criticism with reasons. Challenges again
Manager: I want to ask you a question........... **Male 4 continues what he was saying: and you are telling me 6 employees in one division.** **Manager: I want to ask you a question, how many employees work in one shift?** **Male 3: 4 employees** **Overlap**	

Male 4: 4 employees **Male 6:** 4 in the morning and one in the afternoon. **Manager:** and how many employees take care of distributing text books? **Male3:** distributing text books? 4 in the morning. **Manager:** 3 or 2 **Female1:** sometimes because of workload pressure they ask for help from employees in other departments. **Male 3:** this is true, so many times we asked the college messengers to help us and sometimes we asked the photocopy manager to give us a hand. **Female 1:** yeah workload is .... **Interrupted by male 3** **Male 3:** even sometimes we leave the front desk to help in distributing the text books.	
Manager: listen to me please, I am not ignoring this issue but I do not like to push so hard because I know it will result negatively on us, however, if you want to apply your method by pushing so hard on the college administration go ahead do it yourself and I am not going to be involved in this because I know the opinion of the college board is highly respected by the university administration and we have to convince the college board first. **Male 3:** OK Dr, the new employee who was appointed..................	Expecting negative results if they ask for immediate action. Suggesting employees "do it alone" Following the hierarchy
Interrupted by manager **Manager:** I advise you to take things gently and step by step, do not rush for results, you want to change a situation that has lasted for 8 years in one day, this cannot be done following the university rules unless you have a good network with the dean of the college or nepotism.	Advice to follow the rules. Slowing down again

Female 1: do you remember when the College Board decided to provide us with a new employee to help in the text book section; do you remember exactly when that was? Was it during this semester? **Manager:** almost **Female1:** OK now it has been a long time since they announced this decision, where is this new employee? Why is he not helping the rest of staff here in library? **Manager:** he has a problem with the College Board. **Male 5:** no it's not that, I will tell you why he is not with us now, the college board provided us with a new employee, not because we asked for him but because the college board themselves have a problem regarding this issue, and now they are facing difficulties in implementing the decision	Again wondering why the decision has not been applied.
Manager: we have to keep ourselves away from other people's business, the bottom line is we asked for something and they approved it, their problems are their own business not ours. We have nothing to do with their problem with this new employee. **Male 5:** the new employee is the winner in this issue, he has a new office where he is doing nothing and he gets paid exactly like us and we are doing his work so he has everything. **Male 3:** true, even the longest serving employee, who has worked here for 16 years doesn't have a similar office.... **Male 5;** true.	Demarcation
Female1 : they are saying this is a preliminary solution (to provide us with this new employee) but why has this solution not been applied yet. **Manager:** god willing it will be applied soon. **Female 1:** how soon?	The manager did not provide definite information.
Male3: why is he not working like us? Why is his office located in the college administration and not here in the library?	Did not provide definite information.

Manager: he is going to join you soon. **Male 5: no he is not.** **Manager: he is going to join you soon, his job description is to be responsible for distributing text books and during off peak periods he is going to help you in the library on the ground floor.**	
Male 3: OK, why does he have an office? And we don't? **Manager: because..... a few issues emerged when this employee was appointed.** **Male 3: yeah............... issues!!!!!** **Male 5 : yeah.... yeah...... nepotism.** **Male 3: he applied for it.** **Female 1: strange that some requests get approved so fast.** **Male 4: i would like to tell you Dr that whatever we do is not appreciated and not going to be appreciated in the future, your position as manager is going to change in the near future and a new manager will come and we will have to tell the same story and he or she is going to give the same excuses, for me I have worked here for 13 years and I am able to work for another 20 years and nothing is going to change regarding the workload and the text books section, I developed a medical problem because of this work and my colleague here has the same problem and no one........** **Manager: OK, if this true, bring a medical certificate that proves this.** **Male 4: I do not want to bring anything, its OK for me to work, I do not need to provide a certificate to prove what I am saying.** **Manager: when you applied for this job, did you know what it was exactly?** **Male 4: which job?** **Manager: librarian.** **Male 4: yes I know what it is, but what I am doing here is**	Claiming nothing will change in the future unless something is done differently. Emphasizing the idea of illness. Using the workload problem to challenge the manager's approach. Stating what is required from employees

carrying 5 kg of text books back and forth for 8 hours, this is not the same as sitting in an office and working on a computer. **Male 3:** sometimes during peak hours we have to carry 25 kg of text books back and forth for 3 hours.	
Manager: working in a library is mental and physical work as you know from your job description. **Female 1:** god doesn't push people so hard **Manager:** nobody is asking you to do so. **Male 4:** we have to accept it this way.	Stating what is required from employees
Manager. Every employee should perform specific tasks during the shift time and is paid for that amount of work and time; no one is asking you to do extra work and to work overtime. **Male 4:** nobody said that. **Interrupted by manager.** **Manager :** if you have ... if you have a medical certificate please show it to me and you will be exempted from text book tasks, laugh, ha ha ha, even the rest of you bring me a medical certificate and you all will be exempted, and we will have to ask the cleaners to do the work for you. **Male 5** OK, we can go to any private clinic and act sick and the certificates will be here in no time, if this is going to change the situation.	
Female 1: Dr, why don't you observe their work for one day, try to devote only one day and see what happens and you will understand what they are talking about. **Manager:** laugh, ha ha ha, I am always here and I observe them every day. Ha ha ha, I am not required to observe to understand things. **Female 1:** no, you are not required to observe them, this is only	Providing suggestion. Being reasonable

to understand and to feel the problem they have been dealing with for the last few years. **Male 4: we know this is not an issue to be resolved here but...............** **Interrupted by manager**	Providing suggestions (in a certain way using language not normally used by an employee to a supervisor) and using other departments' experience to support the suggestion.
Male 4: there is a brilliant solution. if you listen to me carefully, the college administration declined our previous proposals because of lack of space for the text book section, why do we not ask them to divide the division here and open a window from outside so students can use it to access the text book section, this way the space problem will be resolved. The second matter is the new employee, they have already announced the appointment of this new employee for text book section, they just need to activate this decision, we presented all the possible solutions this way. This is only a short term solution until they create a new space.	
Manager: Laugh, ha ha ha, this way you want to make it very real, as if it is this easy. **Female1: this is what the administration wants, they also said the lack of space was a problem and I am pretty sure they will support male 4's suggestion.** **Male 5: the space is always available, they could use one of the empty offices, but they use it as an excuse not to solve this problem.**	Challenging the employees' suggestion in previous utterance
Manager: believe in me and trust what I am doing here, we are	Emphasis on step by step techniques

going to approach this issue step by step and see what is available to us and appreciate it, but if hurdles come in the way we should be more tolerant and try to be flexible.	Trust
Male 5: OK, no problem, we are going to trust what you are planning to do regarding this matter and we are going to believe that the new employee is going to be responsible for text books, even if is hard to believe, we have nothing to do with text book distribution and we are not going to help in any kind of jobs related to text books, so if later on he encounters a problem with workload he should report it to the dean's office himself.	
Manager: no, this is not going to happen, you should be involved in this job, you should help him. **Male 4: give us a break please, we are tired of this issue and the text books problem.**	Challenging the subordinate's statement and giving direct advice. Challenging the subordinate's refusal to help the new member.
Male 5 : what??? No ,,,, wait a minute listen to me Dr, they said we lack space and we suggested a space for it, they said no employees, but later they appointed one, now the problem should be resolved and every one of us should be back to his/ her original duties, we have nothing to do with text books and that's it. **Overlap** **Male 4: he is right, yes (male 5) you are 100 % right, we should all be back to our original job duties and text books are the new employee's responsibility.**	

Manager: I would like to ask you a question. **Male 5: go ahead** **Manager: this new employee will need some training, aren't you required to teach him?** **Male 5: yes it is OK, we are going to teach him, which will take a maximum of a week,** **Male 4: we will teach him, it is OK.**	Showing his disappointment at the previous utterances by the subordinates. Convincing the subordinates by minimizing the demands.
Manager: the second part of the question, is he able to do all the work by himself? No, so you should help him. **Male 4: this is not our problem.** **Male 5: wait ...**	Still convincing them by showing examples
Manager: only help him during peak periods, and he is going to do all other duties. **Male 4: what other duties?** **Overlap** **Male 5: what other duties? His job is text books only.**	Trying to convince them with his idea.
Manager: for example bar-coding and follow up. **Male 5: what bar-coding, only click on a computer and print, this is not hard work. Even if we ask the cleaner to do it he is willing to do bar-coding in no time.** **At this point Male 6, who had been silent all the meeting, left.**	Trying to convince them with his idea.
Manager: OK, during peak times it is impossible for one employee to distribute all the books. **Male 3: no it is possible.**	

Male 5: he is required to, this is his job. If he complains he will complain in the dean's office and they will get the picture. This is their problem and they have to solve it themselves. Because we are in one division, the dean's office assume that we will work together but it should be this way, you should explain to them frankly that your employees have different duties and they are required to fulfill them and the text books are their responsibility, whether to assign one employee or 10 it is their decision.	
Manager: you are rushing for results, I told you just wait and see. **Male 5:** oh my god......... oh my god.... Dr please try to be helpful...........please..... today you are with us, tomorrow we do not know, they may appoint a new manager and we have to tell this story again and again.	Suggesting slowing down
Male 4: Dr start from now, start to do something from now, you have three weeks, try to prepare an organizational chart for the library and your employees and everyone's duties and add the new employees in the text books section so later on if they ask you why your employees are not helping the new employee tell them that your employees are busy with their duties and explain to them using this organizational chart. **Female 1:** yeah this is a good idea.	
Manager; would you like your proposal to be rejected? Or do you want something that would be implemented? **Male 5:** wait a minute Dr.. wait..ok... But .. **Interrupted by male 3** **Male 3:** you said a while ago ...this issue started 8 years ago and we may need another 8 years to see a change.	Assuming negative results if the subordinates do not follow the plan.

<u>**Manager:**</u> **no it's not going to be long.** <u>**Male 3:**</u> **you said so a while ago.**	Challenging the employees' statement in the previous utterance
Manager: when I signed my contract for this job, I signed to manage a supporting department that do the job of a library and many other supporting jobs and when I submitted the report to the dean I showed him the time plan and the short and long term objectives, unfortunately it was neglected, in all meetings they always focus on academic problems and issues and they ignore our problems, unfortunately, our department is always marginalized. **Male 3: Dr try to push them harder, so they can feel our problem.** **Male 4: yeah try to push them harder, please…**	Involving the subordinates in what is happening. Situating himself as part of the subordinate group and not the higher management group. In-group/out-group concept (Tajfel). Appealing to the manager to help.
Male 5: as you said we are supporting staff, are e required to do any job? Are you going to work with us, you and the information systems manager, because you are saying we are all supporting staff, are you going to join us?	Expressing disappointment and criticizing higher management .

Manager: why not?	
Male 5: this is the bottom line, we are saying there must be a job description for us, all our duties should be identified and defined. They are saying (the college management) we are one unit and we should work together but they should define all our job titles and job descriptions so we will have the opportunity to be promoted, and to work within a department that values our work. I travelled abroad and did a degree but this has not changed my work duties, I am in the same office and doing the same duties before and after getting my degree, if I knew this I would not have bothered to travel to study.	Expressing disappointment and criticizing higher management, but interestingly involving bureaucracy by asking for detailed description.
Female 1: true, it is very stressful when your achievements are not appreciated.	Supporting colleague's statement.
Male 4: management have many problems, they have an excess number of employees, bad management, for example, coordinators of some departments told us that most of the week they do nothing because they are not required to do a lot of tasks compared to us, We work very hard comparedto them and it is not appreciated, we are much better than them in commitment and hard work, honestly.	Direct critisim of the higher management strategies.
Female: it is not acceptable now to delay solutions.	Criticism
Male 4: true they should not delay dealing with this issue.	Supporting the criticism.
Manager: they are planning to provide a new employee, who will be joining this department soon.	Providing new information.
Male 5: what? No, if he joins this department the situation	Challenging the higher

will be the same because we will end up doing the text book distribution duties, he should be working under the dean's office like a new division or section that has nothing to do with us.	management decision.
Male 4: believe me Dr, if you agree on this solution, it would be like silencing us forever.	Appealing to the manager to accept this decision.
Male 5: they should not do this, even the dean must not decide to do this, if he does then we are going to be in big trouble and this problem will go further and our reactions will be unpredictable.	Warning the manager about their reaction if the decision is implemented.
Male 4: the dean cannot decide to add a new employee to our department and leave the text book responsibility to us, he should be stopped.	Appealing to the manager to stop the dean from implementing the decision.
Male5: he should be stopped by you. **Male 4: Dr you are our only hope, please reject this decision (to add a new employee to this department) and please ask them to open a new division, e.g. text book division, and it will be highly appreciated if they put it in a different building.**	Emphasizing the previous idea. Appealing to the manager to help in rejecting the decision.
Female: Dr, allow me please to say this, I feel that you are not fully convinced of what these employees are saying, since the beginning of the meeting you have been defending the Dean's office actions, you react as if you are not part of this department, you have to believe and feel their problems before you represent them in front of the dean.	Urging the manager to confess his interests.
Manager; I understand this is a very stressful situation But I really cannot do anything about it. I think we have discussed	Expressing empathy.

this topic thoroughly and now we are going to move to the second point in the agenda, shifts times.	And lack of authority.

Table 2. Scripts of the meeting.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I presented my data, I first explained what was going in the meeting. Then, I

presented all the transcribed talk in the meeting and explained beside each utterance the

regular pattern

Chapter 6: Findings chapter

6.1. Introduction

One of the aims of this research is to explain why some discourses are dominant, and how they are used by the participants to construct a reality about themselves and the situation and why they are used in the way.

In this chapter I will use Fairclough's framework (1992) to provide a detailed description of the two discourses that the participants used in this specific interactional context of a regular librarians' meeting between manager and employees and relating to the problem of workload. There might indeed be more than two discourses, but for the purpose of this research I will highlight the bureaucratic discourse and the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse as they are the most frequently occurring in the data.

6.2. The process of identifying discourses:

Foucault (1972, 49) defined a discourse as a practice that systematically forms the objects (Identity) of which it speaks. He emphasized that discourse does not consist merely of a single meaning or interpretation but produces "a particular kind of knowledge about a topic" (du Gay, 1996:43). It also shapes and defines the strategies and rules by which the individuals can speak about a domain, by giving the actors the right to speak (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Some actors will warrant a louder voice than others, while some may warrant no voice, according to their position in the discourse (Hardy and Philips, 1999:4). Thus, discourse provides a space that allows the individual actors to engage in identity work. Identity work is described as interpretive activity that helps in producing and transforming self-identity (Hardy, 2009).

To identify a discourse or interpretive repertoire, researchers consider that all accounts produced by participants should be analyzed to determine significant patterns of consistency and variation amongst them (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Identifying a specific discourse is a difficult process because it is hard to identify what actually counts as a discourse (Dick, 2000). This is because researchers who use CDA are required to find a social construction that has a regulatory effect that is counted as a common sense feature of the social domain that is being researched (Dick,2000). For example, Dick and Cassell (2002) identified a dominant discourse within the UK police force that was utilized to construct the practice of promotion. This discourse constructed the promotion practice as being fair and objective and was claimed to construct subject positions such as the one within the discourses that 'resist' the idea that promotion practices are not discriminatory.

My analysis was informed by a social constructionist epistemology which is concerned with understanding the way in which accounts of reality are constructed through discourses. Mama (1995) stated that discourses convey formal and informal knowledge and ideologies that are

reproduced and constituted in the process of communication. Within the discourse specific knowledge among the individuals allows explicit and implicit meanings to be expressed.

6.3. The Analysis:

When analyzing the interactions of the participants in this particular meeting, I identified patterns in the librarians' and the managers' talk, as described in chapter five, then I looked for a general description for patterns that were similar. I identified two distinct discourses (the bureaucratic discourse and the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse). The technique I used to identify the discourses that the manager and the employees used to construct their accounts of the current situation in this organization was Potter and Wetherell's (1987) concept of " interpretive repertoires" or, as it will be termed in this thesis, "discourse". This technique requires a close examination of the vocabulary used by the participants when they talk about a specific issue, for example, when discussing the extra workload problem and the textbook distribution problem. Having looked for regular patterns in the manager's talk and the employees' talk I then tried to identify a dominant interpretive repertoire (discourse) within each of these patterns, as will be discussed in the following section.

	The manager's talk	Regular Patterns of the manager's talk
1	**Manager**: As I told you before and I keep telling you, this situation has existed for a long time, it cannot be changed in one go.	Emphasis that changing the situation takes time.
2	**Manager:** I keep telling you, I am not ready and I am not able to send a proposal that I know will be rejected from the first attempt. First, I have to make sure that the issue will be resolved by applying step by step technique. For example, we ask for one employee and then we ask for another one, eventually a new division will be opened.	Assuming negative outcome when the employees initiated some solutions. Emphasis on step by step techniques.
3	**Manager:** oh, may god lead you in the right direction, you are rushing for results.	Suggesting slowing down.
4	**Manager**: you have been doing this task	Suggesting slowing down.

	(distributing textbooks) patiently for how long? **Male 3**: years. **Manager** : Ok years, but you are always rushing for results, I told you, we are following a plan.	
5	**Male 5**: it has been 8 months. **Manager:** let it be 8 years.	Slow down in making decision..
6	**Manager:** this is one of the needs that we need to fulfil for our employees, decrease the workload, but gradually.	Urging the slow down policy.
7	**Male 4:** when Dr? Gradually when? After 3 years? **Manager**: hopefully it won't be years.	
8	**Manager:** I will give you a hint, this is what is going to happen; we are going to open a new division and we will move some employees to this division, then we can say that we have a shortage of employees in the old division. However, if we apply now for new employees to join this division, they are going to say that we have 6 employees and they have been doing all the work for the last 8 years without any problems, so our proposal will be rejected easily.	Assuming negative outcome if the employees do not follow the plan.
9	**Manager:** listen to me please, I am not ignoring this issue but I do not like to push so hard because I know it will have negative results for us; however, if you want to apply your method by pushing so hard on the college administration, go ahead, do it yourself and I am not going to be involved in this because I know the opinion of the college board is highly respected by the university administration and we have to convince the college board first.	Expecting negative results if they ask for immediate action. Suggesting employees "do it alone"
10	**Manager:** I advise you to take things gently and step by step, do not rush for results, you want to change a situation that has lasted for 8 years, in one day this is cannot be done following the university rules unless you have a good network with the dean of the college or nepotism.	Advice to follow the rules. Slowing down again
11	**Manager**: we have to keep ourselves away from other people's business, the bottom line is	Demarcation

	we asked for something and they approved it, their problems are their own business not ours. We have nothing to do with their problem with this new employee.	
12	**Female1 :** they are saying this is a preliminary solution (to provide us with this new employee), but why has this solution not been applied yet? **Manager:** god willing it will be applied soon.	Did not provide definite information.
13	**Male3**: why he is not working like us? Why is his office located in the college administration and not here in the library? **Manager**: he is going to join you soon.	Did not provide definite information.
14	**Manager**: working in a library is mental and physical work as you know from your job description.	Stating what is required from employees
15	**Manager:** listen to me please. I cannot send the proposal directly to the university administration, first it has to be approved by the dean because I work under the dean's office, so write all your suggestions and I send them to dean's office.	Following the hierarchy
16	**Manager:** believe in me and trust what I am doing here, we are going to approach this issue step by step and see what is available to us and appreciate it but if hurdles come in the way we should be more tolerant and try to be flexible.	Step by step. Trust
17	**Manager;** would you like your proposal to be declined? Or do you want something that can be implemented?	
18	**Manager;** I cannot do it your way, I work under the dean, he is not my subordinate, I am his subordinate.	Hierarchy.

Table 3. Patterns of Bureaucratic Discourse.

6.4.The Bureaucratic discourse:

The term "bureaucracy" was introduced by the French philosopher Vincent de

Gourmay in 1765 and suggests routines constrained by behavior and inefficiency (Tierean

and Bratucu, 2009) . Bureaucracy is defined as a set of regulations and rules that are drawn

by governments to control activities of large organizations and governments. It is represented

in the way that standardized procedures control the division of labour, hierarchy and relationships. There are four main concepts in the definition of bureaucracy. First, a hierarchy among offices where status and authority is distributed differently among employees. Second, the system of recruitment and linear career follows a consistent pattern. Third, formal and informal networks link personnel from different organizations through cooperation and flow of information.

I called this discourse "the bureaucratic discourse" because it has the characteristics of Bureaucracy.

A.   First, resistance to change and assuming that changing the situation and solving the problem needs a lot of time. One of the characteristics of bureaucratic systems is to resist any sort of change due to centralized system of decision making process (Diamond, 1984) This was articulated in the manager talk as:

✓   *"This situation has existed for a long time it cannot be changed in one go".*

✓   *you are always rushing for results,*

✓   *let it be 8 years*

The manager's utterances in point A demonstrate that he was practising bureaucracy as he was resisting the idea of change the employees were proposing. Here he presents his perception toward the application of a specific solution such as this one; he assumes that the decision making needs a lot of time as different layers of management are involved to approve this decision.

B.   Step by step process, the manager emphasized the idea of hierarchy whereby a single decision needs to be approved by different heads of departments. This was obvious in the following sentences:

✓ *"The issue will be resolved by applying step by step technique"*

✓ ***Male 5****: it has been 8 months. **Manager:** let it be 8 years.*

✓ *We are following a plan.*

Again these characteristics of the manager's talk align with the thoughts of the bureaucratic system as in a bureaucratic system the vertical decision making process is highly valued. (Diamond, 1984).

C. Referral to rules and regulations.

✓ *You want to change a situation that has lasted for 8 years in one day, this cannot be done following the university rules.*

✓ *, if you want to apply your method by pushing so hard on the college administration go ahead, do it yourself and I am not going to be involved in this because I know the opinion of the college board is highly respected by the university administration and we have to convince the college board first.*

One of the bureaucracy's pillars is management by rules (Weber, 1947) where controlling employees at lower level by means of higher management rules ensures the execution of the higher management decisions. The extracts in point C demonstrate that the manager was trying to control the employees' ideas by articulating the importance of rule following in this organization.

D. Expecting negative results if the employees do not follow the administration's plans.

✓ *I am not ready and I am not able to send a proposal that I know will be rejected from the first attempt.*

✓ *If we applied now for new employees to join this division they are going to say that we have 6 employees and they have been doing all the work for the last 8 years without any problems, so our proposal will be rejected easily.*

✓ *I am not ignoring this issue but I do not like to push so hard because I know it will have negative results for us,*

Another pillar of bureaucracy is formal hierarchal structure, where each level in the hierarchy controls the level below, therefore for a decision to be approved it has to be legitimized by different layers of hierarchy from lower to higher levels (Weber, 1947). This characteristic of bureaucracy is represented in the manager's talk in point D: he demonstrated his worries that the proposal that the employees prepared most probably is going to be rejected because the requirements that are set by administrators at higher levels are not met in this proposal. Therefore, the administration's centralized plans influence every decision in this organization.

E.   Information is not freely available due to management control of information. In a bureaucracy, there is strict division of labour and information is not available to all, and most people working within the organization will never see the full picture, or how a decision made at one end of the organization will affect the other end of the organization (Diamond, 1984). This idea was articulated in some of the manager's sentences as follows:

1. _**Manager**: we have to keep ourselves away from other people's business, the bottom line is we asked for something and they approved it, their problems are their own business not ours. We have nothing to do with their problem with this new employee._

2.   _**Female:** why has this solution not been applied yet?_ _**Manager:** god willing it will be applied soon._

3.   _**Male 3**: why is he not working like us? Why is his office located in the college administration and not here in the library?_ _**Manager**: he is going to join you soon._

  The manager used general terms to avoid providing adequate and precise information to the employees regarding what the higher management is planning to do to solve this problem. In extract 1, he advised the employees not to ask questions about what the higher management were intending to do. In the second excerpt he used "god willing", which is a term that is used to indicate hope for an aforementioned event to occur in the future. In excerpt 3 he assumed that the new employee was going to join soon, but "soon" here indicates an indefinite time.

F.   Power centered, with decisions needing to be approved by higher authorities.

   1 _**Manager:** listen to me please, I cannot send the proposal directly to the university administration, first it has to be approved by the dean because I work under the dean's office, so write all your suggestions and I will send them to the dean's office._

   2 _**Manager;** I cannot do it your way, I work under the dean, he is not my subordinate, I am his subordinate._

Another pillar of bureaucracy that was listed by Weber (1974) is the centralized decision making process. Here, in excerpt number 1, the manager demonstrated this characteristic by stating that the approval process for this proposal needed to go through different layers in the hierarchy: first the employees, then the dean's office and finally the university administration. So what the employees are asking him to do does not fulfil the bureaucratic rules that the manager is advocating. The manager's excerpt in number 2 demonstrates his position in the hierarchy and that he has limited authority and solving this problem is not within his authority span.

In a nutshell, when analyzing the manager's talk I extracted all the manager's excerpts in the meeting and then tried to find a regular pattern in his talk whereby he constructed some realities about how processes in this organization are executed. I described the manager's talk as bureaucratic discourse because all the characteristics of the manager's talk go hand in hand with the description of bureaucracy (Weber, 1947). First, he emphasizes key characteristics' of bureaucracy, e.g. hierarchy and the vertical decision making process, by referring to the documents that need to be signed and approved by different heads of departments before a final decision can be made (evidence is shown in Points A and F below). Also, a step by step policy is recommended and suggested a number of times by the manager (Point B). Moreover, the disclosure of information is not available to the subordinates (evidences in point E) and referral to regulations and rules is obvious in most of the excerpts (Point C). Also, there is an emphasis on the slowness of the decision making process and if only employees could be patient everything would happen, as it should. This is exemplified by the following utterances by the manager: *I advise you to take things gently and step by step, do not rush for results, you want to change a situation that has lasted for 8 years in one day, this is cannot be done following the university rules* and *we should do this process step by step it cannot be done in one go.*

Toward this part of the meeting, a slight change in the manager's discourse took place. In contrast to the previous part of the meeting the manager articulated fewer regulations and rules, but challenged the subordinates' rationality more. In addition, he utilized more utterances to convince the subordinates about the higher management strategies in solving work condition problems. Therefore, the best term to apply to this shift in the manager's discourse is "evolution discourse", for a number of reasons. First, the manager was seeking agreement from the subordinates to slow down the process and trust higher management decisions.

Manager: *believe in me and trust what I am doing here, we are going to approach this issue step by step and see what is available to us and appreciate it, but if hurdles come in the way we should be more tolerant and try to be flexible.*

In order to get this acceptance he negotiated the higher management demands, starting with the highest demands, such as "*you should be involved in this job, you should help him*";

Male 5: *OK, no problem, we are going to trust what you are planning to do regarding this matter and we are going to believe that the new employee is going to be responsible for textbooks, even if is hard to believe, we have nothing to do with textbook distribution and we are not going to help in any kind of jobs related to textbooks, so if later on he encounters a problem with workload he should report it to the dean's office himself.*

Manager: *no, this is not going to happen, you should be involved in this job, you should help him.*

then he lowered the demands and asked the librarians to help the new employee only during peak times : "*only help during the peak times*",

Manager: the second part of the question, is he able to do all the work by himself? No, so you should help him.

Male 4: this is not our problem.

Male 5: wait ...

Manager: only help him during peak periods, and he is going to do all other duties.

Male 4: what other duties?

Overlap

Male 5: what other duties? His job is textbooks only.

Then he tried to support this demand by stating the fact that "*it is impossible for one employee to distribute all the books*".

Manager: OK, during peak times it is impossible for one employee to distribute all the books.

Male 3: no it is possible.

The manager questioned and challenged the subordinates' rationality whenever they provided suggestions for solving the problem as in the example below.

Example

Male 4: there is a brilliant solution. If you listen to me carefully, the college administration declined our previous proposals because of lack of space for the textbook section, why do we not ask them to divide the division here and open a window from outside so students can use it to access the textbook section, this way the space problem will be resolved. The second

matter is the new employee, they have already announced the appointment of this new employee for the textbook section, they just need to activate this decision, we presented all the possible solutions this way. This is only a short term solution until they create a new space.

Manager: Laugh, ha ha ha, this way you want to make it very real, as if it is this easy.

Through this talk the manager was trying to align his identity with those of the management. Group membership identity in this interactional context appeared as a resource that the manager drew on to achieve something in the interaction (Antaki, 1988). He achieved a more powerful position by assuming this identity: as in Arab cultures individuals gain strength and power by cooperating and uniting with members of powerful groups (Ayish, 1998). In this context, the higher management held the legitimate power so this membership identity would allow him to claim power and to convince the subordinates about the higher management demands. If the manager succeeds in convincing the librarians to lower their demands and to solve the problem of workload internally by allocating the current available resources and dividing the job among them, he will receive appreciation from the higher management and the university administration as he will save them from the hassles of opening a new department for textbooks and recruiting more employees.

This group membership identity supported his powerful position and reinforced the power structures that allowed him to challenge the subordinates' rationality when suggesting new solutions for the problem.

For example, by laughing at their suggestions

Male 4: *there is a brilliant solution. if you listen to me carefully, the college administration declined our previous proposals because of lack of space for the textbook section, why do we not ask them to divide the division here and open a window from outside so students can use it to access the textbook section, this way the space problem will be resolved. The second matter is the new employee, they have already announced the appointment of this new employee for textbook section, they just need to activate this decision, we presented all the possible solutions this way. This is only a short term solution until they create a new space.*

Manager*: Laugh, ha ha ha, this way you want to make it very real, as if it is this easy.*

And asking them questions that mocked their suggestions.

Male3*: why is he not working like us? Why is his office located in the college administration and not here in the library?*

Manager*: he is going to join you soon.*

Male 5*: no he is not.*

Here the librarians were asking logical questions about why, when the administration provided them with an employee to help in textbook distribution, he was not working on an equal basis with other librarians in terms of hours of working and job duties. The manager

replied to the questions with a very vague answer that implied his powerful position.

6.5. The characteristics of the change in the manager discourse

Challenging the veracity of what the subordinates say. Examples (1,3,4,11). In all the four examples the subordinates were trying to provide rational suggestions to solve the problem, but the manager challenged their suggestions using different techniques. For example, the subordinate provided a solution for the lack of space, which was to divide one office and open a window from outside. Although the suggestion was doable and could have solved the problem, the manager challenged its rationality by saying "*it is not that easy*".

Male 4: there is a brilliant solution. If you listen to me carefully, the college administration declined our previous proposals because of lack of space for the textbook section, why do we not ask them to divide the division here and open a window from outside so students can use it to access the textbook section, this way the space problem will be resolved. The second matter is the new employee, they have already announced the appointment of this new employee for the textbook section, they just need to activate this decision, we presented all the possible solutions this way. This is only a short term solution until they create a new space.

Manager: Laugh, ha ha ha, this way you want to make it very real, as if it is this easy.

3

Male 5: OK, no problem, we are going to trust what you are planning to do regarding this matter and we are going to believe that the new employee is going to be responsible for textbooks, even if is hard to believe, we have nothing to do with textbook distribution and we are not going to help in any kind of jobs related to

textbooks, so if later on he encounters a problem with workload he should report it to the dean's office himself.

Manager: no, this is not going to happen, you should be involved in this job, you should help him.

4

Male 5 : what??? No ,,,, wait a minute listen to me Dr, they said we lack space and we suggested a space for it, they said no employees, but later they appointed one, now the problem should be resolved and every one of us should go back to his/ her original duties, we have nothing to do with textbooks and that's it.

Overlap

Male 4: he is right, yes (male 5) you are 100 % right, we should all go back to our original job duties and textbooks are the new employee's responsibility.

Manager: I would like to ask you a question.

Male 5: go ahead

Manager: this new employee will need some training, aren't you required to teach him?

11

Male 4: Dr, start from now, start to do something from now, you have three weeks, try to prepare an organizational chart for the library and your employees and everyone's duties and add the new employees in the textbook section so later on if they ask you why your employees are not helping the new employee tell them that your employees are busy with their duties and explain to them using this organizational chart.

Female 1: yeah this is a good idea.

Manager; would you like your proposal to be declined? Or do you want something that would be implemented?

Similarly, when the subordinate declared that the librarians would not help the new employee in tasks that were related to textbook distribution, the manager expressed a direct challenge *"it is not going to happen" (utterance 7)*. The manager continues to challenge the subordinate by asking the question '*aren't you required to help him?" (utterance 13).* Finally, when the subordinate claimed that the process of change was going to be long, the manager directly rejected this claim *"no, it is not going to be long"*(utterance, 36).

Emphasizing slowing down the process. Examples (2,9,10). By emphasizing the step by step process the manager was presenting the hierarchy in this organization and what should be expected from subordinates in terms of complying with rules and regulations. This was obvious in example number 2 in the table above when he said "*we should see what is available for us and appreciate it,.*

Male 5: the space is always available, they could use one of the empty offices, but they use it as an excuse not to solve this problem.

Manager: believe in me and trust what I am doing here, we are going to approach this issue step by step and see what is available to us and appreciate it, but if hurdles come in the way we should be more tolerant and try to be flexible.

And

Manager: you are rushing for results, I told you just wait and see.

Male 5: oh my god......... oh my god.... Dr please try to be helpful..........please..... today you are with us, tomorrow we do not know, they may appoint a new manager and we have to tell this story again and again.

 This reflects that only certain resources are available for employees to use and the suggestion that was provided by the employee in utterance 6 did not include resources available to the employees. These tactics were used in order to direct the subordinates towards the next goal: to get them to accept higher management decisions. Using different techniques to convince the subordinates to do what the higher management wants.

1   **Manager**: this new employee will need some training, aren't you required to teach

2   him?

3   **Male 5**: yes it is OK, we are going to teach him, which will take a maximum of a

4   week,

5   **Male 4:** we will teach him, it is OK.

6   **Manager**: the second part of the question, is he able to do all the work by himself?

7   No, so you should help him.

8   **Male 4:** this is not our problem.

9   **Male 5:** wait ...

10   **Manager**: only help him during peak periods, and he is going to do all other duties.

11   **Male 4:** what other duties?

12   Overlap

13   **Male 5**: what other duties? His job is textbooks only.

14   **Manager**: for example bar-coding and follow up.

15   **Male 5:** what bar-coding, only click on a computer and print, this is not hard work.

16   Even if we ask the cleaner to do it he is willing to do bar-coding in no time.

17   *At this point Male 6, who had been silent all the meeting, left.*

18   **Manager:** OK, during peak times it is impossible for one employee to distribute all

19   the books.

20   **Male 3:** no it is possible.

The manager used different methods to convince the employees of the need to help the new employee with textbook distribution, which is a demand issued by higher management. Therefore, in example number 6 he said "*only help during the peak times*", and when the subordinates refused, he explained in utterance 7 that the new employees had many other tasks, such as bar-coding and referencing, and again the subordinates refused. Finally, he said "*it is impossible for one employee to distribute all the books*", and they refused to accept this idea as well.

6.6. Discourse no 2

6.6.1. The bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse:

The subordinates were resisting the (bureaucratic discourse) of the manager that I explained in the previous section through the use of the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse. I called this discourse the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse because the main reason why the employees utilized this discourse was to resist the pillars of bureaucracy that were represented in the manager's talk. The employees presented their resistance toward the manager bureaucratic discourse using different techniques; these techniques will be presented below.

 The table below contains extracts from the employees' utterances in the meeting, which I will use to establish patterns to describe these interactions and I will then explain why this can be regarded as a bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse.

	The employees' excerpts	Regular Patterns of the employees' talk
1	**Male 5**: Now what Doctor, we spent a lot of time discussing this topic, we are very tired, tell us the bottom line.	Emphasize the idea of tiredness as they had dealt with this issue for a long time.

	Male 4: honestly we are very tired.	
<u>**2**</u>	**Male 3**: OK doctor, you did nothing regarding this issue.....................	Criticizing the manager for not acting.
<u>**3**</u>	**Male 5:** Dr, is this the first time you have heard about this issue? Since you were appointed as a manager me and my colleagues have been asking you to do something about it.	Again emphasizing the idea of tiredness and accusing the manager of not acting upon this issue.
<u>**4**</u>	**Male 4**: I .... I .... I would like to say something. Dr, you always say I cannot guarantee results, as my colleague (Female1) suggested, the administration should provide us with employees who will be fully responsible for textbooks and we librarians should not be involved in this task, I mean textbook distribution, this is a good idea. But what will happen is this, they are going to provide us with one employee only who will be responsible for distributing textbooks to 3,000 male and female students every semester, which is an impossible task to do in only one week, as a result we librarians will have to help him/her, this means that we go back to the starting point and nothing will change as we will have the same extra workload that we have now.	Emphasizing the idea of extra workload. Claiming nothing will change in the future unless something is done differently.
<u>**5**</u>	**Male 3:** OK Dr, when are we going to see some changes? We have seen nothing.	Criticizing the manger's approach by accusing him of doing nothing.
<u>**6**</u>	**Female 1**: but the employees have rights and needs, it has been accomplished, they are very tired, now it's years since this hassle started and no one is listening.	Criticizing the manger's approach by using the employees' needs and feelings as a tool.
<u>**7**</u>	**Male 4:** when Dr? Gradually when? After 3 years?	Using sarcasm to criticize the manager's approach. (direct challenge).
<u>**8**</u>	**Male 4**: we are reaching a dead end point, to avoid rejection of the proposal you should divide us according to our job specifications, 2 in indexing section, 2 in periodicals section, and 2 in supply section, so you have no one in the textbook section, Dr, you are putting us in an embarrassing situation by saying you have 6 employees in the division, you should divide us according to different job specifications (description) like any other library or information centre here in the university, so if you allocate the existing employees to specific jobs you will end up with a shortage in the number of employees and your	Providing suggestions for the manager using direct language (You should do this, and you have to do that)

	proposal will be approved.	
9	**Male 4:** you.. you...you even if it is a temporary situation it will give the administration an excuse not to approve the proposal and provide more employees. In every library here they divide their employees according to job specification I don't understand why you are not doing this, for example, if you phone any library and asked for the referencing section they are going to refer you to a specific person who is responsible only for the referencing section and.......	Criticizing the manager's approach and supporting this criticism with reasons. Challenges again.
10	**Female 1:** do you remember when the college board decided to provide us with a new employee to help in the textbook section; do you remember exactly when that was? Was it during this semester? **Manager**: almost **Female1**: OK, now it has been long time since they announced this decision, where is this new employee? Why is he not helping the rest of staff here in the library?	Again wondering why the decision has not been applied.
11	I developed a medical problem because of this work and my colleague here has the same problem and no one....	Emphasizing the idea of illness.
12	**Male 4** continues what he was saying: and you are telling me 6 employees in one division.	Using sarcasms to criticize the manager's approach.
13	**Male 4:** for me I have worked here for 13 years and I am able to work for another 20 years and nothing is going to change regarding the workload and the textbooks section),	Claiming nothing will change in the future unless something is done differently.
14	**Male 4**: yes I know what it is, but what I am doing here is carrying 5 kg of textbooks back and forth for 8 hours, this is not the same as sitting in an office and working on a computer. **Male 3:** sometimes during peak hours we had to carry 25 kg of textbooks back and forth for 3 hours.	Using the workload problem to challenge the manager's approach.
15	**Female 1**: Dr why don't you observe their work for one day, try to devote only one day and see what happens and you will understand what they are talking about.	Providing suggestion. Being reasonable.
16	**Male 4:** there is a brilliant solution if you listen to me carefully, the college administration rejected our previous proposals because of lack of space for a textbook section, why we do not ask them to divide the room here and open	Providing suggestions (in a certain way using language not normally used by an employee to a

a window from outside so students can use it to access the textbook section, this way the space problem will be resolved. The second matter is the new employee, they have already announced the appointment of this new employee for the textbook section, they just need to activate this decision, we presented all the possible solutions this way. This is only a short term solution until they create a new space.	supervisor) and using other departments' experience to support the suggestion.

Table 4. Patterns of Bureaucracy is Dysfunctional Discourse.

The characteristics of bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse are:

A.   Criticizing the manager's approach via different ways and methods, and emphasizing the need to change things through direct actions.

1.   Directly mentioning his inability to act. (Excerpt number 2 and 5, 3).

2.   Using sarcasm. (Excerpt no 7, 12).

3.   Referring to the employees' needs and feelings (6)

B.   Providing suggestions by using direct language (excerpt 8, 9 and 15).

C.   Using the idea of workload and illness to challenge the manager's approach. (Excerpts 1, 4, 11, 13,14).

 From the sample of excerpts and the characteristics above we can extract this definition:

this is a discourse that employs direct language, manifested in employees' utterances when they talk to their manager (for example, *tell us the bottom line, you did nothing regarding this issue, you should divide us according to our job specifications).* It uses reasons to justify suggestions (excerpt number 8). It relies on criticism of the managers' suggestions and advice; such criticism was presented using different methods (as in point A) above.   Moreover, sarcasm is used to challenge the manager's bureaucratic discourse. (excerpt no 7, 12).

The flow of the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse occurred as follows: First, the employees challenged the manager's talk (bureaucratic discourse) by introducing the idea of extra workload and illness (excerpts 11, 14). Second, they provided suggestions for new ideas and applications to change the situation and they used the experience of other departments in other colleges to support their suggestions (excerpts 8, 9, 15, 16, pages 17 and 18). The employees criticized the manager's utterances using different methods of criticism. First, they criticized his ability to act; for example, when they said" *you did nothing regarding this issue", "this situation has lasted for 8 years and no one is acting".* Second, they used sarcasm to criticize the manager, "gradually, when? After three years?" This utterance demonstrates a direct challenge to the manager and to the statement that he was making. Then the employees shifted towards using a soft tone of criticism that employed the needs and feelings of the employees as a tool to criticize the manager. The criticism approach fell within the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse the employees were utilizing. By criticizing the manager's statement the employees were exercising power and demonstrating their ability to challenge the manager.

Also within the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse, the employees presented reasonable ideas and suggestions to the manager. Although the employees used the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse to convince the manager to act upon their problem, the suggestions' they provided fell within the domain of the bureaucratic approach the manager was using and were not appropriate to their role designations. For example, their first suggestion was to divide the employees according to their job specifications (excerpts 8, and 9, dividing the employees according to job specification is one of the pillars that is proposed by bureaucracy systems (Diamonds, 1984). Another suggestion was that the manager should observe the employees

while they were performing their daily duties; this suggestion falls within the bureaucracy domain because by urging their manager to observe their work, the employees here assume hierarchical differences between them and the manager.

On the other hand, some of the suggestions they proposed were reasonable and creative; for example, they provided a sensible solution to the lack of space problem, which was to open a window from the other side of the textbook room so the students would have to deal with one employee only: "the new employee".

6.7. Conclusion

In the previous chapter (5) I listed all the talk of the participants and identified the recurring patterns in the participants' talk. In this chapter these patterns were analyzed and put together as discourses. I identified the two discourses most frequently used by the manager and the librarians: the bureaucratic discourse and the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse, and I described the characteristics of each discourse and how the participants used these discourses. In the next chapter I intend to explain why the manager chose to employ the bureaucratic discourse and why the employees chose to employ the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse, neither of which reflects the power structure in Omani culture and certainly not in the academic culture.

Chapter 7: Micro analysis

7.1. Introduction

The previous essentialist approaches to communication and gender assumed that individuals who hold legitimate or social power are the ones who utilize powerful speech markers and they are the dominant speakers in the interaction (Bohan, 1993). They also assumed that power and other social categories such as gender are properties that reside in personality and traits of the individual and they are commodities of individuals that are fixed and unchanged.

Therefore, my research questions changed from focusing on differences between men and women in the interactional behavior in an Omani workplace context to trying to find out to what extent gender behaviors are influenced and situated by the situation and the context, and to explore when gender and power relations are salient in the interaction and how they are negotiated between the participants in the interactions. Also, I would like to know which rules of conversations that reflect power are changed and which rules are completely transformed. Finally, I am interested to know when gender and other social categories such as power are resisted and when they are reproduced, and why.

Within the social constructionist domain I looked for a framework that would help me to analyze a real situation interaction between a manager and employees in a workplace setting. Unlike the previous gender and communication research, which analyzed the elements of gender and power relations in artificial situations, the current research analyzes a real situation wherein the participants have a specific agenda or a goal to be achieved at the end of the interaction process.

Therefore, my first argument is that within the interaction process some structures, such as gender and power relations between the participants, become salient, but others become side-

lined, depending on the influence of the interactional context and how structures are enacted by the participants. In this specific interactional context, which is a formal workplace meeting, my analysis explores the structures that the manager and his subordinates enact.

The next chapter (eight) will analyze the social categories the participants draw on and the identities they try to invoke within the apparent discourses. This argument will demonstrate how the previous approaches to gender and communication have not been satisfactory in providing an explanation of how gender and power relations between the participants are performed in the talk, as they assume that gender and power relations between the participants can explain the differences in the communication process between men and women.

The second argument of this thesis is that structures in talk only exist when they are enacted by the participants, for example, doing gender and doing power (West and Zimmerman, 1987, Giddens, 1991) and these structures (e.g. men being more powerful than women in general terms or some groups being dominant in relation to others either in terms of how they are seen or how their positions enable them to access resources not available to less powerful people) are not fixed and not a commodity of individuals but they occur during a process of negotiation between the individuals within the interactional context. In order to explore this argument, micro analysis of the interaction process will be conducted. The focus will be on three elements of micro-analysis: setting and policing the agenda, formulation and topic control. The reason for focusing on these three elements is that they are relevant to the context I am analyzing (formal workplace meeting context) and they can demonstrate how the process of power relations and gender is negotiated between the manager and the subordinates. This part of the analysis will be presented in this chapter.

7.2. Analysis of the text (Micro-level)

7.2.1. Structure of the analysis:
In the data chapter the data was presented in the form of conversational analysis, each line of talk having a number. I first familiarized myself with the ideas provided in the data. Then, the features of interactional control, described in detail below, were identified and defined using Critical discourse analysis literature. After identifying the interactional control features, I categorized them into three sub topics: setting and policing the agenda, topic control and formulation, as listed by Fairclough (1992). In respect of each feature I tried to offer explanation of which participants utilized it, how they utilized it, and what they were trying to achieve from such utilization.

7.2.2. Interactional control features:
The main theoretical goal of the critical discourse analysis approach is to bridge the gap between micro and macro levels of social order (Alexander et al., 1987). Language use, discourse, communication and verbal interaction belong to the micro level, while power, dominance, and inequality between social groups belong to the macro level of social order. This section focuses on the micro level of critical discourse analysis, analysis of the language use, focusing on interactional control features that the participants utilize in their interaction to exercise or to negotiate power.

The main purpose of interactional control features is to guarantee smooth interactional organization. The turn taking process, selection and change of topics and opening and closing an

interaction are examples of these features. They are controlled by the participants collaboratively, but asymmetry might occur in the degree of control between the participants. The interactional control features of a specific genre provide claims about power relations between participants (Fairclough, 1992). The key term is genre, which, for Fairclough, is "the use of language associated with a particular social activity" (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138).

To demonstrate how interactional control features provide information about power relations, Fairclough (1992) draws two distinct forms of discourse from the same broad discourse type: medical interviews. He distinguishes the two discourses as standard and alternative medical interviews; in the former the doctor controls the turn taking and topic by controlling the question-response-assessment cycles, while in the second form of interview the overt asymmetries in the power marker are absent. In this case, the patient also uses some control features, such as initiating topics, because this medical interview varies from the traditional doctor-patient interview pattern. Fairclough attributes this variation to the shift in cultural values and social relations and shifts in power away from authority and expertise towards clients, shifts from formality towards informality.

7.2.2.1. Setting and policing the agenda
Setting and policing agendas is an important element of interactional control. Agendas are set usually by the most powerful participant as he/she can control the interaction by initiating and terminating it. Structuring the interaction into episodes is another practice adopted by the powerful participant. For example, teachers set and police the agenda of lessons by initiating topics in the form of questions and they terminate the topics by asking different questions or changing the topic completely (Thomas, 1988).

Evidence of agenda setting by the participants illustrates the different methods of policing and setting agendas, for example, accepting the participant's turn, evaluating the turn positively, rejecting the participant's turn and initiating another topic, forcing explicitness (Thomas, 1988). For example, at the beginning of the lesson teachers introduce the topic of discussion and then they try to keep the pupils to their agendas in various ways during the lesson; for example, they may reject pupils' answers that do not fit in with the order of development of the topic specified in the agenda that the teacher is following (Fairclough, 1992).

Another aspect of control of the agenda is the nature of questions asked by employees. The type of questions they ask, explanations of each type, and what they could imply is explained in detail below. These specific extracts from the data are chosen to demonstrate how the analysis is conducted; however, from page 7 onwards the original data from the previous chapter are referred to only by line number to avoid overloading the chapter with examples. All the examples use the same line numbers as in the original data to maintain consistency and ease of reading.

Example 1:

1   **<u>Male 5</u>** : Now what, Doctor? We spent a lot of time discussing this topic, we are very tired, tell

2   us the bottom line.

3   **<u>Male 4</u>**: honestly we are very tired.

4   **<u>Manager</u>**: As I told you before and I keep telling you, this situation has existed for a long time,

5   it   cannot be changed in one go.

6   **<u>Male 3</u>**: OK doctor, you did nothing regarding this issue.....................

7   Interrupted by male 5

8   **<u>Male 5:</u>** Dr, is this the first time you have heard about this issue? Since you were appointed as a

9   manager me and my colleagues have been asking you to do something about it.

10   **<u>Manager:</u>** I keep telling you, I am not ready and I am not able to put in a proposal that I know

11   will be rejected at the first attempt. First, I have to make sure that the issue will be resolved, by

12   applying step by step technique. For example, we asked for one employee and then we asked for

13   another one, eventually a new division will be opened.

14   **<u>Male 5</u>**: Dr, asking for one employee is................

15   Overlap

16   **<u>Male 3</u>**: Dr.... Dr....that means..... that means........................

17   ***Interrupted by male 4***

18   **<u>Male 4</u>**: I............ I............... I would like to say something. Dr, you always say I cannot

19   guarantee results; as my colleague (Female1) suggested, the administration should provide us

20   with employees who will be fully responsible for textbooks and we librarians should not be

21   involved in this task, I mean textbook distribution, this is a good idea. But what will happen is

22   this, they are going to provide us with one employee only who will be responsible for

23   distributing textbooks to 3,000 male and female students every semester, which is an impossible

24   task to do in only one week, as a result we librarians will have to help him/her, this

25   means that we go back to the starting point and nothing will change as we will have the same

26   extra workload, one that we should not have to put up with.

In example 1, the employee (male 5) opened the conversation by asking the manager a direct question seeking specific information (tell us the bottom line. *line 2*). The manager's utterance was not welcomed by male 3 and male 5 as he gave a very bureaucratic answer, by saying that the situation could not be changed in one go (lines 4 and 5). This may be evidence of his perception of his power and his ability to change things and this possibility will be examined in more detail in chapter 9.

So employee 3 was attempting to accuse the manager of not doing anything about this issue (OK doctor, you did nothing regarding this issue) (line 6) before male 5 interrupted him and asked the manager a question that implied repudiation (Dr, is this the first time you have heard about this issue? Since you were appointed as a   manager me and my colleagues have been asking you to do something about it.) (lines 8 and 9).

Asking the manager this question (*is this the first time you have heard about it?*) suggests that the employees rejected the manager's answer or at least they were not convinced of what the manager was trying to say, as they were seeking a different piece of information (assurance from the manager that he would change the situation) .

Example 2

1 **<u>Manager:</u>** I will give you a hint, this is what is going to happen, we are going to open a new

2 division and we will move some employees to this division, then we can say that we have a

3 shortage of employees in the old division. However, if we apply now for new employees to join

4 this division they are going to say that we have 6 employees and they have been doing all the

5 work for the last 8 years without any problems, so our proposal will be rejected easily.

6 **<u>Male 4:</u>** excuse me DR, I respect your point of view ... But

7 Interrupted by Female 1.

8 **<u>Female1</u>**: But Dr .... this is ....

9 *Interrupted by male 4*

10 **<u>Male 4</u>**: we are reaching a dead end point, to avoid rejection of the proposal you should divide us

11 according to our job specifications 2 in indexing section, 2 in the periodicals section, and 2 in

12 the supply section so you have no one in the textbook section, Dr you are putting us in an

13 embarrassing situation by saying you have 6 employees in the division, you should divide us into

14 different job specifications (description) like any other library or information

15 centre here in the university, so if you divide the existing employees into specific jobs you will

16 end up with a shortage in the number of employees and your proposal will be approved.

The employees used many methods to police the agenda of the meeting. First, they dismissed the manager's contribution, which they seem to consider irrelevant (line 1 to 5). Once the agenda of the interaction was established, the dominant speaker (male 4) dismissed the manager's contribution as irrelevant to the purpose of the conversation (*excuse me DR, I respect your point of view ... But we are reaching a dead end point)* (line 10)

1

Example 3 - 7

1   **Female 1:** do you remember when the College Board decided to provide us with a new

2   employee to help in the textbook section? Do you remember exactly when that was? Was it

3   during this semester?

4   **Manager**: almost

5   **Female 1**: OK, now it has been a long time since they announced this decision, where is this

6   new employee? Why is he not helping the rest of the staff here in library?

7   **Manager:** he has a problem with the College Board

Example 4

9   **Male3**: why he is not working like us? Why is his office located in the college administration

10   and not here in the library?

11   **Manager**: he is going to join you soon.

12   **Male 5**: no, he is not.

13   **Manager:** he is going to join you soon, his job description is to be responsible for

14   distributing textbooks and during off peak periods he is going to help you in the library on 131

15   the ground floor.

Example 5

17   **Male 3:** ok, why has he got an office? And we haven't?

18   **Manager**: because..... a few issues emerged when this employee was appointed.

19   **Male 3**: yeah............... issues!!!!!

20   **Male 5**: yeah.... yeah...... nepotism.

Example 6

22   **Manager**: I want to ask you a question............

23   Interrupted by male 4

24   **Male 4**: and you are telling me there are 6 employees in one division.

25   **Manager**: I want to ask you a question, how many employees work in one shift?

26   **Male 3**: 4 employees

Example 7

27   **Manager**: we have to keep ourselves away from other people's business, the bottom line is

28   we asked for something and they approved it, their problems are their own business not ours.

29   We have nothing to do with their problem with this new employee.

30   **Male 5**: the new employee is the winner in this issue; he has a new office where he is doing

31   nothing and he gets paid exactly like us and we are doing his work so he has everything.

32   **Male 3:** true, even the oldest employee here, who has worked here for 16 years, doesn't have a

33   similar office.

The first question in example 3 was a closed question (line 1), whereby the female employee expected the manager's answer to confirm a specific claim (that this issue was taking a long time). Once the manager confirmed the claim tentatively by saying (*almost*) (line 4) she continued by asking two more questions. She used two leading questions to make her point clear; the first question was about the precise location of the new employee (line 5 and 6), and this was followed by an open ended question about why the employee was not joining the library department (line 6).

In example 4, the male employee followed the same approach in asking questions as his female colleague in the previous example. Here the employee was seeking the manager's confirmation of a specific claim (that the new employee was to have specific privileges, such as a new office in a different location and different working condition) (lines 9 and 10). Then male 5 challenged the manager's answer when he confirmed that the new employee was joining soon (line 12) by saying (no *he is not).*

In example 5, again male 3 was looking for confirmation from the manager of the claim that the (the new employee was to enjoy better working conditions) (line 17). Although the manager answered the question (line 18), male 3 and male 5 showed signs that they were not convinced by the manager's answer (lines 19, 20).

 In example 5, the manager's contribution was challenged or laughed at (lines 19 & 20), indicating a complete lack of respect. Similarly, in example 6, the manager's contribution was interrupted by male 4 (and you are telling me there are 6 employees in one division) (line 24).

In example 7, not only was the manager's contribution ignored, but the manager's advice to the employees to keep out of other people's business was ignored and males 5 and 3 continued with the same topic (lines 30 to 33).

In the seven examples explained above, the employees were policing the agenda of the meeting. By policing the agenda they were trying to steer the conversation towards their goal of convincing the manager that changing the situation was an urgent need and any effort he made to change this situation would be highly appreciated and valued.

The employees continued to police the agenda of the meeting by initiating new topics and terminating others in the following example 8.

Example 8

1 Male 4: there is a brilliant solution. If you listen to me carefully, the college administration

2 declined our previous proposals because of lack of space for the textbook section, why do we

3 not ask them to divide the division here and open a window from outside so students can use it to

4 access the textbook section, this way the space problem will be resolved. The second matter is

5 the new employee, they have already announced the appointment of this new employee for

6 textbook section, they just need to activate this decision, we presented all the possible solutions

7 this way. This is only a short term solution until they create a new space.

8 Manager: Laugh, ha ha ha, this way you want to make it very real, as if it is this easy.

9 Female1: this is what the administration wants, they also said the lack of space was a problem

10 and I am pretty sure they will support male 4's suggestion.

11 Male 5: the space is always available, they could use one of the empty offices, but they use it as

12 an excuse not to solve this problem.

13 Manager: believe in me and trust what I am doing here, we are going to approach this issue step

14 by step and see what is available to us and appreciate it, but if hurdles come in the way we

15 should be more tolerant and try to be flexible.

16 Male 5: OK, no problem, we are going to trust what you are planning to do regarding this matter

17 and we are going to believe that the new employee is going to be responsible for textbooks, even

18 if is hard to believe, we have nothing to do with textbook distribution and we are not going to

19 help in any kind of jobs related to textbooks, so if later on he encounters a problem with

20 workload he should report it to the dean's office himself.

21 Manager: no, this is not going to happen, you should be involved in this job, you should help
22 him.

23   **Male 4:** give us a break please, we are tired of this issue and the textbook problem.

24   **Male 5 :** what??? No ,,,, wait a minute listen to me Dr, they said we lack space and we suggested

25   a space for it, they said no employees, but later they appointed one, now the problem should be

26   resolved and every one of us should be back to his/ her original duties, we have nothing to do

27   with textbooks and that's it.

28   Overlap

29   **Male 4:** he is right, yes (male 5) you are 100 % right, we should all go back to our original job

30   duties and textbooks are the new employee's responsibility.

31   **Manager:** I would like to ask you a question.

32   **Male 5:** go ahead

33   **Manager**: this new employee will need some training, aren't you required to teach him?

34   **Male 5**: yes it is OK, we are going to teach him, which will take a maximum of a week,

35   **Male 4:** we will teach him, it is O.K

36   **Manager**: the second part of the question, is he able to do all the work by himself? No, so you

37   should help him all the time.

38   **Male 4:** this is not our problem.

39   **Male 5:** wait ...

40   **Manager**: only help him during peak periods, and he is going to do all other duties.

41   **Male 4:** what other duties?

42   Overlap

43   **Male 5**: what other duties? His job is textbooks only.

44   **Manager**: for example bar-coding and follow up.

45   **Male 5:** what bar-coding, only click on a computer and print, this is not hard work. Even if we

46   ask the cleaner to do it he is willing to do bar-coding in no time.

47   *At this point Male 6, who had been silent all the meeting, left.*

48   **Manager:** OK, during peak times it is impossible for one employee to distribute all the books.

49   **Male 3:** no it is possible.

50   **Male 5:** he is required to, this is his job. If he complains he will complain in the dean's office

51   and they will get the picture. This is their problem and they have to solve it themselves. Because

52   we are in one division, the dean's office assume that we will work together but it should be this

53   way, you should explain to them frankly that your employees have different duties and they are

54   required to fulfil them and the textbooks are their responsibility, whether to assign one employee

55   or 10 it is their decision.

In the above example male subordinate 4 initiated a topic that provided a potential solution to the overload problem. However, the manager evaluated the subordinate's suggestion negatively by laughing at it (ha ha ha, this way you want to make it very real, as if it is this easy) (line 12 & 13). This utterance of the manager could be explained as questioning the rationality of the subordinate's suggestion.

In opposing the manager's evaluation, the female subordinate evaluated her colleague's suggestion (Male 4) positively by stating " *this is what the administration wants*" (line 14) and assured her colleague that his suggestion would be supported by the higher management (they will support male 4's suggestion) (line 16). With this utterance she challenged the manager's attempt to question the rationality of male 4's suggestion.

Subsequently, in line 17, male (5) asserted that the problem was not to do with the space because it had been always there, but he implied that the higher management had particular reasons for not wanting to solve this problem so they use the problem of space as a reason why the problem opening new department for textbook distribution is not solved (but they use it as an excuse not to solve this problem) . (lines 18 and 19). The manager ignored the previous explicit statement of male 5 that higher management did not care about their problems and he told the subordinate to be calm and to trust the method that he was following (lines 20, 21, 22, 23).

From line 24 to line 27 (OK, no problem, we are going to trust what you are planning to do regarding this matter and we are going to believe that the new employee is going to be responsible for textbooks, even if is hard to believe,) the subordinate "male 5" evaluated the advice provided by the manager by questioning its rationality in a form similar to "parent-child" interaction, showing asymmetry in power markers between the manager and his subordinates

(West and Zimmerman, 1977). In this particular utterance the subordinate was positioned in the powerful position of questioning the rationality of the manager's statement by saying, for example, "*we believe that the new employee is going to be responsible for textbooks, even if is hard to believe*" (lines 25 & 26). Here the subordinate is exercising power. The reasons why the subordinate is exercising power and how he assumes this powerful position will be demonstrated in the second chapter of the analysis. Then, he policed the agenda of the interaction by introducing a new topic, which is the librarians are not going to help the new appointed employee in any task related to textbooks "we are not going to help in any kind of jobs related to textbooks, so if later on he encounters a problem with workload he should report it to the dean's office himself" *(* lines 28, 29). The librarian here is stressing the importance of opening a new department for textbooks that is separate from the library department, and he is trying to make out that the solution the administration is trying to impose is not going to work because adding a new employee to the library department is not going to solve the problem as the librarians will be required to help him during peak times of textbook distribution.

His statement was rejected by the manager (lines 31 & 32) through his assertion that they should help the new employee (no, this is not going to happen, you should be involved in this job, you should help him). Males 4 and 5 (lines 33 to 40) rejected the manager's statement and negotiated that the idea of helping the new employee was not part of their duties and introduced the idea of job responsibility for every employee (, we should all go back to our original job duties and textbooks are the new employee's responsibility(line 40).

The manager (line 41) controlled the agenda of the interaction by seeking the employees' permission to ask them a question (I would like to ask you a question). As he had greater legitimate power than the subordinates, the manager did not need permission to start an

utterance; however, in this interactional context he was trying to attract the attention of all the participants in order to explain an important point to the subordinates.

The sequence of the utterances from lines 42 to 48 works to achieve one of the manager's goals, which was to convince the subordinates to help the new employee in textbook distribution tasks. Once he had attracted the subordinates' attention, when they said "go ahead" (line 42), he asked them a question of repudiation, "aren't you required to teach him?" (line 43). Asking the subordinates this question is evidence that he was not satisfied with their previous statements that they were not required to help the new employees, so he used this sort of question to express his dissatisfaction. The employees were convinced partially by the manager's argument that they needed to train the new employee (Male 5: yes it is OK, we are going to teach him, which will take a maximum of a week, and Male 4: we will teach him, it is O.K) (line 44 and 45). Then, once he had made sure that the subordinates were convinced by the idea of the training, he shifted toward his main goal of convincing them of the need to help the new employee at all times (is he able to do all the work by himself? No, so you should help him all the time) (lines 46 and 47), but they resisted his suggestion. In order to convince the subordinates, the manager lowered his demand from one of helping the new employee in distributing the textbooks all the time (you should help him all the time) (line 47) to helping him only during peak times (only help him during peak periods, and he is going to do all other duties) (line 50). Even when the manager lowered his demands, the employees continued to resist the idea proposed by the manager.

 In order to do so, they used different methods to convince the manager of their viewpoint, for example, explaining that the new employee was able to perform the tasks by himself and did not need help (what bar-coding, only click on a computer and print, this is not hard work. Even if we

ask the cleaner to do it he is willing to do bar-coding in no time.) (lines 55 & 56). However, if he did face problems, this should be reported to the dean's office (this is his job. If he complains he will complain in the dean's office and they will get the picture) (lines 60 & 61). Here the employees used rationality in providing reasons and suggestions to convince the manager of their viewpoints.

To sum up, setting and policing the agenda is a form of controlling the talk that is usually done by the powerful speaker in the interaction; from the extracts above we saw that the manager and the librarians set and policed the agenda almost equally. I expected that manager to police the agenda of this meeting as he holds authority and legitimate power, but the analysis above demonstrated that the librarians also were powerful speakers in the meeting although they do not hold any legitimate power. The librarians policed the agenda of the talk and to convince the manager about their point of view they tried different methods and techniques to steer the wheel of the talk towards their goal, which is to convince the manager about their demand for the opening of a new department for textbook distribution.

The second interactional control feature that conveys power is topic control.

1   **<u>Male 5</u>** : Now what, Doctor? We spent a lot of time discussing this topic, we are very tired, tell

2   us the bottom line.

3   **<u>Male 4</u>**: honestly we are very tired.

4   **<u>Manager</u>**: As I told you before and I keep telling you, this situation has existed for a long time,

5   it   cannot be changed in one go.

6   **<u>Male 3</u>**: OK doctor, you did nothing regarding this issue.....................

7   Interrupted by male 5

8   **<u>Male 5:</u>** Dr, is this the first time you have heard about this issue? Since you were appointed as a

9   manager me and my colleagues have been asking you to do something about it.

10   **<u>Manager:</u>** I keep telling you, I am not ready and I am not able to put in a proposal that I know

11   will be rejected at the first attempt. First, I have to make sure that the issue will be resolved, by

12   applying step by step technique. For example, we asked for one employee and then we asked for

13   another one, eventually a new division will be opened.

14   **<u>Male 5</u>**: Dr, asking for one employee is................

15   Overlap

16   **<u>Male 3</u>**: Dr.... Dr....that means..... that means.......................

17   *Interrupted by male 4*

18   **<u>Male 4</u>**: I............ I............... I would like to say something. Dr, you always say I cannot

19   guarantee results; as my colleague (Female1) suggested, the administration should provide us

20   with employees who will be fully responsible for textbooks and we librarians should not be

21   involved in this task, I mean textbook distribution, this is a good idea. But what will happen is

22   this, they are going to provide us with one employee only who will be responsible for

23   distributing textbooks to 3,000 male and female students every semester, which is an impossible

24   task to do in only one week, as a result we librarians will have to help him/her, this

25   means that we go back to the starting point and nothing will change as we will have the same

26   extra workload, one that we should not have to put up with.

7.2.2.2. Topic control

Controlling the topic involves the exercise of power and control. In this excerpt, it was mainly the employees who introduced new topics through the questions they asked the manager and the suggestions they made. Although the main topic in all the extracts was the workload problem the employees faced, and their need for a new employee to reduce the pressure resulting from a high workload, the employees introduced sub topics within this main topic, and these sub topics flowed in a specific sequence, moving from one stage to another. First, employees expressed the outcome of the situation for them (tiring and time consuming) in example 1. Secondly, in example 2 they shifted to asking about the employee's location and the lack of change in the situation. Then the topic shifted towards logistical details (the new employee's working conditions, the location of the new employee's office), whilst in example 4 they moved on to comparing the information in the previous example to their situation and asking why they were treated differently.

The flow of the topics and the shifts between them worked in accordance with the pre-set agenda. Here the employees could have had a pre-set agenda of demanding concrete action from the manager. In this context, the employees were the powerful participants as they were the ones controlling the nature of the questions as well as introducing the topics. This control of questions and topics reinforces the impression that the employees were working through a pre-set agenda, as they shifted from one stage of it to another as soon as they received satisfactory information from the manager. The employees policed the agenda of the meeting by applying different techniques; first, evaluating the manger's turns, either by accepting what he was saying or rejecting what he was saying by initiating another topic. For example, in example 1, male 5 initiated the topic of the outcome of the problem they are facing, but as the manager's response

did not satisfy the employee he rejected this response by initiating another topic that fell within the agenda he had set. However, this time the question was more direct, and accused the manager of not doing his job (<u>Male 5:</u> Dr, is this the first time you have heard about this issue? Since you were appointed as a manager me and my colleagues have been asking you to do something about it (line 8 to 10). Again the manager repeated his response, but in more detail (I keep telling you, I am not ready and I am not able to send a proposal that I know will be declined from the first attempt. First I have to make sure that the issue will be resolved by applying step by step technique. For example, we ask for one employee and then we ask for another one, eventually a new division will be opened. (line 10 to 13).

Looked at from the manager's point of view, this agenda was not as he predicted, as we can see from the manager's answers to the questions. For example, he kept saying the same thing in different ways: when the employees accused him of not doing his job, he said, (this situation has existed for a long time, it cannot be changed in one go), (lines 4 and 5*)*   or "First, I have to make sure that the issue will be resolved by applying step by step technique" (lines 11 and 12).

Example 2

1   <u>Male3</u>: why is he not working like us? Why is his office located in the college administration
2   and not here in the library?

3   <u>Manager</u>: he is going to join you soon.

4   <u>Male 5</u>: no he is not.

5   <u>Manager:</u> he is going to join you soon, his job description is to be responsible for distributing
6   textbooks and during off peak periods he is going to help you in the library on the ground floor.

Similarly, in example 2 above, when the librarians asked about the new employee in lines 1 and 2 , the manager replied, "he is going to join you soon", (line 3) and then he added after the librarian male 5 challenged him, "he is going to join you soon, his job description is to be responsible for distributing text books and during off peak periods he is going to help you in the library on the ground floor" (lines 5 and 6).

Example 3

1   **Manager**: you are rushing for results, I told you just wait and see.

2   **Male 5**: oh my god………. oh my god…. Dr, please try to be helpful………..please….. today you are
3   with us, tomorrow we do not know, they may appoint a new manager and we have to tell this
4   story again and again.

5   **Male 4:** Dr, start from now, start to do something from now, you have three weeks, try to
6   prepare an organizational chart for the library and your employees and everyone's duties and add
7   the new employees in the textbook section so later on if they ask you why your employees are
8   not helping the new employee tell them that your employees are busy with their duties and
9   explain to them using this organizational chart.

10 **Female 1**: yeah this is a good idea.

11 **Manager:** would you like your proposal to be declined? Or do you want something that would
12 be implemented?

13 **Male 5:** wait a minute Dr.. wait…………..O.K ……….. But ..

14 Interrupted by male 3

15 **Male 3**: you said a while ago …this issue started 8 years ago and we may need another 8 years to
16 see a change.

17 **Manager:** no, it's not going to be long.

18 **Male 3**: you said so a while ago.

In utterances on lines 2, 3 and 4 the subordinate (male 5) initiated a new topic based on his view that the decisions of higher management were robust and they could appoint a new manager in no time (today you are with us, tomorrow we do not know, they may appoint a new manager and we have to tell this story again and again). Another subordinate initiated a new topic (in lines 6 to 9) relating to the effectiveness of providing a chart for the department setting out duties and tasks of the employees, when male 4 said (try to prepare an organizational chart for the library and your employees and everyone's duties and add the new employees in the textbook section so later on if they ask you why your employees are not helping the new employee tell them that your employees are busy with their duties and explain to them using this organizational chart). Although this suggestion was rational and doable, the manager declined and dismissed it by asking a question of repudiation *'would you like your proposal to be declined?'* (line 11). This is evidence of the explicit exercise of power and reinforcement of the power structure by the manager because when he asked this question he was implying that he knew exactly when the proposal could be accepted and when it could be rejected, implying this knowledge also demonstrated his relationship with the higher management and when they would accept or reject a proposal.

Once the manager went back to the idea of the rules and regulations of accepting or rejecting the proposal (lines 11& 12), the text of male 3 (this issue started 8 years ago and we may need another 8 years to see a change) (in lines 15 & 16) demonstrates that the subordinate policed the agenda by shifting the talk toward the timeline needed for implementing the change and the fact that it was taking a long time to be implemented. The manager rejected the subordinate's claim that the process was taking a long time (no it's not going to be long) (line 17); however, the

subordinate challenged the manager and continued with his assertion (you said so a while ago) (in line 18).

So far, the analysis of the text in all the above extracts has illustrated that in most of the utterances the subordinates policed and controlled the agenda of the meeting by initiating new topics, accepting some of the manager's statements and rejecting others. The manager's utterances all went in one direction; his goal was to convince the subordinates of the higher management plans and policies for dealing with the workload problem. Although he made several attempts to win the subordinates over, they resisted these attempts by changing the topics or by rejecting his ideas explicitly.

Example 4

1   **Manager**: when I signed my contract for this job, I signed to manage a supporting department

2   that does the job of a library and many other supporting jobs and when I submitted the report to

3   the dean I showed him the time plan and the short and long term objectives, unfortunately it was

4   neglected, in all meetings they always focus on academic problems and issues and they ignore

5   our problems, unfortunately, our department is always marginalized.

6   **Male 3:** Dr try to push them harder, so they can feel our problem.

7   **Male 4:** yeah try to push them harder, please…

8   **Male 5:** as you said we are supporting staff, are we required to do any job? Are you going to

9   work with us, you and the information systems manager, because you are saying we are all

10 supporting staff, are you going to join us?

11 **Manager**: why not?

12 **Male 5:** this is the bottom line, we are saying there must be a job description for us, all our duties

13 should be identified and defined. They are saying (the college management) we are one unit and

14 we should work together but they should define all our job titles and job descriptions so we will

15 have the opportunity to be promoted, and to work within a department that values our work. I

16 travelled abroad and did a degree but this has not changed my work duties, I am in the same

17 office and doing the same duties before and after getting my degree, if I knew this I would not

18 have bothered to travel to study.

19 Female 1: true, it is very stressful when your achievements are not appreciated.

20 **Male 4:** management have many problems, they have an excess number of employees, bad

21 management, for example, coordinators of some departments told us that most of the week they

22   do nothing because they are not required to do a lot of tasks compared to us. We work very hard

23   compared to them and it is not appreciated, we are much better than them in commitment and

24   hard work, honestly.

25   **Female:** it is not acceptable now to delay solutions.

26   **Male 4:** true they should not delay dealing with this issue.

27   **Manager:** they are planning to provide a new employee, who will be joining this department

28   soon.

29   **Male 5:** what? No, if he joins this department the situation will be the same because we will

30   end up doing the textbook distribution duties, he should be working under the dean's office like a

31   new division or section that has nothing to do with us.

32   **Male 4:** believe me Dr, if you agree on this solution, it would be like silencing us forever.

33   **Male 5:** they should not do this, even the dean must not decide to do this, if he does then we are

34   going to be in big trouble and this problem will go further and our reactions will be

35   unpredictable.

36   **Male 4:** the dean cannot decide to add a new employee to our department and leave the textbook

37   responsibility to us, he should be stopped.

38   **Male5:** he should be stopped by you.

39   **Male 4:** Dr you are our only hope, please reject this decision (to add a new employee to this

40   department) and please ask them to open a new division, e.g. textbook division, and it will be

41   highly appreciated if they put it in a different building.

42 **Female:** Dr, allow me please to say this, I feel that you are not fully convinced of what these

43 employees are saying, since the beginning of the meeting you have been defending the Dean's

44 office actions, you react as if you are not part of this department, you have to believe and feel

45 their problems before you represent them in front of the dean.

46 **Manager;** I understand this is a very stressful situation But I really cannot do anything about it. I

47 think we have discussed this topic thoroughly and now we are going to move to the second point

48 in the agenda, shift

The turning point in this meeting was manifested in the above extract, when the manager took a different stand of no longer representing higher management interests and, instead, supporting the subordinates' view that the library department was marginalized compared to other academic departments (in all meetings they always focus on academic problems and issues and they ignore our problems; unfortunately, our department is always marginalized.*) (lines 4 & 5 *). He presented this idea as a story containing some personal details, for example, (when I signed my contract for this job, I signed to manage a supporting department that do the job of a library and many other supporting jobs and when I submitted the report to the dean I showed him the time plan and the short and long term objectives, unfortunately it was ignored) (lines 1, 2, and 3).

This change in the manager's approach led the subordinates to appreciate his move to share this piece of information with them, and they then used a less challenging tone in their responses to the manager's statements and they became more explicit in criticizing higher management's policies. For example, (lines 6 and 7) males 3 and 4 adopted a more respectful tone in asking the manager to push harder to convince the higher management, compared to the previous utterances. For example they used the phrase "try to push them harder, Please, try to do this*".*

From line number 8 to line 18 male 5 was trying to make sense of the idea of "supporting staff" and its consequences on the librarians' work conditions. Therefore, he started with a question of repudiation: "as you said we are supporting staff are we required to do any job?", and "are you going to work with us*?"* The posing of these questions demonstrates that the subordinate was not happy with the idea of the librarians being called "supporting staff". He then explained his idea for the provision of job titles and descriptions for every employee in the library department, as the current lack of clarity in job descriptions deprived them of the opportunity for promotion (they should define all our job titles and job descriptions so we will have the opportunity to be

promoted, and to work within a department that values our work) (lines 14 and 15). Then he continued by telling his story of how he had studied abroad and gained a degree but never been promoted (I travelled abroad and did a degree but this has not changed my work duties, I am in the same office and doing the same duties before and after getting my degree, if I knew this I would not have bothered to travel to study) (lines 16,17,18).

The story told by male 5 opened up an opportunity for the subordinates to criticize the strategies of the higher management explicitly. For example, (in lines 20 to 24) many problems were mentioned (e.g. excessive number of employees, lack of coordination). Similarly, the female subordinate criticized the delay in finding solutions (it is not acceptable now to delay solutions) and this statement was also supported by male 4 (true they should not delay dealing with this issue) (Lines 25 and 26).

Only after the subordinates expressed strong criticism of higher management's policies and strategies did the manager control the agenda of the talk by presenting information that he had not previously disclosed during the meeting: "they are planning to provide a new employee who will be joining this department soon" (line 27). This is the demand that the subordinate had been focusing on since the beginning of the meeting, but the manager chose not to release his information on it to the subordinates until towards the end of the meeting, and only after they had expressed criticism of higher management. The timing of this disclosure might have been based on a desire to divert the discussion from explicit criticism of higher management, which is not acceptable from lower level employees.

Although the good news that was provided (in line 27) should have pleased the subordinates, their reaction towards it was not as expected. They were very upset and disappointed (lines 29 to

35). This is because they had expected to be provided with a new employee in the department, but felt he should be under the dean's office's management, as placing the new employee under library management would not solve the problem because the librarians would be required to help him distribute the textbooks, and the same problem would occur again. They expressed their resentment and disappointment by predicting what would happen if this decision were to be applied, e.g. "we will end up doing the textbook distribution duties*" (*line 30), *"*it would be like silencing us forever*" (line 32)* " if he does, then we are going to be in big trouble and this problem will go further and our reactions will be unpredictable" (lines 34 & 35). Then, they shifted their talk toward asking the manager to act; e.g. "the dean should be stopped by you" (line 38) *"*you are our only hope, please reject this decision*" (line 39) "*please ask them to open a new division*" (line 40).* The manager ignored all of these statements and he closed this topic and closed the meeting's agenda.

In this section, I used three extracts to analyze how the manager and the librarians controlled the topics in this meeting. From the analysis we saw the librarians initiated new topics whenever they felt the need to introduce them to convince the manager about their demand, which is the provision of a new employee who will be responsible for textbook distribution and who will be under the dean's office's management. The manager also initiated new topics in these extracts, the manager controlled the flow of the talk and the topics discussed to keep the librarians within his agenda, which was to convince them to lower their demand and to introduce the higher management point of view in every matter the librarians discussed.

7.2.2.3. Formulation

Formulation is defined as interactional feature that offers a public display of agreed inter-subjectivity" (Antaki et al., 2007, 168) and packages the previous interaction (Potter, 1996, 48).

The employees' reactions to the manager's appeals to help the new employee with textbook distribution duties (lines 209 to 215), in extract 1 below, can be read as "formulation", as in the following extract.

Manager: I would like to ask you a question.

Male 5: go ahead

Manager: this new employee will need some training, aren't you required to teach him?

Male 5: yes it is OK, we are going to teach him, which will take a maximum of a week,

Male 4: we will teach him, it is OK.

Manager: the second part of the question, is he able to do all the work by himself? No, so you should help him.

Male 4: this is not our problem.

Male 5: wait ...

Manager: only help him during peak periods, and he is going to do all other duties

From the analysis of the data above, it is apparent that one employee (male 4) was most involved in formulating his colleagues' utterances and summarizing them to the manager. For example, he formulated the idea that helping the new employees was not one of the librarians' duties

As in the following extract,

Male 4: I .... I .... I would like to say something. Dr, you always say I cannot guarantee results, as my colleague (Female1) suggested that the administration should provide us with employees who will be fully responsible for textbooks and we librarians should not be involved in this task, I mean textbook distribution, this is a good idea. But what will happen is this, they are going to provide us with one employee only who will be responsible for distributing text books to 3,000 male and female students every semester, which is an impossible task to do within only one week, as a result we librarians will have to help him/her, this means that we go back to the starting point and nothing will change as we will have the same extra workload that we are not required to do.

Then he formulated the idea of categorizing the librarians according to job specifications as in the following extract.

Male 4: we are reaching a dead end point, to avoid rejection of the proposal you should divide us according to our job specifications 2 in indexing section, 2 in the periodicals section, and 2 in the supply section so you have no one in the textbook section, Dr you are putting us in an embarrassing situation by saying you have 6 employees in the division, you should divide us into different job specifications (description) like any other library or information centre here in the university, so if you divide the existing employees into specific jobs you will end up with a shortage in the number of employees and your proposal will be approved.

He then formulated the lack of appreciation that the librarians encountered every day in the library department as in the following extract.

Male 4: I would like to tell you Dr that whatever we do is not appreciated and not going to be appreciated in the future, your position as manager is going to change in the near future and a

new manager will come and we will have to tell the same story and he or she is going to give the same excuses, for me I have worked here for 13 years and I am able to work for another 20 years and nothing is going to change regarding the workload and the textbook section, I developed a medical problem because of this work and my colleague here has the same problem and no one........

He also formulated the idea that the manager should react promptly to the high workload problem the librarians were facing in the following extract.

Male 4: Dr start from now, start to do something from now, you have three weeks, try to prepare an organizational chart for the library and your employees and everyone's duties and add the new employees in the textbook section so later on if they ask you why your employees are not helping the new employee tell them that your employees are busy with their duties and explain to them using this organizational chart.

 Male 4 was the longest serving in the organization, having spent 13 years in the library department, and this might explain why he delivered most of the utterances that challenged the manager.

The female employee also formulated her colleagues' points and presented them to the manager, but she added elements of their needs and feelings to strengthen this formulation, as in the following extract.

Female 1: but the employees have rights and needs, it has to be accomplished, they are very tired, now it's years since this hassle started and no one is listening

And

<u>Female 1:</u> they are saying this is a preliminary solution (to provide us with this new employee) but why has this solution not been applied yet.

One form of formulation is completion, which involves the speakers' completion of each other's utterances to establish themselves as a collective entity (Antaki et al., 1995). Lerner (1993) takes the analysis further by adding that in such completions "speakers can demonstrate their co-participation by joining in the production of an on-going action, for example, through anticipatory completion of that participant's not-yet-completed utterance" (1993: 221). In this interactional context, the employees completed each other's utterances. For example, when male 5 said, "*the new employee is the winner in this issue, he has a new office where he is doing nothing and he gets paid exactly the same as us and we are doing his work, so he has everything",* male 3 completed his colleague's sentences by offering the following example:

<u>***Male 3:***</u> *"true, even the oldest employee here, who has worked here for 16 years, doesn't have a similar office."* Such linguistics act to strengthen the collective aspect of the context.

In this section I analyzed one form of interactional control features, formulation. Usually formulation is practised by the powerful speaker in the interaction; male 4 is the one who formulated his colleagues' utterances to remind the manager of the librarians' main demands and to keep the conversation of the colleagues within the agenda he set.

7.3. Conclusion

The overall picture, with respect to interactional control features, is that the control of interaction is symmetrically exercised by both the librarians and the manager. This was manifested in question initiation, topic control and policing, and agenda setting.

The aim of using these interactional features is as stated by Thomas (1989): they are used by the dominant participant to keep the subordinate participant from drifting from the established path (the pre-set agenda). Also, they are used by the dominant participants to develop new stages in the interaction. Finally, these interactional functions can be used to mark the fact that the dominant speaker is going beyond his /her pre-set agenda. In this interactional context, when the librarians utilized the control features, they were trying to convince the manager of their established agenda, which is the provision of a new employee who will be responsible for textbook distribution tasks and who will work under the dean's office's management not the library management. The manager also utilized interactional control features to keep the librarian within his agenda, which is to keep the librarians' demands within the management boundaries. So overall, the reason the manager and the librarians utilized these features was to achieve specific goals.

The cultural influence in the performance of identity and the negotiation of power relations is worth noting here. In the Omani culture, power structures are more transparent than in the western culture: where such structures are not explicitly practised. For example, in Oman individuals at lower levels in the hierarchy are expected to show respect for individuals at higher levels of the hierarchy, and they are expected to acknowledge the power differences in every applicable way, such as by showing solidarity and supporting management's ideas.

Therefore, members of this culture are expected to obey the rules and regulations and respect authority and are unlikely to transgress against the practice of power by powerful individuals in the society. However, the interactional control features explored in this chapter seem to indicate that the individuals at a lower level in the hierarchy negotiated power and transgressed power structure norms applied by individuals in the higher level of hierarchy.

These results demonstrate that power is not a commodity and does not reside within the individual, as the previous approaches in communication and gender assumed. The use of interactional control features in analysis of the data indicates that power and power markers, such as interactional control features, are negotiated and always in process and people use them to achieve certain goals within the interactional context. Here, the employees used the interactional features to convince the manager of the necessary changes to a situation which involved a high workload and consumed a lot of their time and effort.

Similarly, at some points in the interaction the manager utilized these interactional control features to maintain the subordinates' discussion within the pre-set agenda. The pre-set agenda of the manager was to keep the librarians' discussions within boundaries and to keep their demands within the realistic domain.

The above discussion has established an understanding that the previous approaches to communication and gender have proved to be unsatisfactory in providing a comprehensive explanation of the processes involved because they assume that power markers, such as interactional control features, reside within the participants and only the powerful participants in the interaction, such as the manager or the male speaker, will tend to utilize them. However, the results indicate that these power markers are not merely a commodity at the disposal of the powerful participant; they are always negotiated according to the goals that the participants are seeking to achieve through their utilization. The results show that although the manager was the legitimately powerful participant in this meeting, in comparison to the librarian participants, he rarely used the interactional control features. The following two chapters (eight and nine) will analyze the macro-level of interaction.

Chapter 8: Analysis of the discourse practice (Macro level)

8.1. Introduction

The existing literature on gender and communication assumes individuals' identities and the social categories to which they belong to be a cognitive reality and their effects on people to be obvious (Haslam & Turner, 1994). Based on this assumption, researchers using these approaches restrict themselves in analysis of data to categories that preoccupy them and they use these categories as explanations for what is happening in the interaction process (Schegloff, Wetherell, 2000). However,   Antaki (1996) and Drew and Heritage (1992) demonstrated that the identities of the individuals change as the interaction proceeds. They showed that throughout the interaction, identities of individuals change according to their interactional goals. For example, individuals identify themselves as a part of a group or accomplish ingroupness in interaction when it becomes relevant to their interactional goals. If we view all interactions as oriented by specific goals and interests pursued by participants to track what is happening in the talk in interaction process, we will be able to see why participants invoke certain identities and why they reject others. Also, we will be able to identify why they did so by being aware that they have specific orientation or goals that they want to achieve. Therefore, my third argument is that interactions are structured according to the goals that the participants in the interaction want to achieve.   In order to explain this, analysis of the meeting will explore how the conversation between the manager and the subordinates is institutionalized and situated towards achieving the goals that the participants in the conversation want to achieve.

 To advance this argument, throughout this section I will explore the identity that the manager is invoking within this meeting and why he is invoking this identity. Also, the identity of the

subordinates is highlighted and what they aim to achieve by invoking the identity. The concept of in-group and out-group will frequently be used to explain the alignment process that the manager and the subordinates are practicing during the interaction process and what they are trying to achieve by these alignments.

8.2. Identity of the manager

According to the social construction approach, people construct specific identities within specific discourses according to the situation and the social context (Musson and Duberley, 2007). With identity as a continuing process of self mirroring through discursive practice individuals identify themselves as independent entities through utilizing and attending to certain discourses(Humphreys and Brown, 2002).

To achieve a coherent narrative that describes their sense of identity, individuals tend to repair their identification by attending to some discourses and rejecting others (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, p. 627). Individuals may try to construct a coherent narrative that describes their sense of identity to achieve goals out of the interaction process; these goals can be personal or organizational. Through this process individuals or participants may change their stands and shift their identities. For example, Musson and Duberley (2007) found that organization supervisors responded to a participation discourse to manage their own subjectivity and to construct ideal identities for themselves and the organization. This construction of the ideal identity that is regulated by the management allows them to perceive their work as rewarding. This research demonstrated how individuals can manage discursive change in ways that allow them to achieve their goals and meet their interests (Mumby and Clair, 1997). Overall, the supervisors manage their identity by utilizing subject positions made available to them in this discourse in a way that helps them pursue their plans.

Within the bureaucratic discourse that I described in chapter six, the manager actively engages in creating and maintaining a coherent identity narrative (Weick, 1995). The use of this discourse invokes an identity of an authoritative manager. As the image of the authoritative manager is one whose first priority is to assure adherence to the organization's rules, "the manager identity" invoked and produced in the bureaucratic discourse is that of a rule follower. Within the bureaucratic discourse, he articulated his inability to send the proposal further up the hierarchy because it did not satisfy the minimum requirements of the university rules and regulations. To take this explanation a level further, the manager was drawing upon and trying to achieve a hierarchy by identifying himself as a rule follower, because authority is still respected in Oman and in this context the identity of the rule follower has not achieved the pejorative status that it has in the West. For example, in the West (e.g. USA and most European countries) an individual who claims authority by following rules tends to be labelled pejoratively and people are likely to reject that person's position (Caughie, 1997).

However, the manager struggled to maintain this identity. For example, at the beginning of the meeting he emphasized the idea that he could not send this proposal because it did not adhere to university rules and he should assure its validity before sending it to the university administration. However, when the employees resisted what he was saying, for example " Dr you always say I cannot guarantee results" (line 19) , and "we have been facing this situation for 8 years, now we are tired" (*line 249*), he invoked the identity of a manager who held limited power and worked under the dean's office *(* I work under the dean's office, he is my superior and I am only a subordinate). Through this identity the manager was to deny responsibility because he identified himself as part of the dean's office group, which held the centralized

power; therefore, his powerful position derived from this system that stood behind him. And he is denying responsibility because of his position in the hierarchy.

He then shifted towards invoking the identity of a mentor or an advisor: "I advise you to take things gently" (line 98), and "working in a library is mental and physical work, you need to keep this in mind"(line 155), who constantly advised the employees about the procedures that should be followed in this particular situation. Although this identity can be said to fall within the bureaucratic discourse, the main focus of the utterances was on the advice that employees should follow; it drifted away from the rules and regulations talk that was manifested in the previous identity to more advice giving and suggestion making. Examples of this are giving advice to employees about the proper ways to send a proposal, and advising them to focus on their problem and to keep themselves away from others people's business "we have to keep ourselves away from other people's business, the bottom line is we asked for something and they approved it, their problems are their own business not ours. We have nothing to do with their problem with this new employee" (Lines 113 to 115).

By invoking this identity the manager was - whether intentionally or not - emphasizing power differences between him and the librarians because it is expected that a powerful individual will mentor and provide advice to individuals with less power. The identity invoked by the manager within the bureaucratic discourse demonstrated how power relations can be constructed through identities and, equally, how by invoking certain identities power structures are reinforced. Here the manager was trying to achieve a powerful position in this interactional context and therefore he invoked an identity that could achieve this purpose.

Burr (1995) noted that discourses offer certain social positions and status for individuals. This positioning in the bureaucratic discourse worked in achieving hierarchy for the manager, as it is expected that higher level employees will refer to rules and regulations more frequently than lower level employees. At the same time he grouped himself with the system and identified himself as a mentor. For example, the manager said " if you follow my advice the proposal will be approved" (line 245) and " such processes need a lot of time and planning because the college administration needs to communicate with the university administration before they move to the second step" (line 10). Generally, we saw that the manager invoked, rejected and accepted certain identities within the bureaucratic discourse to achieve hierarchy and authority. The social construction tenets allow us to provide explanations for why individuals perform and invoke certain identities within certain discourses. They also help in demonstrating how power relations were constructed and reconstructed through the identity work of "rule follower", " implementer", and "advisor" invoked by the manager.

The manager also invoked an identity of a manager as "the representative of the system". Within this identity he articulated what the system wanted. For example, the higher management wanted the subordinates to be aware that implementing such a decision (new employee in textbook section that is managed by dean's office) would take a lot of time and if a new employee joined the department, the librarian subordinates should always help him in his tasks. Also, he tried to advocate the higher management interests; for example, when he said "and see what is available for us and appreciate it but if hurdles come in the way we should be more tolerant and try to be flexible" (lines 192 and 193). By identifying himself as a representative of the system, the manager was drawing upon and trying to place himself within the hierarchy.

Another important reason why the manager identified himself as representative of the system is congruent with the concept of group membership identity by Tajfel (1973). This was manifested in the way he described himself: "I am committed to obey the rules and regulations of this university, I do not like to be described as someone who does not obey these rules" (lines 92 to 93), also he placed himself as part of the higher management group by showing his knowledge of procedures and what should be done and the time line for the implementation processes (such decisions need a lot of time, it cannot be done in one go) (line 5) (as if it is this easy) (line 186).

Alvesson and Wilmott's (2002) study focused on how the identity of employees is regulated to be congruent with organizational control. Identity regulation includes the effects of social practices on the processes of constructing and reconstructing the identity (Alvesson and Wilmott, 2002). They noted that training, induction programmes and promotion procedures in organizations shape and structure the direction of the identities of employees in these organizations. Therefore, if the organization becomes a significant source of identification for the individual, the characteristics of the organization inform the development of identity work by the individuals (Alvesson and Wilmott, 2002). We saw that one identity with which the manager was trying to identify himself was that of a representative of the system, and it can be argued that this identity was regulated by the characteristics of this organization. When the manager identified himself as a representative of the system, he was reproducing the rules and the regulations of this organization, as well as reproducing the power and hierarchy relevant to his institutional position.

Group membership identity in this interactional context appeared as a resource for the manager to draw on to achieve something in the interaction (Antaki, 1988). He achieved a more powerful position through this identity, just as individuals gain strength and power by cooperation and uniting with members of the powerful group in Arab cultures (Ayish, 1998). In this context, as higher management hold the legitimate power, this membership identity allows him to claim power and to convince the subordinates about higher management demands.

This group membership identity supported his powerful position and reinforced the power structures that allowed him to challenge the subordinates' rationality when suggesting new solutions for the problem, for example, by joking about what they suggested (Manager: Laugh, ha ha ha, this way you want to make it very real, as if it is this easy) and asking them questions that derided their suggestions (Manager: this new employee will need some training, aren't you required to teach him? And is he able to do all the work by himself? No, so you should help him).

We saw from the analysis of identity of participants in this meeting that it is false to theorize that power is a commodity of individuals and that power relations define the identities of the participants; for example, traditional theorization of power asserts that a powerful individual will have a certain identity that reflects this power and will be expected to interact in a certain way that reflects the power he or she holds . Similarly, the previous approaches to gender and communication adopted an assumption that power relations exist prior to identity (O'Barr and Atkins, 1982). However, the current analysis has shown this assumption to be false as structures in the talk only exist when they are enacted by the participants, for example, doing gender and doing power (West and Zimmerman, 1987, Giddens 1991.). These structures are not fixed and

not a commodity of individuals but they occur during a process of negotiation between the individuals within the interactional context.

From the analysis above we also saw that power relations were structured in a way that achieved the participants' (manager and librarians) goals. Therefore, individuals negotiated these power relations by invoking identities such as the rule follower, mentor, or advisor identity, as invoked by the manager. In this case these identities worked to achieve goals of the manager; since one of the goals was to claim authority, in order to achieve this goal he invoked identities that would help him achieve authority. Also, by identifying himself as a representative of the system, the manager was trying to achieve a powerful position. Similarly, the structure of the talk allowed the librarians to invoke particular identities to respond to the manager's talk, and this will now be explained.

8.3. Identities of librarians invoked within the bureaucratic discourse:

As well as invoking identities for the manager, the subordinates' responses to the bureaucratic discourse invoked a number of identities. The first obvious identity that can be detected from the text is that of "revolutionary employees" who want to change the reality and create a better working environment. This revolutionary identity is manifested in statements that ask for radical change of the situation. For example, male 4 said "we suggested that the administration should provide us with employees who will be fully responsible for textbooks and we librarians should not be involved in this task, I mean textbook distribution, this is a good idea", "this situation needs to be changed", "if they didn't meet our demands, our reaction will be unpredictable". The subordinates were trying to win the manager's approval for changing the stressful work conditions that had lasted for eight years.

The talk in this particular meeting structured the power relations between the manager and the participants; the revolutionary identity for the librarians was an available resource for the librarians who had less legitimate power compared to the manager, but they managed to invoke this identity which reflected power. In a different interactional context, the revolutionary identity would not have been available for the employees to invoke. This is because, in a workplace where power structures are transparent, employees at a lower level in the hierarchy are not expected to speak in such a way.

In relation to my research aims, I argued that power relations and gender in talk is not taken for granted and not a backdrop explanation for whatever is happening in the talk, and the structure of the talk can reproduce power relations and gender among participants and can transform them. Here we saw that the librarians invoked an identity that implied power to achieve a particular goal out of the interaction process, which was to convince the manager about their demands.

8.4. Negotiation of interest and stake within the manager's identity:

My argument in the previous section was that talk can be structured in a way that allows individuals to invoke identities and draw on discourses that help them to achieve a specific goal and to claim a position. Similarly, individuals invoke certain identities to pursue interests and to claim a stake.

Research on identity has often assumed that how individuals try to portray themselves is motivated by inner interests and motives that the individual possesses (Weber, 1947). However, Muller and Whittle (2010) assert that an individual's identity also depends on how the audience positions him/her. As previously explored, drawing on the bureaucratic discourse, the manager identifies himself as an agent who cannot change anything in this organization and his main concern is to adhere to the university rules and regulations. The following section will explore

how the employees also positioned the manager in this identity, using two concepts of "interest" and "stake" developed by Muller and Whittle (2010).

Interests are defined as entities that drive the use of discourse (Vaara and Monin, 2010). Mumby and Clair (1997: 182) define organizations as 'sites of struggle where different groups compete to shape the social reality of organizations in ways that serve their own interests'. Discourses are viewed as vessels that contain particular interests and stakes and these interests might be reproduced or silenced (Vaara and Tienari, 2008).

Generally, in all the extracts analyzed earlier, the manager presented his interest as caring for employees' needs and concerns as opposed to being a "resistant manager" who only applies the rules and does not care about his employees' needs. It might be expected that the manager would present himself as concerned and interested to hear his employees' concerns in the presence of all the employees of the library department. Certainly, he is unlikely to present himself as uninterested or unconcerned about employees' needs during a meeting that discusses these types of issues. He may also be expected to present himself as concerned about employees' needs and feelings, but this has to be for reasons that do not reflect self-interest. Rather, his actions have to be legitimized through notions of professionalism and not through fear of conflict. The manager might try to portray his interest as a professional, which is a concept tied up with hierarchy and authority. The Muller and Whittle article explained how an individual might appeal to the recipients' "self-interest" in an attempt to achieve certain goals (2010). In this particular context, the manager appealed to the employees' self-interest (caring about their needs) to get agreement from the employees for following the bureaucratic steps in writing the proposal.

Mainly, the manager is '*caught in dilemma of interest; which is defined as how to produce accounts which attend to interests without being undermined as interested*' (Edwards and Potter, 1992;158). The manager thus presents himself as interested in solving the employees' problem only if they follow the rules and agree to slowing down the process, which is the main concern of higher management; for example, " this problem will be solved if we follow all the steps required by the higher management" (line 12). This says something about the importance of adherence to rules in Omani culture in general and in this situation specifically, as Oman is a young country that follows bureaucratic systems in most of its organizations, and authority and rules are highly respected (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2002). The manager shows that he has an interest in identifying himself as a person who knows the rules and by doing this he is also showing his stake in authority and thus conveying and reproducing hierarchy.

To avoid being labelled as disinterested and unconcerned about what the employees are requesting, the manager seems to deal with the issue of interest in two ways. First, he claims that the employees are exaggerating the problem of workload because of their "impatience". For example, ***Manager:*** *I advise you to take things gently and step by step, do not rush for results, you want to change a situation that has lasted for 8 years, in one day this cannot be done, following the university rules, unless you have a good network with the dean of the college or nepotism" (Lines 98 to 101).* By invoking upon himself this relationship, what he is conveying to others is that he is closer to management, drawing on and reinforcing his authority and his place in the hierarchy.

Second, the manager attests to the importance of rule following and thus he identifies himself as a good manager: who knows the rules and will never consider breaching them, while the employees' rules are not salient to them. ***Manager:*** listen to me please, I am not ignoring this

issue but I do not like to push so hard because I know it will have negative results for us, however, if you want to apply your method by pushing so hard on the college administration go ahead, do it yourself, and I am not going to be involved in this because I know the opinion of the college board is highly respected by the university administration and we have to convince the college board first (line 91 to 95). Here the manager is anticipating the perceptions of status in this organization whereby high status employees are probably expected to respect the rules and regulations more than lower status employees. Further, he is presenting himself as one who knows the rules and how they must be enacted and the others as rather naïve in wanting to "push" for things; by doing this, he is attempting to establish authority and hierarchy.

Similarly, the manager in this interactional context is challenging the employees' rationality. The employees think it is rational to act in this way but he does not. In fact, he implies that what they intend to do is very irrational and he will have nothing to do with it, for example, when he says "if you want to apply your method by pushing so hard on the college administration go ahead do it yourself and I am not going to be involved in this" *(line 93).*

Third, another way that the manager appears to deal with the issue of interests is through suggesting that the employees' complaints about the situation and the way they compare themselves with other departments demonstrate their lower status, as the following extract illustrates. ___**Manager**___*: we have to keep ourselves away from other people's business, the bottom line is we asked for something and they approved it, their problems are their own business not ours. We have nothing to do with their problem with this new employee.* Here the manager implicitly frames the employees' approach to providing suggestions as irrelevant to the current problem. This could be counted as explicitly power referential as here the manager identifies what is relevant to the discussion and what is irrelevant. This is another way of achieving

hierarchy: identifying which topics should be discussed and which ones should be eliminated. So far, this specific interactional context has been situated and institutionalized towards the manager's goal of claiming power and achieving authority.

To avoid being regarded as "biased", the manager confesses his own stake in the situation. Stake confession is an attempt to display honesty and disarm potential criticism by admitting the stake, interest, or responsibility one has in the situation: "I have a stake in this" (Potter, 1996) **.** In this meeting the manager admits his responsibility for dealing with the problems mentioned by the employees and he expresses his commitment towards changing the situation in the near future. For example (*this is one of the needs that we need to fulfill for our employees), (I am not ignoring this issue).* By confessing this stake he is achieving authority, because stating his responsibility towards changing the situation is an explicit way of demonstrating that authority.

Potter (1996) showed that speakers may emphasize the credibility of their position by, for example, stating that they support the idea in question. But, they may also deny or reject a stake to 'head off the imputation of stake or interest' (Potter, 1996, p.125). Potter and Putcha (2007) demonstrate how a speaker may use stake inoculation. Stake inoculation is defined as speakers' attempts to deny the claim that they have a stake, even before they are challenged on it by the audience. For example, if somebody was selling him a miracle cream a person might say, "At first, I was sceptical about the new cream. It seemed too good to be true. But after I tried it, I was convinced" (adapted from Potter, 1996). Here the speaker presents himself as sceptical towards the product to avoid the assumption that he may be praising the product for profit.

Similarly, in order not to appear to be furthering self-interest over employees' interests, the manager displays empathy with some of the employees' concerns (I understand this is a very stressful situation) (*line 298*)*,* supports some of their suggestions and explicitly recognizes the resistance he is facing from the employees (I know you need to solve this problem as soon as possible, but the process I am advising you to follow is the ideal one) (line 93). Appealing to the recipients' self-interest is usually performed to accomplish a goal (Muller and Whittle, 2010). It is an attempt from the manager to ensure that the employees will follow the process of writing the proposal according to the university regulations.

In response to the employees' formulations (which I explained in more detail in the previous chapter) the manager tries to downplay the criticisms mentioned by the employees and assures them that their request will be approved in the near future. In order to do so, the manager appeals to "out-there-ness". Edward and Potter (1992, p 105) explained how the concept of "out-there-ness" of text is constructed, how a report is precisely constructed to avoid seeming like an artful construction designed to further the speaker's interests". In this extract the manager justifies the need for slowness in making decisions regarding the workload problem in terms of a situation that is out of his control and rules that he cannot change. Again he is explicitly showing how rules should be enacted and his knowledge of these rules, and by positioning himself within this interest he is achieving authority because knowledge of the rules is characteristic of an authoritarian person.

Presenting self as having no interest in a course of action can also be achieved by appealing to "out-there-ness" (Potter, 1996). The manager refers to two conditions under which rules can be changed: first, the employees need to have a good network with the management and second,

nepotism needs to exist (This cannot be done following the university rules unless you have a good network with the dean of the college or nepotism.) (Lines 99, 100)   This situation anticipates the power of networks in relationships and in Omani organizations in particular.

The manager appeals to two contradictory interests. The employees' interest in reducing the workload as soon as possible leads to him to suggest the means to do so, e.g. writing a valid proposal that adheres to university rules. Second, he appeals to university "systems" interests, that take a lot of time to agree on and implement such a decision, by referring to the time factor "This situation has existed for a long time, it cannot be changed in one go" or "you are always rushing for results". Also, he refers to the importance of rules and regulations in solving these kinds of issues, e.g. "You want to change a situation that has lasted for 8 years in one day, this cannot be done following the university rules" (line 99).

By appealing to the employees' interest and the higher management interest he is achieving authority and hierarchy. First, when he refers to his knowledge of the university rules and how employees should enact these rules he is claiming authority. Second, when he refers to the time factor, he is emphasizing his knowledge of similar conditions and the ideal way to deal with them; again he is achieving authority.

To sum up, in this section, using the social constructionism tenets, I have argued that interactions are structured according to the goals that the participants want to achieve. To achieve authority and status, the manager drew on the bureaucratic and evolutionary discourse that I discussed in detail in the methodology chapter, and he invoked identities such as rule follower, representative of the system, mentor and advisor to assert his position as part of the higher management group. He also claimed some interests and rejected others to assert a certain identity. Following the same argument, the next section explains why the subordinates utilized the bureaucracy is

dysfunctional discourse and the identities that the subordinates were invoking and what they were trying to achieve through these identities. In addition, the process of in-group and out-group that the librarians practised will be highlighted and the underlying reasons will be explained.

8.5. Why the subordinates utilized the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse

I argued in the previous two sections that interactions are structured towards achieving the participants' goals, and to achieve their goals, participants might invoke certain identities and they might reject others. Similarly, discourses are utilized by the participants to function in a way that constructs a reality that the participants want to deliver to the audience during the interaction process. The subordinates utilized the "bureaucracy is dysfunctional" discourse; an overview of this discourse and its characteristics is provided in the methodology chapter.

The bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse provides accounts and explanations that are used to construct functions that express a particular version of reality and categories of identity (Antaki, 1988). Functions refer to what the participants are trying to do with the discourse in the immediate setting, for example, explaining, justifying or denying (Hardy, 2009). One reality constructed by this discourse is that the subordinates do not accept the rules and the regulations that they should follow to get their proposal approved. This section demonstrates how agents use specific discourse functions to achieve goals that the participants in the interaction want to achieve.

Therefore, what the employees were trying to do with the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse was to resist these rules and regulations. Also, to demonstrate that they did not accept the fact that this situation was taking a longer time than it should have, they did not accept the reality that work conditions were better for the librarians in the other colleges in this university; they

articulated this fact when providing suggestions to the manager. They used the other libraries' experiences as a tool to illustrate their difficult situation "In every library here they divide their employees according to job specification, I don't understand why you are not doing this, for example, if you phone any library and ask for the referencing section they are going to refer you to a specific person who is responsible only for the referencing section".

Most importantly, what seems to be achieved by the librarians in the specific interactional context that I am examining is to illustrate that they were not upset about the fact that information was withheld from them. The employees also used this discourse to protest against an administration that treated other employees differently and offered them certain privileges and conditions that were not offered to the library employees. This is exemplified by the following extract: **_Male 5_**_:"_ the new employee is the winner in this issue, he has a new office where he is doing nothing and he gets paid exactly like us and we are doing his work so he has everything" (line 116) and Male 3: "true, even the oldest employee here who has worked here for 16 years doesn't have a similar office" (line 118).... and Male 3: "why he is not working like us? Why is his office located in the college administration and not here in the library?" *(line 125).*

These utterances also demonstrate the significance of office size and location for the employees in this organization. They indicated that privileged employees or employees who are preferred by the higher management are given better offices in terms of location and size. For example, the new employee who should be joining the library department is to be given a big office that is located in the administration department. Male 5: the new employee is the winner in this issue, he has a new office where he is doing nothing and he gets paid exactly like us and we are doing his work so he has everything. Male 3: true, even the longest serving employee, who has worked here for 16 years doesn't have a similar office....

Although in this case the employees are using the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse to present their ideas and to show their dissatisfaction with higher management practices, they refer to rules of bureaucracy, and office size and location are aspects of these rules. Referring to rules and regulations is an action that falls within bureaucracy; however, the librarians utilized it to fulfill their demands.

Moreover, the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse constructed another reality about the working environment for the subordinates in the library in the form of stressful work conditions and time consuming tasks, which were manifested in the lack of time allowed to perform the tasks required (line 190), a situation that had persisted for 8 years (Male 3: you said a while ago ...this issue started 8 years ago and we may need another 8 years to see a change) (line 249), and physically strenuous activities

(Male 4: yes I know what it is, but what I am doing here is carrying 5 kg of text books back and forth for 8 hours, this is not the same as sitting in an office and working on a computer)

 (lines 151 and 152).

8.6. Membership identity (the subordinates' identities)
People invoke certain identities and group in and out to achieve certain goals. For example, the employees invoked the identity of a "stressed out" or "overworked group" to achieve the goal, in this interactional context, of urging the manager to act and solve the problem they were facing.

One of the important findings here is that what was most salient to the employees in identity terms was their group membership as the "*stressed group*" or the "*overworked group*" and this accounted for what went on in the meeting. In contrast, the assumption of the two culture and the dominance approaches is that gender and power reside within individuals and they interact

according to the social category to which they belong. Throughout this section, the analysis will demonstrate how the employees in this formal meeting interact and what is salient during the interaction process and why.

Hardy et al. (2000) note that individuals engage in discursive activities in ways that guarantee beneficial outcomes for them. In a culture where power structures are salient, the employees try to construct an argument that supports a goal in their mind: to gain an extra employee in the department. As the employees have no official power, they need to construct persuasive arguments that will hold the manager to account for the problem they are currently facing (male 4: "*you are causing us to be very stressed and indeed ill*"), and in order to do so they invoke the group membership identity. For example, all the subordinates in the extracts, whenever talking about the problematic situation they are in, speak about the group " collective", for example, "*we are very tired*", (line 1) " *me and my colleagues have been asking you to do something about it*" (line 9) " *as a result we librarians have to help him*" (line 24) and *" we will have the same extra workload*" (line 24). Here we can see that the subordinates identify themselves as part of the group: "the librarian group" or "the stressed out group", in all their input during the interaction with the manager, and they identify themselves as one entity against the manager.

The discursive practice in this context is the subordinates' challenge to their manager because their request for a reduction in workload is not fulfilled. So we have two teams who speak from two different positions: "the manager" team, which consists only of the manager, and the "subordinates' team", which consists of all the male and female subordinates. The challenging environment surrounding the two teams leads the subordinates to position themselves in a united form of speech against the manager. In this situation they construct themselves as one group and one voice because it is more powerful, as is revealed in the group process (Tajfel, 1973).

According to social identity theory, individual identity is derived from the individual's membership of a group, whereby group members share psychological attachment to the group because they share similar beliefs, feelings and interests (Rabbie & Horwitz, 1969, Tajfel et al., 1971). However, the discursive psychologists argue that the problem with social identity theory is that it assumes social identities have a fixed and reified or external existence that shapes or even determines what individuals say about themselves and others. A discursive approach says these categories are resources that are used to achieve a goal (Wiggins and Potter, 2008).

The view of group identity as a resource that employees utilized to achieve their goals during this interactional context contradicts the dominance and two cultures approach to communication and identity. These latter approaches assert that identity is fixed and individuals utilize specific communication behaviors, depending on the identity they hold (Maltz and Borker, 1981). They also claim that the concept of identity can be used as an explanation of what is going on in a meeting; for example, in this context (regular staff meeting) they would suggest that the employees used bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse because they are a group. Therefore, the previous essentialist approach neglected the idea that resources exist in an interactional context that participants can draw on and utilize to achieve a specific purpose, e.g. in this case the identity. The reason why the employees invoked the stressed out group identity may be that they perceived their identity as a group to be powerful enough to persuade the manager to respond to their concerns. Hence, this identity as a group is a function of the situation and a resource that the employees used to achieve a specific aim from the interaction process. This view is supported by social constructionists (Burr, 1995), who would also support the view that in other situations, this specific group identity might not be salient.

Furthermore, this group identity allowed the employees to utilize the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse, which was explained earlier as a direct and assertive means of holding the manager to account for the negative situation they were facing. However, if they had invoked the identity of individuals, the effect of the discourse would not have been as powerful as it was when they identified themselves as a group (Tajfel et al., 1971).

This is a reflection of the power structure in Omani culture in general and Omani academic life: whereby people at lower levels of the power structure are expected to interact in a way that demonstrates respect for the individuals at higher levels of the power structure. These rules are known to all individuals in this culture; however, it appears that some of these rules can be breached and disrupted in a certain conditions, while other rules may not be breached under any circumstances. For example, in all the utterances of the employees discussed earlier, there was not a single instance of an employee referring to the manager by his first name or last name, and it was always Dr. Examples of the reflection of the power structure in Omani culture may provide an understanding of which rules can be breached and which cannot. This idea will be discussed in far more detail in the third chapter of analysis under the institutionalized aspects of interaction and the immutability of the institutionalized rules of interaction.

In the previous section the analysis of the librarians' interaction with each other and with the manager demonstrated that the structure of the talk forced the librarians to utilize the group membership identity to construct different realities about the situation and themselves. The reality about the situation they were trying to construct was a stressful work condition that they could not tolerate any more. They reality about themselves is that they are a stressed out group that have been suffering these stressful working conditions for the last eight years. These realities were based on the assumption that power was not equal between the manager and the librarians,

and although the subordinates seemed to use this bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse to shout the manager down, they assumed that the manager held the legitimate power and authority and that the decision should go through the manager before it went up to the administration. Evidence of this assumption is provided by the fact that the subordinates always referred to their manager as Dr, and in all the encounters between the subordinates and the manager they started the utterance by calling him Dr.

Halfway through the bureaucratic discourse the manager slightly shifted his tone or his talk as I explained in chapter six, page 120. When this shift took place and the manager challenged the employees' rationality, this resulted in the following forms of shift in the subordinates' identity.

8.6.1. The assertive subordinate identity
In chapter six, page 120 the analysis of the discourse that was utilized by the manager revealed that halfway through the meeting the manager articulated fewer regulations and rules, but challenged the subordinates' rationality more. In addition, he utilized more utterances to convince the subordinates about the higher management strategies in solving work condition problems. As a result of this shift in the manager's discourse, the librarians identified themselves as "assertive subordinates", who expressed direct opinions and rejected ideas that did not satisfy their needs. All the utterances from line 179 of the meeting support this premise, for example: "they could have used one of the empty offices but they used it as an excuse not to solve this problem."(line 186) "we have nothing to do with textbook distribution and we are not going to help in any kind of jobs related to text books" (lines 196 and 197) and " give us a break please, we are tired of this issue and the text book problem." (line 201). The reason why the subordinates positioned themselves within this social position might have been to gain sufficient power to convince the manager of their ideas and suggestions. This assertive subordinate identity

was invoked as a function of the situation and was a resource that the subordinates used to achieve a specific aim at the end of this interactional context (Burr, 1995).

8.6.2. The negotiator identity

Another identity that the subordinates invoked was the "the negotiator"; all the subordinates (from line 179 to line 252) practised negotiation in order to achieve their main aims. For example, they negotiated not helping the new employee with textbook distribution tasks for example "and we are not going to help in any kind of jobs related to textbooks" and " we have nothing to do with textbooks and that's it" (utterances on lines 196, 197 and 205). Then they negotiated training the new employee for one week only " we are going to teach him, which will take a maximum of a week" (line 212), and subsequently negotiated the idea of the creation of a new division for textbook distribution that had nothing to do with the library division "Because we are in one division, the dean's office assume that we will work together but it should be this way, you should explain to them frankly that your employees have different duties and they are required to fulfill them and the text books are their responsibility, whether to assign one employee or 10 it is their decision" (lines 231, 232, 233).

One possible explanation for the subordinates invoking the identity of the negotiator is that they were positioned in this identity by the audience (Muller and Whittle, 2010). The manager's utterances opened a space for the subordinates to negotiate their demands with the manager. For example, when the manager asked questions to get the subordinates' consent about some ideas, e.g. "this new employee will need some training, aren't you required to teach him?" (line 211) Or, "only help him during peak periods, and he is going to do all other duties"(line 218) and "OK, during peak times it is impossible for one employee to distribute all the books " (line 226

). The utterances of the manager motivated the subordinates to negotiate and reject some of these statements.

8.7. Stake and interests in employees' identities

One of the employees' extracts in this meeting can be read as an example of identity work. Male 4 describes his work conditions as follows; "what I am doing here is carrying 5 kg of textbooks back and forth for 8 hours a day, this is not the same as sitting in an office and working on a computer. (lines 152, 152, 153). " We are not required to do this task, sometimes I have to leave the front desk to help in distributing the textbooks, I developed a medical problem because of this work and my colleague here has the same problem"(*lines 90, 142,143*).

This example is an illustration of the need for identity work, with the employee's experience demonstrating that he is a target of contradictory identity regulation (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Here he is positioned as a textbook distributor when he should have been working as a librarian; in this organization a librarian is considered a higher position than a textbook distributor because the librarian needs a university degree to do the job while the textbook distributor requires only a high school degree. The frustration associated with this positioning had a negative effect on the employee's health.

Thus, in terms of identity work, the employee is noting that he is a high status employee being forced to do a lower status job and as a result, his status is threatened by the job tasks that he is having to perform (textbook distribution). Here the employee seems to indicate that he is at a higher level of authority but at the same time he tries to deny having a stake in authority by referring to the effects on his health of performing these tasks; this can be explained as stake inoculation. Stake inoculation was defined earlier as speakers' attempts to deny the claim that they have a stake, even before they are challenged about it by the audience (Potter, 1996).

Therefore, to deny the claim that he had a stake in authority he referred to the medical problem as a reason for not being able to do this job. So instead of explaining frankly that he is a higher status employee who ended up doing a lower status job, he uses his health problem as a reason for not doing this kind of job.

This result supports Weick's (1995) proposition that individuals may define themselves as opposing what they fear they might become. By inoculating against this stake, what male 4 was trying to achieve was an image of himself as an individual in a high status job, whilst at the same time avoiding being perceived as claiming authority, as it is not acceptable in the Omani culture for individuals who do not have legitimate power to claim authority.

This point can also be linked to stake attribution, as was discussed by Antaki and Horowitz (2000). They explained that some accounts can be discredited by referring to the person's personal stake. For example, appearing to be interested in a particular stake is always disadvantageous, while appearing to have no stake is a desirable position interactionally (Edwards and Potter, 2005). In this specific interactional context, male employee no 4 was attempting to be perceived as having no stake in authority and hierarchy so he defended this position by presenting the idea of a health problem.

Muller and Whittle (2010) assert that an individual's identity depends on its positioning by the audience. Male 4 and male 5 were the most assertive and vocal members in the meeting. As they were the longest serving employees in the department (having spent 13 years in this department), they were positioned by the audience to be the representatives of the group; within the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse they identified themselves as the group leaders. This was

manifested in the way they initiated topics and controlled the conversation, as was described in detail in chapter seven.

For example, Male 4 and Male 5 constantly challenged the manager, using the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse Male 4 " *gradually ? Gradually? When, after 3 years?"* (line 43) or Male 5 "yeah.... yeah...... nepotism*"* (line 135) and male 4 "we are reaching a dead end point" (line 59). They also introduced controversial topics such as " solving this problem is taking too long" and " nothing is going to change if we follow the procedures you are suggesting*" (line 142),* " the new employees enjoy certain privileges and conditions that we do not have*"(line 132)* Males 4 and 5's challenging utterances seemed to be functioning in a way that opened a discursive space for the rest of the employees to also challenge the manager and to utilize the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse.

To sum up, through the discussion of the subordinates' identities we saw that the employees drew on group membership categorization or identification and in terms of their arguments and negotiations this was the most salient category. The employees possibly drew on this group membership categorization to achieve the goal of looking powerful in presenting their claims to their manager and trying to convince him about their demands. Within the subordinates' or the employees' interactions gender was not an issue, which challenges the essentialists' assumption that the employees would categorize and use the communication process according to their gender. This will be covered in more detail in chapter eleven. For example, male employees would use masculine communication styles and female employees would utilize feminine communication style, an assumption based on the essentialist approaches discussed in chapters two and three. However, the employees grouped and identified themselves as the stressed out group, with both male and female employees identifying themselves with this group. This is

because the social constructionist approach assumes that individuals invoke or align with a group to achieve certain goals from the interactional context. In the next section I will discuss how the female employee negotiated her identity along with her male colleagues, and how she was part of the stressed out group discussed above.

8.8. The female employee's identity:

 Based on the social construction approach, gender is a socially constructed category and only feminine and masculine performances can create the ideology of gender (Butler, 2004). Ideology of gender refers to attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights, and responsibilities of women and men in society (Kroska, 2007, P. 1).

Similarly, gender identity is created through these masculine and feminine performances, and within the discourse gender identity can be created, invoked or rejected.   This discourse, like any other, is used to construct self identity and a reality about the situation (Fairclough, 1992). The analysis of the data in the previous section seemed to indicate that the employees used the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse to invoke certain identities and to construct certain realities about the situation and themselves. One of the realities they were trying to construct was a stressful work environment manifested in the lack of time to perform the tasks required and working conditions that had lasted for eight years without change. Both male and female employees participated in this discourse to construct this reality about work conditions.

In this context, the female employee constructed the same reality about stressful work conditions that her male colleagues constructed, but she performed a gendered identity in the way she used the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse.   For example, we could say female input about relationships in the interaction was a way of performing a feminine gender identity. Here the

female employee constructed the workplace problem at the level of the employees' feelings and needs, "you need to listen to them" (Line 39), and they were "tired" (Line 38). She did not use the direct language that was used by her male colleagues to criticize the manager and to challenge him. Instead, she appeared to prefer to use more careful sentences to criticize the manager, and these sentences were within the domain of employees' feelings and needs. For example *"Dr, why don't you observe their work and see the problem for yourself?"* (Line 171), " Dr, please look at other libraries and see how they work and you will understand what the employees are facing*"*. The reason why the female employee chose not to use the same direct approach as her male colleagues might have been to retain (perform) her female identity.

We would say that the female employee here was "doing gender"*,* which involved expressing feminine identity through using discourses that were culturally approved as being feminine (West and Zimmerman, 1987). This finding echoes a central theme in the literature that involves the meanings associated with gender identities and how they are expressed in interaction. "Doing gender"*,* as defined by West & Zimmerman (1987), is an ethnomethodological approach that argues that gender is an interactional accomplishment, something that must be continually enacted in local situations in order to survive as a social phenomenon. This female employee was doing gender in the way she expressed her opinions when she constructed the workplace problems at the level of employees' feelings and needs. She also performed a gendered identity when she approached the manager; in her utterances she provided reasonable suggestions that the manager and the employees respected.

If the manager's feedback on the male employees' suggestions is compared with his feedback on the female employee's suggestions a noticeable difference becomes apparent. First, in example

number 1 below, the female employees suggested that the new employee should help in the library, whilst the manager's feedback disclosed new information that this new employee was facing administrative problems with the College Board. In the second example, the manager's feedback assured the female employee that he was not ignoring these problems. The manager's feedback to the female's suggestions show that he was considering and respecting her suggestions and not marginalizing her utterances as he did with the male employees' suggestions. For example, the manager challenged male 4's utterance in example 3 and questioned the rationality of the suggestion in example number 4.

(1)

Female 1: ok now it has been a long time since they announced this decision, where is this new employee? Why is he not helping the rest of the staff here in library?

Manager: he has a problem with the college board.

(2)

Female 1: sometimes, because of workload pressure, they ask for help from employees in other departments.

Manager: listen to me please, I am not ignoring this issue but I do not like to push so hard because I know it will have negative results for us,

(3)

Male 4: I developed a medical problem because of this work and my colleague here has the same problem.

Manager: OK, if this is true bring a medical certificate that proves it.

(4)

<u>Male 4:</u> this means that we go back to the starting point and nothing will change as we will have the same extra workload that we are not required to do.

<u>Manager:</u> oh, may god lead you in the right direction, you are rushing for results.

There are two possible explanations regarding the manager's feedback towards the employees' suggestions. One relates to the type of suggestions offered by the employees, with the female employee's suggestions seeming to be reasonable and within the boundaries that the manager had drawn. On the other hand, the male employees' suggestions can be described as revolutionary in demanding radical change. Another possible explanation relates to the perception of gender in this particular culture, as the Omani culture is gender segregated in social settings. This segregation would be expected to have an influence in professional settings, even though professional settings such as the workplace are mixed and allow for interaction between male and female employees.

But social constructionism is critical towards the notion of taken for granted knowledge. It cautions observers to be suspicious of their own assumptions about how the world appears to be, it questions the categorization of how human beings apprehend the world (Burr, 1995). Applying this approach will involve not attributing the female employee's use of relationship discourse to her gender and not assuming that because she is a woman she tends to use this discourse. However, by applying the social constructionist tenets we will be able to offer explanations for why she preferred to invoke this identity.   This will be theorized in the following section.

Unlike essentialist approaches, that look inside the person to provide explanations of social phenomena and assume that attitudes, motivations and cognitions are responsible for what people say and do, social constructionism focuses on social practices engaged in by people and their interactions with each other (Burr, 1995). Therefore, the social constructionism explanations are thought not to be based on an individual's psychology nor in social structures but on the process of interaction that occurs between individuals.

Gender was salient because the female participant challenged the manager as much as any other person but she did so by using different discursive tactics – appealing to feelings and relationships – which were not apparent in in the challenges made by others.

According to the social construction approach, people construct specific identities according to the situation and the social context (Musson and Duberley, 2007). Both male and female employees invoked the identity of group membership. This in-group membership and alignment with the subordinates' group allowed the female employee to offer challenging discourses even though she lacked official power.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) introduced "warranting voice" theory wherein subjects' positions are invoked as the subjects acquire the right to speak in specific discourses. Foucault (1972) asserted that discourses offer only limited positions from which an individual can speak and act. To be able to speak within a discourse, individuals are required to occupy one of the positions that are made available to them (Hardy, 2000). In this context, the male employees started producing the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse, holding the manager to account for the negative situation the employees were voicing. Within this discourse, some positions were available for the female employee to occupy; for example, she managed to challenge the

manager as much as her male colleagues did within the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse that I described in detail in chapter six. So she engaged in discursive activities within this discourse in an attempt to secure advantage from this subject position (Phillips and Hardy, 1997). Wetherell and Potter (1987) note that the use of a particular discourse provides a particular presentation of self that allows individuals to warrant and justify actions as well as maintaining power relations and forms of subordination and domination.

To initiate discursive activity, actors must hold subject positions that warrant sufficient voice, as recognized by others, otherwise the impact of their activities or statements will be minimized (Hardy et al., 2000). The female employee managed to position herself within the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse that most of her colleagues were using, although, perhaps because of the different methods that she used, her voice was heard and appreciated by everyone at the meeting. In some of her utterances she referred to sayings from the Holy Quran (the holy book for Muslims) (for example, God charges no soul save to its capacity, that is, what it is capable of bearing) (AlBagarrah, Verse 286). This may suggest an indivudal who is cognitively constructed by Islamic rules. Her Islamic utterances allowed her voice to be appreciated as the particpants in this meeting were all Muslims.

 Also, her continuous referral to employees' feelings and needs helped in justifying her voice. As discussed previously regarding interest and stake, male employees positioned their discourse within their own interest and stake in referring to membership and the group they belonged to; however, the female employee positioned her talk in "their" interest and "their" stake; she expressed her points and suggestions as an outsider to the employees' group or the stressed out

group. For example, *Dr, why don't you observe their work for one day, try to devote only one day and see what happens and you will understand what they are talking about*. Here the female employee demarcates her identity as "I" and the male employees' identity as "their"; at this point in the interaction the female employee categorized herself as the female group and the rest of the employees as the "male group".

Because of this positioning she preferred to use the relationship and feelings approach when challenging the manager, as opposed to the assertive or direct approach that her colleagues utilized. I suspect that if she had utilized the assertive and direct approach to challenge the manager, her utterances would not have been appreciated by the manager or by her colleagues.

In general we saw that gendered behaviors are situated and constrained by the situation and the context; the female and male employees did not perform gender as much as other social categories but gender was salient at some points. So gender is constrained and sometimes allowed by the interactional context. In this context was it permissible? Yes and no. It was permissible when the female used it in relation to identity, and when she used the employees' needs and feelings to convince the manager about her point. Gender was also present and salient when the female employee demarcated herself from the male group, e.g. when she talked about "their needs and interest" and not "our needs and interests".

The rule of gender segregation in Oman:

Gender segregation in Oman play an crucial role in social life settings. For example, in weddings and social gatherings men and women celebrate in separate locations and communication between men and women should be kept within the conservative mode. Another representation of gender segregation in the

Omani context is in some public and private organizations where men only and women only waiting rooms is a requirement.

In this chosen setting gender segregation was practiced when male and female employees address each other. For example the data demonstrated that in all the utterances when the female employee addressed her male colleagues she used the word " brother". Similarly, when the male colleagues want to address their female colleague they called her "sister". The segregation between the two gender categories in this culture may have an influence on the way they communicate or interact with each other. This influence could be to formalize the interaction between them (male and female) as much as possible to make it easier for them to communicate. My interpretation as a member of this culture is that when a female communicates with a male colleague in the workplace she might not be in her comfort zone if there are no boundaries or rules to regulate the talk, and one of these rules involves both parties in making the interaction or the talk as formal and conservative as they can.

Gender segregation was also apparent in the way that the female employee challenged the manager. Although she challenged the manager as much as her male colleagues in the meeting but she did so by using different discursive tactics which were not apparent in the challenges made by the male participants. For example, appealing to feelings and relationships as shown in this excerpt;

When she said " *employees have feelings and needs you should listen to them*", and " employees are very tired of this situation, you have to sort it out". However, the male colleagues challenged the manger in a more direct way, this differences in they way the manager challenged by the male and female employees can be attributed as the influence of the segregation between the two genders in the Omani culture.

Beside what I mentioned above, gender segregation did not influence the way men and women use of discursive tactics because both of them used almost the same discourses to challenge the manager and to achieve their goals out of this interactional context

Examples for the use of both CDA and DP:

The following two examples demonstrate how I used CDA and DP to analyse my data.

Example 1:

The manager's talk	The footing shift
1. **Manager**: when I signed my contract for this job, I signed to manage a supporting department that does the job of a library and many other supporting jobs and when I submitted the report to the dean I showed him the time plan and the short and long term objectives, unfortunately it was neglected, in all meetings they always focus on academic problems and issues and they ignore our problems unfortunately, our department is always marginalized. (lines 253 to 257).	1. Involving the librarians in what is happening. 2. Situating himself as part of the subordinate group and not the higher management group. 3. In-group/out-group concept (Tajfel).
2. **Manager:** they are planning to provide a new employee who will be joining this department soon.(lines 279- 280)	Providing new information
3. **Manager**; I understand this is a very stressful situation But I really cannot do anything about it. I think we have discussed this topic thoroughly and now we are going to move to the second point in the agenda, shifts. (lines 298 to 300) ■■■	Expressing empathy. And lack of authority.

Table 5. The Manager's Utterances.

Discursive psychology approach involves applying discursive devices on the data. Discursive devices are language based tool that is used as a part of the interaction process (Antaki, Barnes, & Leudar, 2007, P.170). one of the devices that I will use to analyze this example is footing, which refers to the relationship speakers show between themselves and what they say (Goffman, 1981). Footing is considered as a tool that discursive psychologists use to address the fluctuation and the reflexive

characters of the talk because it focuses on moment by moment changes when the participants move from one position to another

(Drew and Heritage, 1992).

In the example above, a shift in the manager's footing took place, when he shifted from using bureaucratic talk, which stood for and supported the higher management to a democratic talk that presented the talk to the librarians and involved them in the real picture. This new shift in the manager's footing regulated both his and the employees' subject positions. For example, the manager's subject position changed from a manager who follow the rules and who presented himself as a guardian of these rules whose main job was to urge the librarians to comply with them, to a subject position that involves the librarians with what was happening and what the higher management were planning to do.

With this new footing the manager has distanced himself from the higher management group, this distancing was manifested in the way he described the higher management perceptions towards the library division for example in line 257 in chapter 5 he said (*in all meetings they always focus on academic problems and issues and they ignore our problems, unfortunately, our department is always marginalized*). Therefore, he referred to the higher management group as " they" and he referred to the library department as " our department" " our problems and issues".

Using Fairclough (1992) CDA analytical approach, what is happening in the data can be described as democratization using Fairclough's term. Democratization of discourse is a removal of indicators of power and authority in the linguistics and discursive linguistics rights of groups of people (Fairclough,

1992). One of the areas of discursive democratization that Fairclough reviewed was elimination of overt powers in institutional discourse where power relations were unequal.

The new footing that the manager practiced in the talk can be described as democratization because he grouped himself with the employees group which held less authority compared to the management group. In a society where authorities are a sovereign idea and where obeying authority is cognitively ingrained within a society member's mind, the new footing for the manager where he grouped himself with the librarians group and criticized the decisions of the higher management group, is a sign of democratization.

Example 2:

In this example I am going to explain some of the Discursive psychology devices in the talk and how these devices can explained used some of the Fairclough's concept.

The employees challenged the manager's authority and his position of power by using different methods and techniques that are explained in details in chapter 8 page 229. The manger's authority was questioned like male 3 excerpt " you did nothing regarding this issue". Also, his honesty in dealing with the situation was questioned e.g. male 5 " is this the first time you heard about this problem". In addition the his intentions to change the situation was questioned, " you have to explain our problem in a different way that demonstrate how hard is it for us to work". Using Fairclough's terms this can be explained as a struggle of hegemony where the manager's power and authority was challenged and questioned by the employees.

Using the DP approach what I explained as a struggle for hegemony can be explained as furthering self interest, Appealing to the recipients' self-interest, and presenting self as having no interest.

For example, in order not to appear to be furthering self-interest over employees' interests, the manager displays empathy with some of the employees' concerns (*I understand this is a very stressful situation*) (*line 298*), supports some of their suggestions and explicitly recognizes the resistance he is facing from the employees (*I know you need to solve this problem as soon as possible, but the process I am advising you to follow is the ideal one)* (line 93). Appealing to the recipients' self-interest is usually performed to accomplish a goal (Muller and Whittle, 2010). It is an attempt from the manager to ensure that the employees will follow the process of writing the proposal according to the university regulations.

In response to the employees' formulations (which I explained in more detail in chapter 7) the manager tries to downplay the criticisms mentioned by the employees and assures them that their request will be approved in the near future. In order to do so, the manager appeals to "out-there-ness". Edward and Potter (1992, p 105) explained how the concept of "out-there-ness" of text is constructed, how a report is precisely constructed to avoid seeming like an artful construction designed to further the speaker's interests". "***Manager***: *we have to keep ourselves away from other people's business, the bottom line is we asked for something and they approved it, their problems are their own business not ours. We have nothing to do with their problem with this new employee*"

In this extract the manager justifies the need for slowness in making decisions regarding the workload problem in terms of a situation that is out of his control and rules that he cannot change. Again he is explicitly showing how rules should be enacted and his knowledge of these rules, and by positioning himself within this interest he is achieving authority because knowledge of the rules is characteristic of an authoritarian person.

Presenting self as having no interest in a course of action can also be achieved by appealing to "out-there-ness" (Potter, 1996). The manager refers to two conditions under which rules can be changed: first, the

employees need to have a good network with the management and second, nepotism needs to exist (*This cannot be done following the university rules unless you have a good network with the dean of the college or nepotism.*) (Lines 99, 100) This situation anticipates the power of networks in relationships and in Omani organizations in particular.

In conclusion, the two examples demonstrate how I used the CDA approach and the DP approach to analyze my data.

8.9. Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed how the participants in the meeting negotiated their identities and how they invoked different forms of identities to achieve a goal and purpose out of the interactional context. I also discussed why the manager and the librarian utilized specific discourses in this meeting and not others.

Within the discourses that were utilized I discussed how the participants negotiated their interests and defended their stakes to draw a specific identity for themselves. The analysis demonstrated that identities are not fixed and they do not occur before the interaction takes place, however, they are negotiated, challenged, and sometimes require identity work by the participants according to the goal they want to achieve.

In line with this sort of analysis the next chapter will analyze what happens if the participants in an interaction change or shift their positions, what the effects are of this shift on their identity, interest, position in a discourse and many other elements of discursive devices.

Chapter 9: Shifts in Discursive Devices

9.1. Introduction

Discursive devices are a language based tool that is used as a part of the interaction process; this term covers a range of conversational devices associated with discursive psychology concepts (Antaki, Barnes, & Leudar, 2007, p. 170). Two examples of discursive devices are stake inoculation and stake attribution, which were described in chapter eight, whilst in this chapter another device, known as footing, will be used in relation to the manager's and the librarians' talk,. Footing refers to the relationship speakers show between themselves and what they say, and as Goffman (1981, p128) explains, "A change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance".

Footing is considered as a micro concept of talk because it addresses the fluctuating and reflexive characters of the talk and it focuses on moment by moment changes as participants move from one position to another (Drew and Heritage, 1992). A shift in the manager's footing took place, starting from the utterance in line (253), when he shifted from using bureaucratic talk, which stood for and supported the higher management and reproduced the power and hierarchy normally associated with his status, to democratic talk that presented facts to the librarians and involved them in the real picture. This new shift in the manager's footing regulated both his and the employees' identities (Hardy, 2009; Whittle and Muller, 2011). This will be explained in detail throughout this section.

9.2. The footing shift in the manager's talk

The manager's talk	The footing shift
4. **Manager**: when I signed my contract for this job, I signed to manage a supporting department that does the job of a library and many other supporting jobs and when I submitted the report to the dean I showed him the time plan and the short and long term objectives, unfortunately it was neglected, in all meetings they always focus on academic problems and issues and they ignore our problems unfortunately, our department is always marginalized. (lines 253 to 257).	4. Involving the librarians in what is happening. 5. Situating himself as part of the subordinate group and not the higher management group. 6. In-group/out-group concept (Tajfel).
5. **Manager:** they are planning to provide a new employee who will be joining this department soon.(lines 279- 280)	Providing new information
6. **Manager**; I understand this is a very stressful situation But I really cannot do anything about it. I think we have discussed this topic thoroughly and now we are going to move to the second point in the agenda, shifts. (lines 298 to 300)	Expressing empathy. And lack of authority.

Table 6. The Manager's Utterances.

In the case of the manager's identity, the previous part of this meeting demonstrated how the manager's identity was regulated toward that of a manager who was following the rules and appreciated whatever decisions the higher management implemented. The rule follower identity of the manager echoes the ideas about the conformist self (Collinson, 2003). Within the conformist self the individuals define themselves as valued objects in the eyes of people in authority and regard pursuit of a successful career as an important motivator. The data in the previous chapter demonstrated how the manager's identity was regulated to achieve higher

management's goals. The manager's identity was regulated by higher management's policies and strategies; as a result he presented himself as a guardian of these rules whose main job was to urge the librarians to comply with them.

Starting from line (253) the manager shifted his footing towards involving the librarians with what was happening and what the higher management were planning to do. The manager's identity shifted from the conformist self who complied with whatever the higher management demanded to a manager who was trying to blend with the subordinate group and who understood their concerns. Within this new footing, the manager tried to involve the librarians with the full picture and inform them of what was happening in the higher management department. In order to do so, and to provide the librarians with the full picture, he first distanced himself from the higher management group, which he had previously identified himself as part of. This distancing was manifested in the way he described the higher management perceptions toward the library division (in all meetings they always focus on academic problems and issues and they ignore our problems, unfortunately, our department is always marginalized) (line 257). Therefore, he referred to the higher management group as "they" and he referred to the library department as "our department" "our problems and issues". This reveals the in-group and out-group concept whereby (Tajfel, 1972) people form an in-group with individuals with whom they share some characteristics.

Although in the previous parts of the meeting that I have discussed (lines before 253) the manager also referred to the higher management as "they" and his department as "our", he was implicitly referring to himself as part of the higher management group because he stood up for their actions and decisions and defended them in front of the librarians. For example, "*implementing such decisions is not easy, it needs lots of time and communication between the*

dean's office and the university administration". This demonstrates that individuals can create alignment with a group in a specific interactional context to achieve a specific goal or what Goffman (1976) described it as footing shift. The manager, in the first part of the meeting, distanced himself from the librarians group and formed an in-group with the higher management group to achieve hierarchy and authority. However, towards the end of the meeting he out-grouped himself from the higher management group and aligned with the librarians to demonstrate his inability to act and change the situation.

Similarly, the manager tried to involve himself and feel for his librarians' problems of extra workload and stressful working conditions "I understand this is a very stressful situation. But I really cannot do anything about it" (line 298).

Once the manager had revealed the higher management perceptions toward the library division, he then offered the librarians a new piece of information "they are planning to provide a new employee who will be joining this department soon" (line 279) . By sharing this information he involved the librarians in what was happening.

In this interactional context the manager tried to construct a reality that was different from the realities in the beginning of the meeting. Here, he was constructing that the College administration or the higher management looked down on this department as he termed it a "service department" compared to academic departments (line 256), or "*unfortunately they ignored this department*" (line 257) . This reflects the idea of ranking among different departments in this university and the hierarchy in place among different departments. For example, the manager stated that academic departments were at a higher level in the hierarchy so their issues and problems were given greater priority in the dean's office's meetings (as in lines

256 and 257), *"in all meetings they always focus on academic problems and issues and they ignore our problems, unfortunately, our department is always marginalized"*

In the previous part of the meeting (from lines 1 to 253) the manager identified himself within the bureaucratic discourse as part of the "higher management group". This was manifested in the interactional features of the text that he was using, for example, *"we are following a plan" (line 32)* or *"we need to apply step by step technique and see what is going to happen, we cannot make dramatic changes in one go" (lines 98, 192, and 12).* This reveals an in-group process (Tajefel, 1973) and is another example of in-group process as a function of the situation wherein the manager identified himself as part of the higher management group to achieve a higher level in the hierarchy.

Throughout this section we saw a shift in the manager's footing that resulted in shift in the manager's rhetoric and alignment. The manager shifted his rhetoric to achieve specific goals from the interactional context. These goals are listed below;

This part of the meeting (starting from line 253) shows how the use of certain discourse and a shift in rhetoric may function as explanations that are used to construct a certain reality and identity (Antaki, 1996). These functions are related to what people are doing with this discourse, for example, explaining, justifying, supporting an idea, etc (Hardy, 2009). For example, the manager engaged within the bureaucratic discourse to justify the actions and decisions of the higher management, e.g. why the process of change was consuming a lot of time, while by this new footing and shifting his talk towards involving the librarians in what is happening more, the manager may have been trying to minimize his responsibility for what was happening to the librarians in terms of workload problems and stressful working conditions.

Social constructionism notes that identity is a function of a situation and a resource that individuals utilize to achieve specific goals (Burr, 1995). The manager, in the previous part of the meeting, identified himself as part of the higher management group, which might have been a function of the situation at that time as he was seeking to achieve power and authority by alignment or in-grouping with the higher management group.

First, he was positioned by the audience as the person responsible for the higher management drawbacks or mistakes; he was positioned as having an *interest* in delaying the decision making process (such *decisions need a lot of time, it cannot be done in one go)* and having *no interest* in helping the librarians to solve their problems (see Muller and Whittle, 2010). Once the manager was positioned in this identity, he started defending the higher management stake and interests. As a result, he provided reasons and explanations of why the management was not acting upon the situation.

However, in this part of the meeting, starting from line 253, the identity of the manager shifted toward identifying himself as part of the employees' group or as he put it "manager of the service department". In the text he said, "*they ignore our problems unfortunately*" and *"our department is always marginalized"*. Here he shifted towards confessing his stake to help the librarians to solve the problem

Once the manager acknowledged the employees' interests, his identity was not so much at stake as at the beginning of the meeting. He no longer needed to convince the audience about his identity and positioned himself firmly in the group.

The shift in the manager's alignment influenced and affected the production and reception of utterances by the librarians, and this will now be explained.

9.3. The influence of the footing shift in the librarians' talk:

	The statement	Regular pattern of the librarians talk.
1	**Male 3:** Dr, try to push them harder, so they can feel our problem. (line 258)	Appealing to the manager to help.
2	**Male 4:** yeah try to push them harder, please… (line 259)	Appealing.
3	**Male 5:** as you said we are supporting staff, are we required to do any job? Are you going to work with us, you and the information systems manager, because you are saying we are all supporting staff, are you going to join us? (line 260 to 262)	Expressing disappointment and criticizing the higher management
4	**Male 5:** this is the bottom line, we are saying there must be a job description for us, all our duties should be identified and defined. They are saying (the college management) we are one unit and we should work together but they should define all our job titles and job descriptions so we will have the opportunity to be promoted, and to work within a department that values our work. I travelled abroad and did a degree but this has not changed my work duties, I am in the same office and doing the same duties as before getting my degree, if I knew this I would not have bothered to travel to study. (line 264 to 270)	Expressing disappointment. And criticizing the higher management. But interestingly involving bureaucracy by asking for detailed job description.
5	**Female 1:** true, it is a very stressful condition when your achievements are not appreciated.	Supporting her colleague's

	(**line 271**)	statement
6	**Male 4:** the management have many problems, they have an excessive number of employees, bad management, for example, coordinators of some departments told us that most of the week they do nothing because they are not required to do as many tasks compared to us, We work very hard compared to them and it is not appreciated, we are much better than them in commitment and hard work, honestly. (lines 272 to 276).	Direct criticism of the higher management strategies.
7	**Female:** it is not acceptable now to delay solutions. (line 277)	Criticism.
8	**Male 4:** true they should not delay dealing with this issue. (278)	Supporting the criticism.
9	**Male 5:** what? No, if he joins this department the situation will be the same because we will end up doing the textbook distribution duties, he should be working under the dean's office like a new division or section that has nothing to do with us. (line 280 to 283)	Challenging the higher management decision.
10	**Male 4:** believe me Dr, if you agreed to this solution, it would be like silencing us forever. (line 284).	Appealing to the manager to accept this decision.
11	**Male 5:** they should not do this, even the dean must not decide to do this, if he does then we are going to be in big trouble and this	Warning the manager about their reaction if the decision is

	problem will go further and our reactions will be unpredictable. (line 285 to line 287)	implemented.
12	**Male 4**: the dean cannot decide to add a new employee to our department and leave the textbook responsibility to us, he should be stopped. (line 288 and 289)	Appealing to the manager to stop the dean from implementing the decision.
13	**Male 5:** he should be stopped by you. (line 290)	Emphasizing the previous idea.
14	**Male 4:** Dr, you are our only hope, please reject this decision (to add a new employee to this department) and please ask them to open a new division, e.g. textbook division, and it will be highly appreciated if they put it in a different building. (line 291 to 293)	Appealing to the manager to help in rejecting the decision. And distancing the new employee bureaucratically and physically.
15	**Female:** Dr, allow me please to say this, I feel that you are not fully convinced of what these employees are saying, since the beginning of the meeting you have been defending the Dean's office's actions, you react as if you are not part of this department, you have to believe and feel their problems before you represent them in front of the dean.(lines 294 to 297) ▪▪	Urging the manager to confess his interests. Interesting that she should say you have to " believe and feel their problems"

Table 7. the Librarians' Utterances.

9.4. The shift of the librarians' rhetoric

When the manager shifted his footing towards aligning with the librarians and in-grouping with them, the librarians started to speak to the manager as part of the librarians' group; his suggestions were received with agreement and were supported sometimes.

There are three regular patterns in the librarians' talk that can be divided into different types of rhetoric: the "appealing rhetoric", as shown in table 3 examples number 1, 2, 12 , 13 and14, secondly the "criticism rhetoric", as in examples 3,4, 6,7 and 8, and finally the "revolution rhetoric", as in examples 11 and 13.

The shifts in the librarians' rhetoric developed after two important shifts in the manager's statements The first occurred after he blamed the higher management for the problems the librarians were facing (line 253). Once the manager denied responsibility for what was going on, the librarians stopped challenging him and appealed to him to help them in changing the situation. The second time was after the manager informed the librarians of the new decision by the higher management in lines 279 and 280. This piece of information was not expected as it contradicted what the librarians were asking for. They had requested a new employee to be in charge of textbook distribution, who should be under the dean's office's management, whilst the new decision was adding a new employee, but in the library division, which was not going to solve the problem because the librarians would have to share textbook distribution responsibilities with him. As a result, the librarians desperately wanted to change this decision by convincing the manager to discuss it with the higher management. In this situation they wanted to achieve a specific goal of convincing the manager to reject this decision as he had the authority to do so, as in example14 "***Male 4: Dr you are our only hope***,"

Within the appealing rhetoric, a number of identities were invoked for the librarians. First, there was the "powerless subordinate" identity, wherein the librarians demonstrated that they were powerless and the help of the manager was very much needed at this time, for example, *"please push them harder"*, *"if you accept the decision, it would be like silencing us forever"*, *"we are going to be in big trouble"*, *"you are our only hope"*, *"please reject this decision"*, *"please ask them to open a new division"*.

The second influence in the librarians' talk emerged after the shift in the manager's discourse towards "criticism rhetoric" in examples 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8. Once the manager had blamed the higher management for the problems the librarians were facing (line 253), the librarians shifted their rhetoric from appeal to downright criticism. The manager's shift in rhetoric in line 253 opened a discursive space for the librarians to criticize the higher management policies, strategies and decisions.

Within this process of talk interaction the librarians articulated explicit criticism of the higher management. Although the employees criticized the higher management throughout the entire meeting, it was not direct, but only within the contexts of delaying the decision making process and not considering the employees' issues. They explicitly mentioned the excessive number of employees, bad management, etc).

Throughout the criticism rhetoric the librarians presented revolutionary ideas to display their dissatisfaction at the higher management processes and strategies. They presented unrealistic suggestions, for example, *"the dean should be stopped by you"* in example 13 or " *if the higher managment does not fulfil our needs, our reactions will be unpredictable"* in example 11. Most of the librarians' suggestions were asking for dramatic change so they are best described as revolutionary rhetoric. For example, they suggested distancing the new employees physically

and bureacratically, example 14, and they invoked ideas about the power of their manager and used vague threats about their own behavior.

Modern organizations practise managerial control over their employees through identity regulations and bureacratic control (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, Zannoni and Janssens, 2007). The control through identity regulation functions through managerially inspired discourses that result in some influence over the identity work of the employees, while the bureaucratic control operates in a way that motivates desirable behaviors (Zannoni and Janssens, 2007). These two forms of control are embedded in the organization's discursive practices and the employees comply with them or they micro-emancipate themselves. In this meeting, the manager's discourses were examples of this organization's higher management's regulation of the manager's identity and involved him in identity work to achieve the goals of the organization. For example, he used the bureaucratic discourse to remind the librarians of the regulations and rules in this university and he made constant attempts to identify himself as a manager who followed these rules and he would not accept being identified as anything other than that. The librarians resisted these forms of control and tried to micro-emancipate themselves using the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse that was described in detail in the previous chapter.

Another example of an incident wherein the librarians micro-emancipated themselves occurred when the manager shifted his footing. In this particular context, this form of identity regulation (his identity shift toward a manager who cared about involving his librarians in the decision making process) opened a space for the librarians to micro-emancipate, which was manifested in the way they engaged in the criticism rhetoric.

What the manager did in terms of the critical dicourse analysis framwork was to open a discursive space by permitting criticisim of the higher management. By this criticism he offered consent to his employees to express direct criticism of the management. Criticizing the management policies was not an option for the employees at the beginning of the meeting; however, towards the end this rule was breached once the manager gave consent for it, in order to achieve in-group identity and solidarity.

Although the librarians resisted the bureaucratic discourse that was utilized by the manager and they asked for change to the bureaucratic functions of this university, they used some of the bureaucratic ideas to micro-emancipate themselves. For example, they emphasized the idea of job descriptions and they suggested that they should have detailed job descriptions that listed their duties, as in example 4.

This excerpt demonstrates how the context of interaction may play an important factor in influencing the discourse utilized and the performance of identity. We saw how the manager's identity shifted, from identity at stake when the employees challenged him in the previous part of the meeting, to an identity that supported the employees' concerns and stood up for the department's interests.

Another potential issue relates to the fact that once the opportunity arose for the librarians to criticize the management explicitly, which is a rare incident in Omani organizations, even in an educational institution such as this, the employees bonded with the manager and created a united identity against the higher management bureaucracy and supporting change. The librarians' and the manager's identities were regulated by the bureaucratic control mechanism imposed by the higher management's rules and regulations. These mechanisms regulated the manager's and

librarians' identities toward an identity that criticized the system and resented the current situation.

We saw that these aspects of the context of interaction influenced a shift in the discourse used by the manager from a bureaucratic form to one that was more understated and bonded with the employees. Another important aspect that needs to be highlighted in this particular interactional context is that the manager's identity was no longer at stake and he did not need to do a lot of identity work to defend his subject position through the discourses. Now he could take on a position that could be described as desirable by him and by the audience.

9.5. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to show how shifts in participants' talk may result in shifts in alignment, identity, in-groupness and out-groupness. The analysis above demonstrated that discursive devices such as footing shift occur because of a particular goal that the participants may want to achieve out of the interactional context. The analysis also demonstrated how the shift in the manager's footing affected and influenced the way the librarians responded to the manager's utterances. This chapter and the previous one discussed in detail the micro elements of talk and moment to moment re-assessment of positioning and alignment within the talk between the manager and the librarians. The next chapter will cover macro aspects of talk or, to use Fairclough's term, the social practice, and how micro elements of talk can explain talk at the macro level and also explain what is going on in a specific culture.

Chapter 10: Discourse as a social practice

10.1. Introduction

In the previous 3 chapters I analyzed the micro dimension of talk and explained why the participants in the meeting employed some features of talk and disregarded others. I also explained the identities, interests and stakes they were trying to invoke and why they invoked a particular identity and interests and not others. Continuing with Fairclough's (1992) framework, this chapter will explain the macro element of talk and look at the discourse as a social practice and what this implies about the culture. Fairclough located the analysis of this dimension within certain main aspects: first, by relating discourse to ideology and power, and second, by discussing the discourse within a view of power as hegemony.

10.2. Ideology

Thompson (1990) noted that ideologies are constructions of reality: this reality could be the physical world, social relations or social identities. This reality is built in to different dimensions of meanings of discursive practices that contribute to the production and transformation of relations of domination. Fairclough's account of the ideology and its relation to the discourse is similar to Thompson's (1990). Fairclough added that certain usage of language that specifically establishes or sustains relations of domination is ideological. Ideologies achieve the state of common sense when they are embedded in discursive practice. Therefore, the more ideological the underlying principles of the discursive practice, the less likely they are to be challenged (Fairclough, 1992). In this interactional context, where power structures were transparent, some forms of domination were reproduced and other forms were challenged or transformed. I called this idea the hierarchy of rules; in this specific interactional context some rules of domination or

those that sustained power relations were breached by the participants, but other rules were not breached.

A similar idea to the idea of hierarchy of rules was discussed by Drew and Heritage (1992): the more institutionalized the talk the less likely to be transgressed. Institutional talk, which began to emerge in 1970, was defined by Drew and Heritage as the talk that develops in a restricted environment where the goals of the participants are limited and institution specific; the interactional contribution is in force and institution specific inferential frameworks are used widely (Drew and Heritage, 1992). For example, institutional talk inhibits news interviewers from asking specific questions of their interviewees, and inhibits doctors from complaining about their own illnesses to patients. Institutional talk is not limited to particular physical settings such as hospitals or schools, but can happen in any ordinary conversation as long as it maintain the characteristics of institutional talk (Drew and Heritage, 1992).

Drew and Heritage discussed the institutionalized aspects of interaction between doctors and patients and they demonstrated that even when doctors attempt to equalize the relationship between themselves and the patients, the patients will use deferential markers to reproduce the power asymmetry between themselves and the doctors; these deferential markers include asking the doctor tag questions like "my son needs antibiotics, doesn't he?" This implies that the doctor's diagnosis is authorized and valued more than their own diagnosis.

 Power structures that I will describe in the section below are similar to that described by Drew and Heritage, where the more ideological and institutionalized the power structures the less likely they are to be disrupted in the talk. The sections below explore which forms of power structures are reproduced and which are transformed, if any.

10.3. Hierarchy of rules

Here I will discuss the power structures that were reproduced and why they remained the same, without being transformed. All rules are not the same. Some rules are breakable but others much less so, depending on the strength of feeling of group membership and the context. In this meeting we saw that some rules were breached but others remained unbreached. For example, in the interactional control features section that I discussed previously, the analysis demonstrated that the employees utilized the control features more than the manager; for example, they controlled and set the agenda of the talk by initiating new topics and terminating others. They also formulated and completed each other's utterances to set themselves as a united entity against the manager. Moreover, they controlled the development of the topic to adhere to the agenda they set by suggesting solutions and ideas. Although Dedoussis (2004) suggested that universities in Arab countries are bureaucratic and centralized, with members expected to conform and follow the rules as well as to make a good impression to their superiors, this interactional context does not reflect what Dedoussis suggested in his studies. On the contrary, the employees were challenging the manager in most of the utterances, using different discursive devices.

This demonstrates some ideological aspects of this context and of the Omani culture in general. The more ideological the underlying principles the less likely they are to be challenged (Fairclough, 1992). One of the rules that was not breached was the explicit power indication in calling the manager Dr. The employees referred to the manager as Dr in all the encounters between them and the manager; and they began each utterance by calling him Dr. This is one reflection of the power structure in the Omani culture in general and Omani academic life specifically, where people at lower levels of the hierarchy interact in a way that shows respect to the individuals at higher levels in the hierarchy. This form implies particular ideological

assumptions about the social identities of the employees and the manager, and the social relationship between them in this particular context. One possible explanation why this form of power reflection was ideologically ingrained (institutionalized and situated) within this discursive practice is that it achieved the status of "common sense" and become naturalized in this discursive practice.

Another rule that was not breached was that in referring to the female employee, all male employees and the manager referred to her as sister (her name). This is a method utilized to maintain distance between males and females in the Omani culture, and it also formalized the interaction. Calling the female colleague "sister" placed the woman in the same familial situation as the men's real sisters, thereby desexualizing her, so she was another sister not a 'woman'.

10.4. The less institutionalized power structures

This section discusses the power structures that can be described as transformed. When the employees resisted the manager's bureaucratic discourse and questioned his ability to change the situation, by doing this they tried to equalize the relationship between themselves and the manager. In chapter six I discussed the interactional control features and how power asymmetries were practised between the manager and the employees. In general, we saw that the subordinates initiated the topics of conversation in their attempts to convince the manager to change the situation. They also controlled the agenda of the meeting by contributing to and formulating their colleagues' utterances. In addition, the employees controlled the question initiation process by asking the manager questions of repudiation that held the manager to account for the stressful situation they were facing.

During the process of negotiating power between the subordinates and the manager hegemonic struggles might take place to retain some power structures for the manager. Definition and a discussion of hegemonic struggles that were documented in the meeting follow below.

10.5. Hegemonic struggles:

The idea of power structure in this meeting and how some forms of power were transformed and others remained the same, implies that unlike other essentialist research that studied talk, gender and power relations or structures in talk, this research demonstrated that power is not a commodity of the powerful individual and not an explanation for what is happening during the interaction process. For example, in this meeting, where the manager held a greater degree of legitimate power than the librarians, he did not manage to claim or achieve power although he used different methods and techniques, including trying to utilize bureaucratic discourse, to achieve power and authority. During this negotiation of power between the manager and the librarians, moments of hegemonic struggle took place.

I mentioned order of discourse above and this requires a detailed definition. Fairclough (1992) noted that social practices function in a way that constitutes a social order, for example the social order of education in a specific time and society. The discourse or a semiotic aspect of this social order is what is called an order of discourse. It is a social ordering of the relationship between different ways of making meaning. Some ways of making meaning are dominant in an order of discourse and others can be alternative. For example, a dominant way within a consultation process between doctor and patient is the maintenance of social distance between the patient and the doctor; however, there might also be ways by which doctors play down their authority. An order of discourse in not a closed or fixed system, but is always dependent on what happens in the actual interaction.

The concept of hegemony is used to analyze the concept of order of discourse, so a particular social structure of talk may become hegemonic and thereby maintain the relations of domination. However, because hegemony is always challenged it results in a hegemonic struggle (Dick, 2000).

Fairclough (2005) notes that organizational structures are hegemonic structures that reproduce power relations among groups of agents. These power structures constitute "fixes" that provide guidelines to manage the contradiction and get on with the business successfully. However, if these organizational structures face a crisis, the fix will be no longer valid and the social agents will try to develop a new "fix" through a process of hegemonic struggle, which as a result will create a new hegemonic "fix".

Hegemonic struggle can be manifested at moments when domination is challenged and the domination in ideas, authorities, statement and personality is questioned (Dick, 2000). During the meeting, I spotted a number of occurrences when hegemonic struggle took place. The manager used the bureaucratic discourse to construct realities about himself as a manager and realities about the situation, while employees used the democratic discourse to resist the realities constructed by the bureaucratic discourse. Moments of hegemonic struggle happened when employees questioned the manager's authority, for example,

Moments of hegemonic struggle	Excerpts
The manager's authority is questioned.	*Male 3: Ok doctor, you did nothing regarding this issue.*
His honesty in dealing with the situation is questioned.	*Male 5: Dr, is this the first time you have heard about this issue? Since you were appointed as a manager me and my colleagues have been asking you to do something about it.*
The manager's idea is questioned.	*Male 4: when Dr? Gradually when? After 3 years?* *Manager: hopefully it won't be years.*
The manager's intention to change the situation is questioned.	*Male 4: Dr you are putting us in an embarrassing situation by saying you have 6 employees in the division, you should divide us to different job specifications (description) like any other library or information centre here in the university, now you are saying 6 employees, this is funny..*
The manager's statement is questioned.	*Manager: we are not talking about job description here, but this is a temporarily situation.* *Male 4: you.. you...you even if it is a temporary situation it will give the administration an excuse not to approve the proposal.*

Table 8. Moments of Hegemonic Struggle.

The struggle of hegemony was manifested in the challenge by the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse of employees against the bureaucratic discourse of the manager. This struggle was played out via membership group identify that the employees constructed. The employees used utterances that demonstrated they were one united group. This group challenged the strategies

and policies set by the higher management and articulated by the manager. Within the group membership identity, the employees challenged and questioned the manager's ideas, statements, and his authority, as is shown in the table above.

10.6. Democratization by Fairclough (1992)

Democratization of discourse by Fairclough (1992) is a removal of indicators of power and authority in the linguistics and discursive linguistic rights of groups of people. One of the areas of discursive democratization that Fairclough reviewed was elimination of overt power markers in institutional discourse where power relations were unequal.   In this interactional context, the subordinates did not accept the rules and the regulations that had been established in this organization for a long time. They tried to resist these rules that were articulated by the manager by using the democratic discourse. Also, they did not accept the fact that this situation was taking an unnecessarily long time, and they did not accept the reality that work conditions were different for people in different libraries in this same university. They articulated this fact when providing suggestions to the manager, for example, when male 4 said (*Dr you are putting us in an embarrassing situation by saying you have 6 employees in the division, you should divide us to different job specifications (description) like any other library or information centre here in the university, so if you divide the existing employees to specific jobs you will end up with a shortage in the number of employees and your proposal will be approved).* They used the other libraries' experiences as a tool to illustrate their difficult situation.

The examples of hegemonic struggles that I described in the previous section could be interpreted as the democratization of discourse that Fairclough (1992) proposed. In a society where authorities are a sovereign idea and where obeying authority is cognitively ingrained within a society member's mind, the hegemonic struggles between the manager and the

employees were a sign of democratization. Here employees questioned the authority held by the manager and most of the overt power markers were eliminated. For example, males 4 and 5 were formulating the interactions of their colleagues and the manager, and this formulation was an example of an overt power marker (Fairclough, 1992) that was used by the less powerful group, the employees.

This was a formal and authoritative context and the rules controlling discursive practice should have been adhered to. However, the critical discourse analysis revealed that the employees dismissed the manager's bureaucratic discourse and the overt power markers were eliminated. Faircough suggested that the tendency to eliminate these markers is correlated with a tendency toward informality (1992).

However, in this context there were resources that allowed these employees not to adhere to the rules governing the interaction between them as employees and manager and to democratize the discourse. These resources are a manager who was perceived as weak, who employed a weak bureaucratic discourse that allowed the employees to attack it and challenge it using interactional features such as controlling the agenda of the meeting, controlling the topics discussed and asking questions that controlled the flow of topics.

Another resource of the context that allowed the employees to disrupt the rules was the work conditions and the pressures they were facing in daily matters. The employees felt able to not respect the manager's right to speak and to ignore most of his utterances, because they faced a lot of pressures, these pressures where manifested and articulated in the democratic discourse they employed. Examples of these pressures and how the employees articulated them were discussed in the democratic discourse section in the previous chapter.

In accordance to the situation, the topic discussed could be one reason why the rules collapsed in this context. Here they were discussing the problem of workload and their need for new employees and urging the manager to act. The employees articulated that during peak times they had to work overtime and they were not even getting payment for that period; they also complained that physical duties such as carrying books for long periods of time was causing them health problems.

This problem lasted for eight years and it did not change, although three different managers had managed this department (Library) during this period. Despite the employees' attempts with the previous managers to change the situation, it did not change, due to university policy and rules. Previously, these employees had appealed twice to the university administration and to the college's dean to help with this problem and to provide solutions, but both attempts were rejected.

Another resource supporting the employees was that this new manager could not have been experienced in dealing with angry employees and controlling the wheel of interaction. Moreover, the manager's background allowed him to be conservative when answering the employees' questions and concerns as he was careful not to reveal the whole picture and provide them with the information needed. Previously the manager had worked in the university administration for more than 10 years; the university administration is a bureaucratic place that exhibits a power differential between employees and managers. Therefore, his background led him to practise bureaucracy and emphasize the power differences between him and his subordinates by advocating the university administration rules and regulations.

Another resource that is picked out from the context is the different agendas set by the subordinates and the manager in this encounter. Here the subordinates apparently seek to raise contentious aspects of their work conditions, which were presented in most of the employees' excerpts. The manager's agenda was to slow down the process and to allow sufficient time for rules and regulations to be followed properly.

One final resource might be that having this new manager in the department gave the employees an opportunity to attack and to express the problems and issues they had been facing for the last eight years. Therefore, no matter whether this new manager was an authoritative or a weak leader, the employees would follow this new discourse (the democratic discourse) because a discursive space had opened up and been colonized by the employees, which gave them the opportunity not to follow the rules of the interaction but to disrupt it.

Generally all these resources allowed the employees to disrupt the rules governing the interaction and to create a transformational understanding of manager-employee interaction under certain circumstances and conditions. This could be attributed to struggles for power over defining the real truth of the situation. The manager employed the bureaucratic discourse to retain power and to represent an image of a powerful manager and the employees resisted his positioning and challenged the authority he held to achieve their goal from this interaction of changing a reality of stressful working conditions.

All the "resources" that I discussed in the paragraphs above are examples of what Fairclough calls the "non-discoursal" aspects of the social world – that is they are features of the reality that these employees encounter every day.

Finally, this hegemonic struggle that resulted in democratizing the discourse made it easier for the female employee to contribute to the meeting as much as anybody else and to utilize the democratic discourse. This mode of intervention eliminated the overt power markers that would have made the female employee feel uncomfortable if the salient social category had been gender. However, as the social categories that were salient to this context were manager and employees, within this social category she was able to contribute within the democratic discourse without worrying about using competitive or collaborative modes of interaction. Therefore, the democratization of discourse was one of the reasons that motivated the female employees to contribute in this interactional context equally with her male colleagues.

However, one power marker was not eliminated, namely calling the manager Dr. As I discussed in the hierarchy of rules section, in all the encounters the subordinates referred to the manager as Dr, even when his domination, authority and ideas were challenged. This can be attributed to the underlying principles in the Omani culture; the more ideological these principles the less likely they are to be challenged.

10.7. Conclusion

One of my thesis aims was to discover whether power structures in talk are negotiated and can be transformed or remain the same according to how rules are institutionalized or ideologized to reach the state of common sense.

Knowing which rules are transformed and which remain the same offers valuable information about the culture in which an interaction takes place. Analysis of the rules of interaction between the manager and the librarians demonstrated that although the manager held the legitimate power, his bureaucratic discourse was challenged, which can be described as moments

of hegemonic struggle. During these moments of hegemonic struggle the manager's tendency to claim power and authority was questioned by the librarians.

One of the rules of talk that revealed asymmetry of power between the manager and the librarians and was neither transgressed nor transformed was that of calling the Manager Dr. Throughout the meeting the librarians never called the manager by his first name alone, but always combined his name with Dr.

Another rule of talk that distanced the male speakers from their female colleague was calling her sister during the talk. By doing so the male employees, including the manager, placed her in the same familial situation as their own sisters, thereby desexualizing her.

Most of the other rules that conveyed power asymmetry between the manager and the librarians, such as using interactional control features during the talk, which I explained in detail in chapter six, were transformed. During moments of hegemonic struggle the manager was challenged, his ability to change the situation was questioned, and the librarians, who held less legitimate power than the manager, took charge of this talk.

Chapter 11: Discussion and overall conclusions

11.1. Introduction

This is the last chapter of my thesis. In the previous chapters I have analyzed the meeting and explained the discourses that were used by the participants and their reasons for using them. Also I explained the identities that the manager and the librarians were invoking during the meeting and why they were invoking these identities and I highlighted the shifts in the manager's discursive devices and the consequences of this shift for the librarians' talk. This chapter is a step forward towards analyzing the talk and relating it to the culture and the context where the talk took place. I will start by listing my thesis aims and then I will explain how I developed the four arguments of my thesis. This will be followed by explanation of the contributions that this research provides to methodology, practice and knowledge. I will then explain how my point of view has changed through this journey and the implications of this for me as a researcher. Finally, the relevance of this study for moving the research field forward will be discussed.

11.2. Aims of my thesis

The first aim of this research was to demonstrate why the previous approaches to communication and gender had failed to provide a comprehensive explanation for what is happening during talk in interaction and what participants are trying to do with the talk or what they are trying to achieve at the end of the interaction.

The social constructionist approach suggests, fundamentally, that there are multiple and sometimes conflicting cultural conceptions (discourses) of what it means to be a man or a woman (Burr, 1995). In talk, men and women will draw on these accounts to construct a particular identity and the key element in social constructionism is to understand how the social

context motivates these constructions. There are cultural conceptions about how men and women should communicate – the aim of this research is to understand to what extent these conceptions are either reproduced or resisted in any given interaction, why this might happen, and more particularly what it is about the interaction that produces the discursive practices that are observed in the talk.

The second aim of this research was, within the social constructionist understanding about gender and talk, to find a research tool that would allow me to explain what cultural conceptions or discourses are utilized by the audience and why they utilize these discourses. It was also my aim to find a research tool that did not treat gender and power relations as variables that explain what happens in the interaction process. I needed a research tool that would allow me to establish a relationship between the use of text and the social practice at what is explained in critical discourse analysis as the Macro level of analysis (Fairclough, 1992). I also needed a research tool to analyze talk in interaction, or the micro elements of talk, and how participants negotiate, produce, and resist some social positions and reject others.

Bearing this in mind, the CDA framework by Fairclough (1992) is a research tool that combines linguistically oriented discourses analysis with relevant social and political aspects. Moreover, discursive psychology (or DP) is a research method that analyzes the micro mechanisms of production and reproduction of power, gender, and identity and many other categories that might be relevant to the interaction process (Whittle and Mueller, 2011).

11.3. Development of arguments.

In chapter two, I presented my thesis arguments which were founded on a detailed literature review. My first argument is based on the social constructionist tenets that view gender categories as emergent features of on-going social interaction (West and Zimmerman, 1987). I argued that within the interaction process some social categories such as race, class and gender become salient and others become sidelined, depending on the influence on the interactional context and the social categories that the participants draw on.

My second argument relates to the importance of focusing on the context of the interaction when analyzing talk because this allows the researcher to explore how gendered processes are practised and played out in a particular interactional context, how power is played out between the participants, and how the context influences the participants to interact in a specific way.

My third argument is that to achieve particular goals out of the interaction participants in an interactional setting will invoke certain identities and reject others and they may take up specific social positions in the discourse and they may reject others, according to the social positions that are made available for them. Also, they may join a specific group or distance themselves from the group.

My final argument is that within this formalized encounter power structures are enacted by the participants in the talk: some power structure rules are transformed and some are reproduced, depending on the extent to which these rules are institutionalized and ideologized. The more institutionalized the rules, the less likely they are to be challenged and they become taken for granted knowledge

I will now explain how I developed these arguments and what their implications are.

11.3.1. Development of argument no. 1:

At this meeting six male librarians and a male manager and two female librarians were present. The analysis of interactional control features demonstrated that both male and female participants utilized these features equally. One female librarian, as explained in chapters seven and eight, in-grouped with her male colleagues and they spoke as one group whose main concern was to achieve a better working environment. She formulated the talk cat some points; as I explained in chapter six, formulation is a feature of talk used by a powerful speaker, so here the female librarian was as powerful as the male librarian speakers. Therefore, gender was not, as the essentialist studies had previously assumed, salient. I discussed in chapters one and two that essentialist studies on gender and language consider social categories such as gender, race, and occupation as ranked in a hierarchy, with many other attributes of the individuals always salient to the conversation, and these are the main reasons why the interaction process happens in a particular way (Cameron, 1998). In this interactional context we saw that the participants did not enact gender and they did not interact according to their gender category but according to their group membership as they talked as one group: " the librarians group ".

However, the gender element was not completely irrelevant because at some points during the meeting gender was enacted by both the female librarian and her male colleagues and manager. They both were doing gender in various ways that are fully linked to the perceptions or cultural understanding of what it means to be man or a woman in the Omani culture; first, when the female librarian was expressing the problem that they had been facing in this department for the last eight years, she constructed the workplace problem at the level of the employees feeling and needs, for example: "but the employees have rights and needs, it has to be accomplished, they

are very tired, now it's years since this hassle started and no one is listening" and "you need to listen to them they are tired". Although she like her male colleagues used bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse, she used a softer language when criticizing the manager and the administration. One reason why she preferred to use this approach might be that she wanted to retain and express her female identity.

Another reason could be related to this specific context; this meeting was dominated by male employees (seven) and she was the only the one of the two females present who contributed to this meeting. Generally, for a regular Omani female this is a challenging context in terms of being heard and appreciated because the regular practice in Oman is to segregate the two genders. As I discussed in the thesis overview, the Omani culture is a Muslim and Arab culture; in public places such as waiting rooms for hospitals, clinics, civil organizations, etc. people are separated according to their gender. Similarly, in public schools, after 6th grade pupils are required to attend single sex schools. However, mixing of the two genders takes place when they join universities and workplaces.

Therefore, males and females do interact in the workplace, but within professional boundaries wherein although work issues and procedures are discussed freely, discussion of personal issues and informal chat are not as common as the formal talk. This cultural knowledge provides a preliminary understanding of how men and women interact in the workplace. We saw that the female librarian, rather than using exactly the same approach as her male colleagues, which was to directly challenge the manager, preferred to be more conservative and use softer language to make sure that her suggestion would be accepted and tolerated and to comply with the culturally accepted image of the Omani female. This is linked to the discussion that segregation between

the two gender categories in this culture may have an effect on the way they communicate with each other but this effect is only minimal.

Similarly, for male librarians gender was enacted at some points during the meeting. First, when the manager was giving feedback to the female employee he used a softer tone and showed more respect to her than when he gave feedback to the male librarians. For example, as I discussed in chapter six when I described the bureaucratic discourse that he was utilizing, he joked and belittled their suggestions and there were many incidents where he challenged the points they were raising by providing negative feedback to these points or by laughing at what they were saying. However, when the female librarians provided a suggestion, he treated her suggestion with more tolerance and understanding; for example, when she complained that the employees were tired and the manager should listen to their needs, the manager replied that a change was going to be implemented, but gradually. Also, when she asked about the new employee and when exactly he was joining the department he gave her a piece of information that should have been regarded as classified in the case of somebody who was utilizing the bureaucratic discourse: namely, that the new employee was facing problems with the college board. Although the male librarians had asked this question earlier in a challenging way, the manager did not provide an answer until the female librarian asked the same question in a way that was respectful to him.

This provides information about the perception of authority in this culture and how the best way to approach people with authority is to acknowledge their authority and powerful position as the female librarian did. When she approached the manager in a respectful way that acknowledged hierarchical differences, he then provided her with the information that she was seeking. This is linked to goal achievement in the talk and how people react if their goal in the interaction is achieved, a point which will now be covered through discussion of my second argument.

Another way of doing gender was observed in how the male librarians and manager addressed the female librarian. During the meeting, they did not call her by her first name alone as they did with each other but they always preceded her name with "sister". This raises many implications about the interaction between males and females in this context and in the Omani workplace in general.

Addressing the female librarian as sister placed her in the same familial situation as the men's real sisters; by doing this they formalized the talk and de-sexuliazed her, so instead of being a women she was treated as another sister. This demonstrates that formalizing and desexualizing the talk between men and women is one method that is used in this culture to ease the flow of interaction between the two genders. This also implies that in segregated cultures it is false to assume that the interactions between the two genders will be limited or restricted. Participants in the talk may find ways that allow them to interact freely and efficiently, and placing the individual from the opposite gender in a familial position is one method that is used by individuals in a gender segregated culture. Hence, the same rule applies for females when interacting with male colleagues, and mostly they will call a male colleague "brother" before saying his first name. In this meeting, when referring to her male colleagues the female librarian used the word brother before saying their names except in the one incident when she mentioned her husband who is her colleague in this department.

Finally, gender was done by the female librarian when she demarcated herself in talking about the stressful situation that her male colleagues were facing, so she didn't say "**we** are tired", or "you should fulfill **our** needs", but she always used "they" when referring to the librarian group. One reason could be that she wanted to keep her talk neutral and to avoid the challenging tone of voice that her male colleagues were using, or it could be that because she was the only female

who participated in this meeting she wished to demarcate herself from the male group. Another possible reason is that all the male colleagues who attended this meeting worked in the book loans, bar-coding and book supply sections but she and her female colleague, who was silent all through the meeting, worked in the reference department.

11.3.2. Development of arguments nos. 2 and 3:
My second argument is that in every interaction participants try to achieve particular goals and to achieve their goals. In so doing they may:

A. Use more interactional control features. As I explained in chapter seven, as the librarians in the interaction practised more control features than the manager to achieve their goals, the manager also used interactional control features to steer the talk towards achieving his goals and objectives.

B. Identify themselves with specific identities and reject others. From the analysis of the manager's and the librarians' talk we saw that the manager had certain goals he wanted to achieve by the end of the meeting These goals were to convince the librarians to lower their demands and to accept what the higher management was offering. Another important goal that I extracted from the context was that the manager was trying to achieve a higher position in the hierarchy and to claim his legitimate power. To achieve his goals the manager invoked a number of identities through the talk, identities such the representative of the system and the mentor that I explained in more details in chapter 7 pages 188, 189, and 190.

Within the bureaucratic discourse he also invoked the identity of the rule follower when he articulated his inability to send the proposal further up the hierarchy because it did not

satisfy the minimum requirements of the university rules and regulations. Because authority is still respected in the Omani context and it has not achieved the same pejorative status as it has in the Western context, the manager might have thought that invoking the identity of a rule follower would allow him to achieve the authoritative position he was seeking. After he failed to maintain this identity, the manager shifted towards identifying himself as a mentor or an advisor, as I explained in chapter seven, page 185 and 187 , by constantly advising the employees about the procedures that should be followed in this particular situation. So what was he trying to achieve and why? Since the ultimate goal of the manager was to achieve a high position in the hierarchy and to show power differences between him and the librarians, the identity of mentor or advisor was used by the manager to demonstrate that he held more legitimate power than the librarians; by doing this he might have been trying to make his suggestions more convincing and appealing to the librarians.

He also invoked the identity of a representative of the system, as I explained in chapter seven, page 187 to in-group himself with the higher management group, which he hoped would lead the librarians towards perceiving him as a powerful individual who was part of the powerful group.

I argued that these identities were resources that were made available to the manager in the interactional context (Antaki, 1988) and he used them to achieve his goal of confirming his high position in the hierarchy and to convince the librarians to lower their demands. Similarly, (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) noted that in an organization, the identity of employees can be regulated by that organization's procedures, rules and regulations. Therefore, the manager's identities might be regulated by this organization's

rules and regulation. I mentioned in chapter four that the university where this meeting took place is a highly authoritative organization, where employees at higher levels of the hierarchy, such as this manager, are expected to reflect and to represent the organization's rules and systems for employees at lower levels of the hierarchy. The manager's identity in this interactional context was shifting from that of a rule follower to that of a mentor or advisor and then to the identity of the representative of the system. What these identities have in common is that they all fall within the higher management's expectations of a good manager who should constantly remind his employees of the importance of rules and regulations to the organization.

So based on the analysis of the identities of the manager we can extract two important findings; first, it is false to theorize that power is a commodity of the powerful individual. My analysis demonstrated that power can only be achieved through talk by invoking identities that reflect power. My second finding questions the assertion of the essentialist studies that power relations exist prior to identity (O'Barr and Atkins, 1982). The current analysis showed that this is a false assumption because power can be enacted by the participants through the structure of the talk; these structures are not fixed and can be negotiated by the participants in the talk. We saw that although the manager held legitimate power through his position in this organization as a manager, he still had to negotiate this power by invoking identities that would help him achieve the powerful position that he was seeking.

Similarly, the structures of the talk allowed the librarians to invoke particular identities to respond to the manager's talk. The librarians were able to invoke these identities only

because the structure of the talk allowed them to do so: I suspect that in a different setting the librarians might not have been able to invoke these identities that reflect power. One obvious identity that the librarians were invoking was that of revolutionary employees who wanted to change the reality and create a better working environment. Within this identity a plea for a radical change in their working conditions was obvious.

This negotiation of power by invoking identities provides valuable information about the culture in which this interaction took place. From the results of the analysis, it is obvious that power is expected to be exercised by the individuals who hold this power legitimately, for example, a manager or any person in a high position in the hierarchy. This is because the Omani culture is a highly prescribed culture and the power differences are accepted by Omani individuals. Although power differences and differences in hierarchy should be acknowledged, the manager and the librarians struggled to maintain this cultural conception about power differences. Many reasons can be put forward to explain why power relations were negotiated by both manager and librarians and power was not accepted as the culture prescribed it; this aspect will be covered later in this chapter.

C. They may take up a specific social position in the discourse and they may reject others.

Although the librarians utilized the bureaucracy is dysfunctional discourse, which I explained in more detail in chapter six, they used some aspects of the bureaucratic system domain, for example, they emphasized the importance of job description and job titles to solve the current problems of workload and excessive working hours. They also suggested to the manager that he should observe them while they were performing their daily duties; this suggestion falls within

the bureaucracy domain because by urging their manager to observe their work, the employees were assuming hierarchal differences between them and the manager.

The example here demonstrates that although the librarians refused and challenged the tenets of the bureaucratic system that the manager was trying to convince them with, they used some of its ideas to achieve some of their goals and to convince the manager of their demands.

D. They join specific group or they distance themselves from the group (In-group-out-group process).

One of the discursive devices that were discussed by Whittle and Muller (2011) was in-grouping and out-grouping of participants to achieve a goal within the interactional context. The analyses in chapters eight and ten illustrated that both the manager and the librarians practised in-grouping and out-grouping during the talk. The manager in-grouped with the higher management team by constantly stating what the higher management wanted and the rules and regulations that were to be followed in such cases. Also, he out-grouped himself from the librarians' group when they suggested revolutionary actions such as "the dean should be stopped" and "our proposal should be sent to the university administration as soon as possible". Here the manager distanced himself by saying "if you want to do it your way do it yourself, I am not going to be involved in this".

Toward the end of the talk the manager out-grouped from the higher management group which he had previously identified himself as part of. He did this to minimize his responsibility for what was happening to the librarians in terms of workload problems and stressful working conditions.

The librarians also in-grouped with each other and identified themselves as the stressed out librarians, male and female librarians identified themselves as one group and they spoke about the group interests and demands, for example, "we need", "Our demand is", and so on..

This discursive device was used by the manager and the librarians during the talk to achieve their different goals: the librarians wanted to sound more powerful through this group identity and the manager wanted to claim hierarchy by grouping himself with the legitimately powerful group, "the higher management team" .

E. Participants may use footing to achieve a goal.

Another discursive device that was used by the manager during the talk was footing. As I described in chapter nine, he shifted his footing towards the end of the meeting. The manager shifted his footing towards involving the librarians with what was happening and what the higher management were planning to do. Within this new footing, the manager tried to involve the librarians with the full picture and inform them of what was happening in the higher management department. The reason why the manager shifted his footing was to minimize his responsibility for the current difficult situation that the librarians were facing.

11.3.3. Implications

The essentialist approaches had previously argued that the context of the interaction is not important and it has no influence on the interaction process as it was assumed that linguistic strategies have only one fixed and defined meaning, regardless of the context. However, the discussion of the second and third arguments demonstrated that the context of the interaction is very salient and it influences what is said, who says it, and why. In this interactional context, which is supposed to be a formal workplace interaction where

power differences are transparent, the librarians, who held less legitimate power, used the interactional control features that imply dominance and power (as is discussed in more detail in chapter seven) to achieve goals and to accomplish their demands. The context influenced the way both the manager and the librarians talked; it allowed the librarians to sound powerful and present their demands in a challenging way and it also made available to them the resources needed to negotiate their demands. These resources were a manager who was newly assigned to this department, librarians who had been in this department for eight years and who tried different methods to change the current situation but failed, librarians whose group membership was so powerful that it allowed them to challenge the currently applied system and the people who advocated it. All these resources were components of this interactional context that led a person with authority (the manager) to struggle to claim this authority and to maintain it, and enabled people with less authority (the librarians) to take up positions within the available discourses that can be described as reflecting power and thereby posing challenges to the manager and the system behind him.

Similarly, the essentialist studies that I described in chapters one and two assumed that identity pre-dates the conversation or the interaction process and that the participants in the interaction process have a predetermined identity that steers the wheel for the conversation. This identity is fixed and defined by cultural and social factors (Kitzinger, 1997). However, the discussion of the identities invoked by the manager and the librarians above illustrates that identity is not fixed and it does not pre-date the conversation; it occurs as a result of the context and it is invoked to achieve a goal by the

participants in the talk. All the identities that I discussed earlier were invoked during the talk and as a result of what other participants were saying.

I argued that every participant has a goal that he or she wants to achieve within the interactional context and the results demonstrate that participants react positively if their goal in the interaction is achieved. For example, as I explained earlier in this chapter, when the female librarian acknowledged the manager's authority by showing respect and speaking in a softer tone than her male colleagues the manager responded positively by providing her with information that he had not previously disclosed in the meeting. The second incident occurred when the manager shifted his footing and sympathized with the librarians by acknowledging their demands and justifying them and, as I explained in chapter nine in the shifting in footing section, the librarians responded positively to him by using a less challenging tone and in-grouping with him, which was not the case at the beginning of this meeting. This implies that participants in talk do not have a fixed form of interaction or way of talking; for example, a feminine or masculine style of talk. Instead, the form of an interaction changes according to the context and according to the goals that the participants want to achieve.

11.3.4. Development of argument no 4:

My final argument is that the structure of the talk defines which power structure rules are transformed and which are reproduced, and this depends on how these rules are institutionalized and ideologized. The more institutionalized the rules, the less likely they are to be challenged, and they become taken for granted knowledge. .

Drew and Heritage (1992) introduced the idea that institutionalized talk develops in a restricted environment and is regulated by a set of rules that are institution specific. Therefore, based on Drew and Heritage, every interaction is institutionalized according to specific rules that are relevant to the setting where the talk takes place. The performance of these rules depends heavily on how they are institutionalized or ideologized to reach the state of common sense; the more institutionalized the rules the less likely they are to be breached or transformed by the participants in the talk. As stated by Fairclough (1992), the more ideological the underlying principles, the less likely they are to be challenged

In line with this idea, and using the results of analyzing the talk in this meeting I introduced a new theory that can be described as a continuation of Drew and Heritage's theory of institutionalized talk. I named this theory the hierarchy of rules in talk, and it assumes that there are different levels of rules: some of them at higher levels of the hierarchy and some at lower levels. What defines their position in the hierarchy is their ability to be changed and transformed. If they are easily transformed they are at a lower level; however, if they resist and remain the same, they are at a high level of the hierarchy. These rules prescribe what is said and what is not said in a specific interactional context. If these rules are strongly ingrained in the culture they are more likely to stay the same and not be transformed; however, if they are not strongly ingrained in the culture or they are the result of modernization, they will most likely be transformed.

The examples of incidents in the talk between the manager and the librarians illustrate which rules are high in the hierarchy and which are low. Although the best description of the interaction between the manager and the librarians is that the latter were challenging the manager's utterances and whatever he was doing to try to convince them, the librarians never breached or transformed the rule of addressing the manager by his educational degree (Dr). Throughout the

meeting both male and female librarians acknowledged this difference between them and the manager: that he held a higher level of educational degree than them.

This implies that the rule of acknowledging differences in educational levels is important in interactions in the Omani context and this rule is difficult to transform.

This rule demonstrates the importance of showing the different levels of power and authority among the participants in situations where people at lower levels of the hierarchy interact in a way that shows respect to the individuals at higher levels in the hierarchy.

Another rule that was not transformed was that of the males addressing the female librarian as "sister" and her calling her colleagues "brothers". The segregation between the two gender categories in this culture may have an influence on the way they communicate or interact with each other. This influence could be to formalize the interaction between them (males and females) as much as possible to make it easier for them to communicate. My interpretation as a member of this culture is that when a female communicates with a male colleague in the workplace she might not be in her comfort zone if there are no boundaries or rules to regulate the talk and one of these rules involves both parties in making the interaction or talk as formal and conservative as they can, for example, by discussing only work matters and avoiding jokes and personal matters. Therefore, placing the colleague in a familial position of "brother" will ease any tension between the two genders that might occur.

Going back to the hierarchy of rules theory, some rules were easily transformed and challenged by the participants. I described these rules as low in the hierarchy because unlike the previous two rules they had not been ideologized to reach the state of common sense. When the

employees resisted the manager's bureaucratic discourse and questioned his ability to change the situation by using interactional control features to control the interaction, they breached the rule of power differences between them and the manager. By breaching this rule they tried to equalize the relationship between themselves and the manager.

The hierarchy of rules is not fixed, however. It mainly depends on the importance of these rules to achieving the participants' goals from the interaction. I think if the transformation of a rule is important for the participant in achieving his/her goal, he or she is going to transform and transgress that rule regardless of how it is ideologized or institutionalized in the talk. Similarly, if a rule such as calling the manager Dr is not important to the participants in the process of achieving their goals, it remains unchanged.

11.4. Contributions

Three important contributions are offered by this thesis to the research into language and gender and they take the form of valuable insights for researchers who intend to focus on a specific interactional context. First, the researcher is urged to avoid the taken for granted knowledge about the communication process for specific groups or a specific gender. This researcher cautions other researchers against assuming that language in a specific interactional setting is fixed or patterned and can be applied in any similar context. For example, essentialist studies had previously assumed that communication processes between doctor and patient will always be similar and power asymmetries will be practised in talk. However, my research demonstrated that interactions are always situated and institutionalized according to the context and the particular goals that participants want to achieve. The three main contributions of this research are as follows.

11.4.1. Methodological contribution

This research is based on naturally occurring talk.   Taylor (2001) defines 'naturally occurring data' as 'informal conversation which would have occurred even if it was not being observed or recorded, and which was unaffected by the presence of the observer and/or the recording equipment' (p. 27). Similarly,   Potter (1997) defined 'naturally occurring talk' as 'spoken language that is produced entirely independently of the actions of the researcher' (1997: 148).

Most of the research involving analysis of talk has conducted analyses on interviews: where the interviewer had specific formulations and assumptions that might have affected the data (Stainton and Rogers, 2003). Therefore, the data are steered and controlled mainly by the interviewer, which may influence the results of the analysis. However, in comparison, the analysis of naturally occurring talk is not distorted or influenced by the researcher (Ashmore and Reed, 2000).

This is because the reason for using naturally occurring data is to collect materials wherein the participants orient towards issues that might be relevant to them and to the context (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998), so the impact of the researchers' presence, their questions and contributions should be non-existent (Griffen, 2007) .

11.4.2. Second contribution

Unlike gender and communication studies that treat gender as an analytical explanation for whatever is happening in the interaction, this research demonstrated that the interaction itself that fuels the categories that participants use to represent themselves and others For example, membership is a more important and salient category in this form of research, and gender cannot, as essentialist studies had commonly claimed, provide a backdrop or explanations. This research provided good examples that what is relevant in the interaction or talk is what participants enact,

so if they enact gender it will be salient and if they enact other categories, gender will not be necessarily a salient category.

11.4.3. Third contribution
In Oman's segmented culture, the librarians were vocal and the manager's authority was challenged although he tried different methods and positions in his unsuccessful attempts to achieve this authoritative position.

Therefore, although this culture is described as having a rigid power structure within which power and authority are practised only by the people who hold this power legitimately, this research provides evidence that this is not necessarily the case in every interactional context in every organization in Oman. Most importantly, what is salient in any interaction depends mainly on the goals that the participants want to achieve from the interactional context. For example, if they want to achieve power they will use particular means and methods to negotiate their position and achieve their goals.

Contribution to Knowledge:

In this thesis I used both critical discourse analysis of Fairclough (1992) and discursive psychology approach as my conceptual framework for analyzing my data.

The DP approach focuses on the local context of the talk and on talk in interaction in a particular setting where the participants take up different positions to achieve their interactional goals. While the CDA approach focuses on the global context of the talk because it provide the researchers with the tools to understand the relationship between the text and social practice.

What motivates me to use Discursive psychology approach beside Fairclough CDA is the assumption of Fairclough that discourse has a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure where discourse is shaped and controlled by the social structure. For example, it assumes that at the societal level, relations specific to a particular institution such as norms, laws and education shape social relations and class. It also assumed that discourse can contribute to social identities and types of self (Weedon, 1987).

These assumptions neglects the changes in footing and formulation in the participants talk, it also neglect the possibilities that the participants may take up subject positions and they may reject others. In short, it eliminate the researcher's ability to focus on the fine grain element of the talk and because of this reason, using the discursive psychology approach was necessary to focus on the local context of the talk.

11.5. How this research is relevant to me.

I started this research with a positivist view about communication between men and women, namely that men communicate in a particular way and women communicate in a different way, and my focus was to discover whether the Western theories about men and women could be universal and be applied in my culture. However, reviewing the social constructivism epistemology allowed me to see things with a different eye and from a different angle. First, there is no fixed or rigid way of interacting that a group of people will habitually follow, because interaction is always situated and constructed by the situation, the context and, most importantly, the audience who are participating in that interaction. Second, power is not a commodity, exercised only by certain people, it is always negotiated and everyone has the opportunity to

speak in a powerful tone as long as the resources are available and can be utilized by the participants. Therefore, resources change from one interactional context to another; for example, in this meeting the resources were available for the librarians to challenge the manager and to contest the hegemony. If the interactional context had been different, for example, if more than one manager had been present to represent the administration's point of view, I suspect that the librarians would not have sounded as powerful and challenging as they did in this meeting. Therefore, resources are always important in every interactional context.

Third, gender is not always salient in an interaction; there might be other elements that are more relevant to the context than gender, such as the group membership identity expressed in this meeting. Even in a culture where gender is acknowledged and emphasized through segregation, it was in this case not as salient as other elements.

11.6. The relevance of this thesis in moving the research field forward.

This research shed some light on different methods of analyzing talk in interaction in a specific interactional context. Utilizing both the discursive psychology approach and critical discourse analysis would allow researchers who are interested in analyzing the talk in interaction and linking it to cultural and organizational aspects to employ the techniques I described in chapters seven, eight and nine. Also, because there is no fixed method for discourse analysis and because the extracts of talk that I provided are very descriptive, this research would help researchers who are new to the field to comprehend the discourse analysis methods and to start applying them.

11.7. Limitations

One of the issues that I have wrestled with and come to terms in my thesis is the fact that I could not use gender as an independent variable because the essentialist approaches that I started this research with used gender as an explanation for all the communication behaviors used by the

participants. My focus was on how the dynamics and demands of the interactions made certain categories salient for the participants, and any attempt on my part to use the original framework to say something about gender as an independent variable would have been problematic. Indeed, it is true that my research rejected the idea of using gender as an independent variable in studying the interaction.

The second limitation is that if somebody wanted to investigate whether gender influences communication they might view my research as limited because taking it for granted that gender can be an independent variable involves the use of a completely different epistemology. If I were going to adopt that viewpoint I would use an essentialist framework.

I would agree with Speer's view (2007) that conversation analysis does not require the incorporation of critical realism , because if critical realists wanted to understand the factors that account for what participants say, they would need to use a more reflexive approach to their data, and conduct analysis of the talk in its own right. Therefore, in line with Speer's point of view, using both the CDA approach and Discursive Psychology approach is not necessary to an analysis of an interaction itself.

In the light of the experience of writing my thesis I can say that during that time using the critical discourse analysis approach served its purpose of helping me to understand the influence of the institutional setting and the broader political implications of an interaction in an Omani workplace context.

Summary

The first aim of this thesis was to explore to what extent gendered behaviors in talk are constrained and situated by the situation and the context. The second aim was to explore if there are rules that define the talk of the participants and control it and if any do exist what prescribes these rules and which rules are reproduced and which are transformed and why.

Using a critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology methodological approach this research argued that interactions are situated and controlled by the situation and the context. Talk is situated according to the goals that the participants in the interaction want to achieve. These goals define which discourses, identities within these discourses, positions in the talk are to be invoked.

Second, this thesis assumed that there are rules that define the talk and some of these rules are transformed and others are reproduced according to the extent to which these rules are institutionalized and ingrained in the culture. The more institutionalized the rules the less likely they are to be transformed, for example, the rule that implied power differences when the librarians addressed the manager by his educational degree (Dr) was not transformed although the librarians transformed all the rules that implied power and they were the dominant group, challenging the manager throughout the meeting.

This thesis also suggested that even in a segregated culture such as the Omani culture, gender is not always salient and there might be other elements that are salient to interactions, such as group membership in this particular context.

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