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Strategies, Statuses and Selves: A Linguistic Ethnographic Study of the Interplay between Leadership, Language and Identity in a North London Primary School

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relationship between language, leadership and identity in the talk of 10–11-year-old children attending a North London primary school. While existing research is already questioning the value of 'grand theories' of leadership and advocating for social constructionist approaches, the talk of older, secondary school-aged children, or adults, is often explored in environments created by researchers or teachers. This thesis combines analysis of talk from natural contexts with ethnographic knowledge to examine how leadership is meaningfully achieved at a local level. It considers two contexts. Firstly, curriculum-oriented talk, where the children make decisions towards completing a cross-curricular project, and, secondly, play-oriented talk, where the children play a verbal game and a video game in self-selected groups.

An important finding of this study is that, for these children, leadership is related to local social practices and language. It shows leadership is most successful when both girls and boys are able to draw on particular locally-accrued statuses, construct a local ethnographic position associated with kindness or niceness, and pay attention to relational practices by using linguistic strategies traditionally associated with indexing normative femininity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Thesis

1.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to investigate the relationship between language, leadership and identity in the talk of UK-based pre-adolescent children. Answering the questions, 'Who leads in this group of children, why are they successful, and how do they achieve this?', it contributes to the current literature in the field of language and leadership by making connections between children's language, their identity constructions, and their ability to attempt and achieve leadership in small group contexts. My linguistic ethnographic approach combines data from the self-recorded spontaneous talk of 29 children aged 10–11 years comprising a Year 6 form-group attending a North London primary school, alongside my own observations and their contributions while adopting the dual role of researcher and their class teacher.

While many studies of children's leadership focus on secondary school-aged children, this thesis examines a group of children who are upper primary school-aged pre-adolescents. In addition, the talk I examine is naturally-occurring and self-recorded by the speakers, empowering them to contribute to the research (Pinter 2014, 2023; see 1.2). This is in contrast with other studies that report on manufactured situations where the adult-imposed objective to talk collaboratively is made explicit (see Baxter 2006a; Davies 2011[2003]), or the participants understand they are focus groups for whom the researcher determines the context and timings of short-term, one-off recordings (see Baxter 2015). In addition, studies of similar age groups often consider either curriculum-oriented or play-oriented talk; this thesis considers how leadership is achieved in both curriculum and play contexts, and explores the talk of children from one form-group throughout the school year. Similar studies on language, identity and leadership are rare, therefore my thesis presents a unique example of how children agentively utilise language and local social practices to

do leadership while also constructing their identities.

Viewing leadership as something individuals 'do' rather than something they 'are', this thesis responds to Judith Baxter's (2015: 427) call to adopt a social constructionist approach to examine leadership, an approach which 'posits the centrality' of talk in local contexts. This approach contests the 'grand theories' of leadership, such as 'transformational', 'laissez-faire' or 'authentic' (Bass and Bass 2008[1990]), which offer models where applicability to multiple contexts or considerations of whether particular practices are even appropriate are unexplored. My thesis adds to findings by contemplating how children interactionally accomplish leadership at a local level, taking a social constructionist perspective to examine how leadership is achieved through language in combination with children's local social practices. I show that their local social practices may also be used to contribute to local 'statuses', such as a higher relative skill in the activity being completed. As my linguistic ethnographic approach views participants as 'whole' speaking subjects (Hymes 1972), it uses a social constructionist approach to explore individuals' socially constructed local identities to show the relationships between leadership and identity. I therefore view interactants as agentive individuals consciously selecting linguistic resources alongside local social practices for achieving context-dependent identities which contribute to their ability to be successful in leadership.

In the process of my linguistic ethnographic approach, I noticed episodes of decision-making talk as 'rich points' (Jewitt 2008), which is how leadership became the focus of my observations and analysis. I therefore examine how the children make decisions related to their group-based curriculum work or playing a group game. In line with Janet Holmes et al.'s (2007: 435) definition of leadership as 'a performance […] integrat[ing] the achievement of transactional objectives with more relational aspects of […] interaction', I consider how the speakers achieve a learning or play-

based 'transactional' objective while maintaining positive relationships through attention to 'relational' practices. Because the children choose to be with friends to complete schoolwork or play games, they said they sought to maintain positive relationships alongside engaging in their task or activity. Holmes and Meredith Marra (2004: 393) note the influence of a context's local culture in determining what 'counts' as relational practice. This may be where strategies associated with indexing what Holmes and Stephanie Schnurr 2011[2006] call 'normative masculinity' in their study of women's and men's leadership in the workplace, such as directness, jocular abuse and good-humoured insults, are used to build relationships, or strategies associated with indexing 'normative femininity', such as hedging and the use of modals. For my children, their 'Community of Practice' (CofP) (Lave and Wenger 1991) encourages strategies which are associated with indexing normative femininity. However, use of such strategies is not enough on its own. This thesis shows that, for this group of children, leadership is most successful when a child has constructed a local identity associated with being 'nice' or 'kind' and accrued a local status, such as higher relative skill in the activity taking place and use linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. It is the combination of these three areas which most successfully facilitates leadership.

The aspects of social identity on which I focus are the children's gender and age as they became relevant when I analysed the children's talk. Through my linguistic ethnographic approach and making a 'conscious attempt' to portray children's own experiences and understandings (Pinter 2014: 174), I was able to ask the children about leadership and listen to recordings of their talk together, while sitting with them. They took the opportunity to identify gender as important, saying they preferred, and would therefore support, those who took a leadership position in groups who showed willingness to 'listen to, and include, the girls **and** the boys' (their emphasis), and for leaders to use linguistic strategies which were 'nice', for example, 'Please can you do this?'

and not, 'Do that now!'. Upon delving more deeply, it became clear they were referring to a preference for all leaders to use linguistic strategies associated with indexing what Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006] call 'normative femininity' in their study of women and men's leadership in the workplace. Because they were permitted to self-select their groups in both the curriculum and play contexts, and actively chose single-sex groups, they also made gender relevant. Therefore, although Joan Swann (2002: 49) warns against using the biological sex of speakers to 'warrant' exploring gender, my ethnographic approach meant speakers agentively confirmed the significance of gender alongside my analytic findings. This allows me to share children's 'valuable insights' about 'important matters' (Pinter 2023: 3), using their views to offer an additional angle. Not only is this in line with the core principles of ethnography, but also with contemporary theories about the role of children in social research identified by Annamaria Pinter's (2014) discussion. Because my participants are children, in the next section, I discuss historical perceptions of children and explain current thinking about children's talk.

1.2 Children's Language

Children are agentive individuals, and it is important to recognise this agency. Prior to the postmodern turn to social constructionism in sociocultural linguistics and the emergence of the new sociology of childhood in the 1990s (see James and Prout 1990), children were frequently regarded in research as passive, unfinished and incomplete, and as undergoing integration into the social world by reproducing adult values and norms apparently unknowingly absorbed from parents and other adults. They were viewed in terms of what they are not rather than who they are, as 'pre-social, potentially social, in the process of socialisation – essentially undergoing socialisation' to fit with adults' ideals (Alanen 1988: 924).

In research on language and gender, childhood was viewed similarly. It was acknowledged only to

explain the origin of adults' gendered talk which, it was argued, was learned unidirectionally from adults in what became known as the 'deficit' paradigm (Lakoff 1975), or it was used to describe the strategies to which women were viewed as having to resort, e.g., 'Guess what?', to secure men's attention in mixed-sex talk in the 'dominance' paradigm (Fishman 1978, see also West and Zimmerman 1977). The 'difference' paradigm afforded slightly more agency to children and claimed children learned gendered ways of talking from interacting in their single-sex peer groups (Maltz and Borker 2011[1982]). Although these paradigms addressed and attempted to theorise relationships between language and gender, it was a theoretical approach which emerged in the 1990s, social constructionism, which explored and acknowledged speakers' agency in their identity construction. However, as I discuss below, this was not at the expense of considering larger social structures. While not much attention was initially paid to children's language, I outline social constructionism because the approach shows how gender is understood today, and privileges speakers' agency, something I argue we should appreciate when studying children's language.

The social constructionist approach showed that, unlike its predecessors, language and other social practices do not 'reflect' society, but are 'actively involved in the construction and maintenance of social categories such as gender' (Coates and Pichler 2011: 485). Thus, as Swann (2009: 19) notes in her exploration of the interactional performance of gender, a social constructionist approach treats gender not as a fixed 'prior' category affecting how individuals speak or act, but 'something that is "performed" or "done" in particular ways, in particular contexts'. This was linked with the philosophy of Judith Butler (1990: 33), who theorised gender as 'a repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being'. Gender became understood, therefore, not as inescapably natural but a 'performance'; the person individuals are and become is not pre-determined by a sex they are assigned at birth (though see

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013 for an astute reflection on the many flaws of accepted sex-assignment traditions), but accomplished through the ways in which they 'style' themselves and their bodies. As Elinor Ochs (1992) illustrates in her pivotal chapter, language is a key resource in these stylisations not because certain forms, such as tag-questions, are used only by women, but because use of particular linguistic features indexes stances, acts and activities which indirectly index gender. As Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick (2003) highlight, this suggested that individuals are not completely free agents, as any decisions they make have social and cultural meanings and societies often enforce limitations on what is deemed acceptable.

Holmes (2007: 55) notes in her overview of social constructionism, postmodernism and feminism that social constructionist approaches require analysts to use their knowledge of gender associations to 'assess' and 'interpret' participants' language. She recommends that analysts carefully consider context and pay particular attention to participants' interpretations within a particular 'Community of Practice' (ibid: 603). The concept of a 'Community of Practice' (CofP), introduced to sociolinguistics by Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet (1992a, 1992b), draws on the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991). The concept encourages researchers to appreciate the 'dynamism of living communities' where gender is 'constantly created and re-created in social interaction with others' (Coates and Pichler 2011: 570). The use of ethnography allows researchers to explore these communities and contexts in detail, allowing understandings of the meaning of context-based social practices for individuals' socially constructed identities. While social constructionism had focused mainly on adults' language and gender, progress in ethnography was being made for exploring children's gender constructions.

Marjorie Harness-Goodwin's (1990) study of children's talk in Philadelphia, USA, adopted an ethnographic perspective. She presented children as agentive speaking subjects who socialised in

single- and mixed-sex peer-groups, using language for relationships and friendships. Harness-Goodwin showed children are 'actors actively engaged' in their social worlds (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 283), and viewed children as people in their own right, not as individuals merely on a journey to adulthood. Barrie Thorne (1993) took a similar viewpoint in her ethnography of children in two elementary schools in California, USA. Like Harness-Goodwin, Thorne presents childhood not as preparation for adult life, but 'life itself' (Thorne 1993: 3). Although she does not explore language, in her explicit adoption of a social constructionist approach, she shows that children are active and agentive social actors in their identity constructions as individuals and children. Like my thesis, both Harness-Goodwin and Thorne use ethnography to view the children's world through child eyes rather than an adult lens by 'following' the children's behaviours and choices rather than trying to influence them. Their work also confirmed children are 'whole' people and should be treated as such, and this is the view I take. The children in this study do not use language merely to rehearse talking like their imagined future adult selves, but to contribute to their construction of current, meaningful identities as children. My thesis also adds to Harness-Goodwin and Thorne's work as, like Pinter (2014, 2023) endorses, the children participate in the research; they assume control and responsibility for talk they record and erase, share the areas upon which they recommend I focus, and generate questions for the ethnographic interviews.

Now that I have given an overview of approaches to language and identity with a focus on children's constructions, I discuss the focus of my thesis which brings together children's language, leadership and identity.

1.3 Focus of the Thesis

As noted above, for this group of children, leadership is related to local identity construction. To

explore this, I use a linguistic ethnographic approach combining analysis of their talk alongside attention to their local social practices in two contexts: a curriculum-oriented project completed in triads, and play-oriented games played in larger groups. Most illuminating in this thesis are children's constructions of local ethnographic positions. Like Mary Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) 'nerd' girls, I explore meaningful local identities, considering how they construct themselves as 'particular *kinds*' of boy or girl (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original), and how these contribute to leadership. In line with an ethnographic approach, I was drawn to explore gender after allowing my data to 'speak' to me (Copland and Creese 2015: 48) and, as recommended by Pinter (2014: 174), having discussions with the participants as I made a 'conscious attempt' to portray children's own experiences and understandings. In each chapter, I introduce the speakers and their local ethnographic positions pertinent to the context. Children do not always construct the same local ethnographic position between contexts; for example, in the curriculum-oriented talk in Part I, Bella constructs herself as a 'cool, likeable, easy-going girl', but then constructs herself as a 'supportive, fair girl' in the play-oriented talk in Part II. To establish this, I consider the 'stances' (Bucholtz 2009; Jaffe 2009; Kiesling 2009, 2022, 2023) she adopts towards her interlocuters and the task. Some local ethnographic positions the children construct are associated with 'niceness' or 'kindness', such as 'easy-going, funny, popular girl' (Tilda) or 'supportive, consultative, growing-up boy' (Marcelo). I show in my analysis that it is constructions with these associations which often facilitate leadership success. Children who construct such local ethnographic positions have done so in practices such as paying attention to their relationships with others, making efforts to include them, show that they value their opinions, or put them at ease. For example, when the boys play a video game in Chapter 7, Aiden constructs his local ethnographic position as an 'easy-going, 'nice guy' boy' by empathising with others when they are losing, ensuring others' inclusion when he suggests decisions, and listening to others' views. The other boys clearly appreciate his efforts and often invest in 'aligning' with him (Kiesling 2009, 2022).

Also important for leadership are the speakers' local statuses. They use local social practices and language to accrue local statuses which contribute to their local ethnographic positions. In my exploration of leadership, I show that, like the managers studied by Susan McRae (2009), these statuses then often stand as proxy for speakers' ideas being accepted or actioned. My children have accrued local statuses such as higher relative skill, popularity and quality control through their own local social practices, and these are, like their local ethnographic positions, also context-dependent. To return to my example of Bella, the project the children are working on in their curriculum-oriented talk encourages an artistic response. Bella's higher relative skills-based status has been accrued through her social practices, including her interest in art-based activities outside of school, her high effort and achievement in the subject at school, and her research into career aspirations. This locally-accrued status garners her teammates' support for her leadership. In the play-oriented talk, however, higher relative skills-based status is not required, so it is not a status upon which she can draw. However, it is clear that particular local statuses facilitate leadership in different contexts. This shows the importance of adopting a social constructionist approach informed by linguistic ethnography which allows for considerations of multiple identities and contexts as well as combining social information with talk to present these children as whole, agentive individuals.

I have so far emphasised speakers', and especially children's, agency in an attempt to emphasise that they should not be viewed simply as passive and powerless. However, this is not to ignore the societal expectations on them as individuals. As Baxter (2015: 428) notes in her comparison of leadership strategies between three 'differently gendered' small teams of adults, social constructionism can therefore be aligned with a discursive approach, as some individuals have greater access to certain resources. These often depend on social factors such as, most relevant

for my participants, gender and age. My thesis explores how the children position themselves in discourse as they construct their identities. Discourse is no longer viewed in linguistics simply as a stretch of language, but instead discourses are regarded as 'constitutive systems of meaning' which 'carry ideology' (Sunderland 2004: 6). Although invisible, they position speakers in different ways. For example, there are many versions of femininity available for individuals to invoke or reject, including mainstream, radical and subversive (Coates 1996: 261). However, like Michel Foucault (1981), I am interested in how the children position themselves within discourses in their talk. For example, Tilda invokes a discourse of heterosexual femininity when she suggests 'boys' as a topic they might discuss during their play-oriented talk. Her willingness to suggest this positions her as a girl who is growing up, whereas some other girls' expressions of disgust position them as young or immature.

Discourse analysis is closely linked with indexicality (Ochs 1992). In this thesis, I use Interactional Sociolinguistics to identify speakers' contextualisation cues and make connections between their language and the positionings they are indexing. For example, when Tilda proposes talking about 'boys', she smiles. Her smile on this occasion is a contextualisation cue that she is not being completely serious. Although it could be interpreted as a face-saving strategy, allowing her to say 'only joking!' if others challenge her, my ethnographic knowledge shows that she is indexing a playful stance towards the subject. She therefore constructs a growing-up femininity in her invocation of the 'boys' discourse, and a playful femininity in her smile, which contribute to her local ethnographic position as a funny, easy-going, popular girl. This supports her leadership attempts. She also uses modal, 'shall' and inclusive pronoun, 'we'. As Harness-Goodwin's (1990) study exposing children's gendered leadership styles shows, these are traditionally associated with indexing normative femininity. I show that the children have co-constructed a normatively 'feminine' CofP. This is revealed in its encouragement of linguistic strategies associated with

indexing normative femininity when making leadership attempts, which are 'unmarked' (Ochs 1992). Therefore, Tilda's local ethnographic position alongside her use of linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity support her leadership attempts.

Because the world of business leadership remains male-dominated, this thesis has the potential to make real-life societal impact. It shows that strategies associated with indexing normative femininity are valued, and that girls who have constructed particular femininities are able to do leadership. It emphasises the significance of a co-constructed CofP culture, to which all participants contribute through ratification or rejection of leadership attempts. In the final section of this introduction, I give an overview of the thesis, before proceeding to Chapter 2 which engages with current research in language, leadership and gender.

1.4 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 2 reviews the main areas providing the background for this study. I first consider language, identity and leadership, where I outline the benefit of using social constructionist approaches to examine leadership at a local level compared to prior 'grand theories' of leadership. Here, I outline a key concept for my study about linguistic strategies used for transactional and relational practices, and their associations with indexing normative masculinity (transactional) and femininity (relational, though this is context-dependent). I then discuss linguistic approaches to identity construction, showing the value of analysing spontaneous talk. I proceed to review studies of leadership in work- and play-oriented talk showing how leadership is attempted by speakers and ratified or challenged by others with considerations of institutionally-allocated and locally-accrued status. In the second part of this chapter, I explore studies of language and gender where most explore children's spontaneous talk. This chapter provides an overview of the features of

language, leadership and gender which support and inform my analysis. Because in all contexts the children chose who they worked or played a game with, I outline studies of friendship talk.

Chapter 3 explains my informed decision to use linguistic ethnography (LE) as my methodology. I summarise key understandings of ethnography and linguistics, and how each enhances understanding of the other in their union under LE. I then share information about my dual role as a teacher and researcher, and reflect on how I managed my relationships with the participants as pupils and children. I outline how I used self-reflexivity and considerations of my positionality to inform my interpretations and analysis. I offer information about my participants and the research sites, as well as the data sources I use. In the final section of my Data and Methodology chapter, I share my use of deeply-considered ethics to make decisions about my research.

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical foundations of my study and Chapter 3 demonstrates its methodological foundations, while Part I and Part II are made up of two chapters each. Part I explores leadership in the children's curriculum-oriented talk, and Part II their play-oriented talk. In Part I, I give an overview of findings from studies of children and young people's task-oriented talk, building on literature I reviewed in Chapter 2 but providing more detail relevant for this Part. I then outline the cross-curricular curriculum activity in which the children were engaged. Chapter 4 focuses on the girls' groups, and Chapter 5, the boys' groups. After explaining the relationships within and between each individual in their self-selected groups, I examine how each triad uses talk to make design-related decisions. I make connections between children's local social practices, local statuses and identity constructions and their ability to lead, finding the statuses of higher relative skill, quality control, popularity and friendship. I also use the stances I identify in their talk to explore how they construct themselves as particular types of learner.

Part II examines the children's play-oriented talk. After providing more detail on play-oriented talk introduced in Chapter 2, I begin Chapter 6 by outlining the verbal game the girls choose to play, *Who's Most Likely To?*. I first analyse some key episodes from their pre-game talk, where I show that relationships and local identities are established which map onto their in-game conduct and affect how it is played. I then analyse their game. I examine how decisions are made related to deciding to play a game in the first place, choosing a game to play, and establishing, maintaining and challenging the rules. Chapter 7 examines the boys' game. I explain the out-of-school context in which this occurs (the birthday party of one of the boys) and the relationships between the speakers, before giving an overview of the game they select – a video game named 'Rocket League'. I explore how they decide upon playing this game, how they choose their times, and how they make, maintain and challenge rules. In both chapters, I make connections between their identity constructions and leadership. I find that likeability-based popularity is a status utilised in both, and higher relative skill in the boys' game because of their decision to play a video game. In both chapters, I explore how local identity constructions contribute to success in leadership, but that leadership attempts also provide opportunities for children to construct and constitute their local identities.

Chapter 8 is the conclusion chapter. I summarise the main findings of my thesis and offer a model for leadership success for this form-group of children at the intersection of locally-accrued status, a local ethnographic position associated with being 'nice', and use of linguistic strategies associated with normative femininity. I give more detail on each of these areas, and suggest how my thesis contributes a new perspective to the literature. Finally, I offer my reflections on the methodology I employed, and suggest new directions which might be pursued. I also share how the research has impacted my own teaching practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Language, Leadership and Identity

2.1.1 Introduction

My research explores how the speakers in Penguin Class[1] do leadership in the contexts of curriculum-oriented and play-oriented talk, and the connections between language, identity constructions and leadership. I first outline the relationship between language and leadership, where sociolinguistic studies are moving understandings away from 'grand theories' in favour of a more local, linguistic-analytic approach, highlighting its interactive nature (Baxter 2015). More studies have explored language, gender and leadership, showing that leadership success might be influenced by whether certain linguistic forms, such as directive strategies, are associated with indexing normative femininity or masculinity (Ochs 1992; Dwyer 1993; Vinnicombe and Singh 2002; Baxter 2015; see 2.1.3). Additionally, whether the locally-established 'culture' of a community is regarded 'feminine' or 'masculine' (Fletcher 1999; Holmes and Stubbe (2003); Holmes and Marra (2004); Holmes and Schnurr (2011[2006]; see 2.1.8) deeming specific strategies 'marked' or 'unmarked'.

Ethnographically observing certain children seeing more success in leadership led me also to question how leadership might be related to identity construction. I therefore review how identity construction can be approached as a constant performance (Butler 1990), utilising several resources and social practices (Swain 2004; Bucholtz and Hall 2005). Language is a key resource, and current research moves thinking towards how identities are discursively constructed (Cameron 1997). In 2.1.6 and 2.1.4.3, I outline discourse analysis and indexicality, allowing me to

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[1] All form-groups at the school in which this study takes places were named after birds; however, this bird name is a pseudonym (see 3.7.2.2).

locate my research in the same linguistic-analytic approach, finding discursive 'traces' in language (Sunderland 2004: 7) which point to the discourses speakers draw upon or reject to do their identity. I then make connections between stance, style and gender, where repeated adoption of particular stances constructs individual, gendered styles through indexicality (Ochs 1992; Bauman 2001; Johnstone 2009; Kiesling 2023).

When I analysed my data, gender emerged as relevant in various ways as I show in my analysis chapters. I asked the children for their views, and they also confirmed they felt gender was significant in how they attempted leadership and responded to others' attempts. I therefore review studies of language and gender with a focus on studies of children and young people. These studies show the importance of considering gender a social constructionist endeavour, but also how discourses influence children's constructions. This chapter offers background on key concepts I use to form my analysis of children's leadership in work- and play-contexts.

2.1.2 Language and Leadership

In his study of talk in meetings at a British cultural organisation, Jonathan Clifton (2012: 148–149) details the 'frustration' scholars face in defining leadership. This sentiment is echoed across research approaches and disciplines, including psychology (Gemmill and Oakley 1992; Bass and Bass 2008[1990]; Avolio et al. 2009); social sciences (Barker 1997); business and administration (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003; Bass and Bass 2008[1990]; Zinkentra 2013); sociolinguistics (Baxter 2006a, 2015; Mullany 2007); business communication (Clifton 2012, 2019; Northouse 2013); and education (Baxter 2006a; English 2011). This suggests there is no single definition which wholly captures the meaning of leadership applicable to every context and individual. I find Holmes et al.'s (2007: 435) view of leadership as a 'performance […] integrat[ing] the achievement of transactional objectives with more relational aspects of […] interaction', the most useful

description, which I explain below. Before exploring this definition and the importance it places on interaction, it is useful to understand how leadership studies arrived at this point. I summarise some key concepts in its history, before explaining the opportunities offered by social constructionist perspectives and language.

Recorded almost 100 years ago, Bruce V. Moore's (1927: 124) definition following a conference on leadership as 'the ability to impress the will of the leader […] and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and co-operation' centred an individual decision-maker unreservedly instructing compliant followers. From this developed the traits-based approach to leadership, suggesting a number of pre-determined, often considered innate, characteristics, such as height and extraversion, facilitated an individual's ability to incite the compliance detailed by Moore (Kotter 1990; Bass and Bass 2008[1990]). The focus in the 1940s and 1950s shifted slightly to consider how leaders influenced groups through their behaviour in the 'style' approach, as something that can be learned, rather than given through innate personality traits (Hemphill 1949); this definition is unrelated to 'style' as approached by sociolinguists (see 2.1.5). In the 1970s, James MacGregor Burns (1978: 83) considered the potential of interaction in leadership, defining it as 'one or more persons [who] engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality'. From this grew 'new leadership' (Bryman 1996: 280), encompassing ideas that leadership can be actioned through approaches such as transformational, where practices are modelled to nurture others through encouragement and empowerment, or authentic, where openness is fostered so decisions are approached in a team (Avolio et al. 2009: 423).

Like Baxter (2015: 427), I am not fully convinced of the value, comprehensiveness or full applicability of these grand theories of leadership. For example, considering 'transformational' or

'authentic' leadership might clarify some practices leaders use to build relationships, but does not illuminate the reasons for their success (or failure) in a particular context. I instead adopt a social constructionist perspective which considers individuals' language and social practices to understand how leadership is achieved interactionally at a local level.

Considering interaction and moment-by-moment talk in leadership highlights where linguistic resources are utilised to 'accomplish particular leadership goals effectively' (Baxter 2015: 428). In her study of three hexads of MBA students who self-manage to complete the same task (see 2.1.9), Baxter (ibid) relates group success to the linguistic strategies used by speakers such as 'mitigated' directives (2.1.3) and humour. Like Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) exploration of a 'nerd' CofP (2.1.8), I use ethnographic observations of my participants to extend observations similar to Baxter's. I consider 'whole' speakers (Hymes 1972; see also Eckert 1989; Bucholtz 2009) who engage in many social practices, including language-use, to adopt stances and styles which construct particular identities that relate to leadership success. I focus on moment-by-moment interaction in episodes of decision-making talk contemplating why particular children's ideas are actioned in curriculum-oriented interaction, completing a piece of group-based schoolwork (Part I), and play-oriented interaction, engaging in group games (Part II). In these contexts, leadership is shown when an individual's decisions are actioned, or, as is sometimes the case, their support of a decision causes it to be actioned.

Contemporary theorists in sociocultural linguistics embrace such social constructionist approaches to depart from the grand theories and explore the idea that when someone leads, they draw on context-dependent linguistic and discursive strategies, practices and resources. This is echoed by Ann Cunliffe (2001), Holmes and Maria Stubbe (2003), Clifton (2012) and Baxter (2015), who discuss the importance of these explorations of discursive and social constructionist approaches

for understanding leadership. These practices are often used to enable the achievement of two interrelated goals: results-focused 'transactional' objectives, such as completing a piece of work, and relationship-focused 'relational' objectives, such as maintaining friendships.

Transactional practices are practices used by individuals that 'focus on the task to be achieved, the problem to be solved or the purpose' (Dwyer 1993: 572). 'Relational' practices are used by speakers to 'foster relationships, 'create team' (Fletcher 1999) and develop a productive working atmosphere' (Holmes 2009: 189). Baxter's (2015) research shows how individuals might use linguistic strategies in pursuit of these goals. For 'transactional' strategies, speakers often utilise bold forms, such as imperatives, prioritising (efficient) goal-completion (e.g., adapting from Grace's talk in 4.2.3, 'Write any name!'). For 'relational' strategies, they might use more mitigated forms, such as those including hedges and modals (e.g., again adapting from Grace, 'Might you be able to maybe write one of these names, please?') (see also Dwyer 1993; Fletcher 1999; Parry and Meindl 2001; Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]; Holmes 2009 for discussions of transactional and relational practices). There are many different ways of saying the same thing (Cameron 2001), and an area which informs my study is the varied ways speakers use directives to incite action. In the next section, I explore research on directives, explaining how they relate to transactional and relational practices.

2.1.3 Directives and Transactional and Relational Practices

Directives are defined by Harness-Goodwin (1990: 63) as 'speech actions that try to get another to do something' (see also Austin 1962). There is no unified way in which speakers issue directives, although efforts have been made to order turn shapes by mitigation (more traditionally relational-focused) and aggravation (more transactional-focused). How these are defined varies, as I explain below.

William Labov and David Fanshel (1977: 84-85) argue speakers always wish to mitigate or modify their expression and seek to avoid being offensive when issuing a directive. They suggest directive shapes may therefore be ranked from mitigated to aggravated, which I reproduce using an example based on one of Matty's directives in 7.6:

Will you please leave the match?
Will you leave the match?
Please leave the match!
Leave the match!
Leave the goddam match!

Increasing aggravation
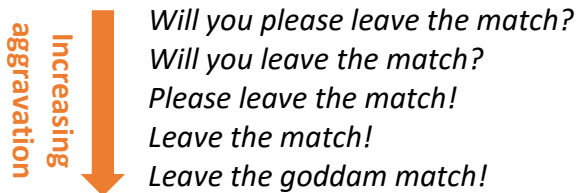
This is developed by Susan Ervin-Tripp (1976: 29), whose typology ranks directives according to the descending relative power of speaker over addressee:

Need statements, such as 'I need you to leave the match'
Imperatives, such as 'Leave the match'
Imbedded imperatives, such as 'Could you leave the match?'
Permission directives, such as 'May you leave the match?'
Question directives, like 'Have you left the match?'
Hints, such as 'Not everyone has left the match'

Speaker power decreases
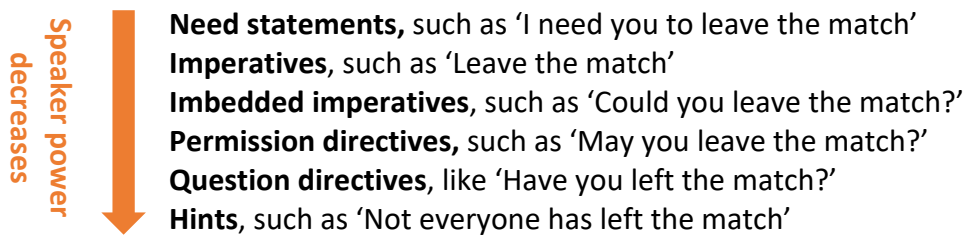
Though it is tempting to argue that as we travel up or down the taxonomies, attention to traditionally-relational practices increases (Ervin-Tripp) or decreases (Labov and Fanshel), Ervin-Tripp (1976: 60) reminds us of the influence of 'social conditions'. For example, using adaptations from Harness-Goodwin (1990: 60-70), to express danger, a speaker is most likely to use an aggravated imperative, e.g., 'Leave! The timer's on, it's about to start!', and the most apparently-'mitigated' forms might be used with sarcasm by a speaker to express dissatisfaction that an expectation has not been performed, e.g., 'Might I trouble you to please leave the match, Adam Heywood?'.

While there are exceptions, and social conditions influence understanding, I find my speakers

often consider aggravation and mitigation, or, how they will maintain good social relations, when using directives in their decision-making. This has been linked with gender. In Joyce Fletcher's (1999) study of female design engineers in the workplace, she links 'relational' practices with the 'invisible' work of women; emotional work nurturing good relationships and attitudes. As Holmes and Stubbe (2003), Holmes and Marra (2004), Holmes and Schnurr (2011[2006]) and Baxter (2015) show, one way in which this is achieved is through language. Mitigated forms, which use features such as hedges and questioning intonation, are traditionally associated with indexing normative femininity (Holmes and Marra 2004, see also Holmes 1995, Coates 1996). They have therefore been associated with relational practices. Aggravated, authoritative forms, which use features such as bald imperatives and the speaker's whims as justification, are traditionally associated with indexing normative masculinity. These have been associated with transactional practices (Vinnicombe and Singh 2002).

It is interesting to note, however, that the 'culture' of the workplace (see 2.8), specifically, whether it is viewed as 'masculine' or 'feminine' (Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]: 323) influences what 'counts' as relational practice (Holmes and Marra 2004: 393). In the workplaces deemed 'feminine' in Holmes and Stubbe (2003), Holmes and Marra (2004) and Holmes and Schnurr's (2011[2006]) studies, a label I argue in 2.8 also befits Penguin Class, 'relational' practices include collaborative, less direct styles and self-deprecating humour to build relationships allowing individuals to feel 'recognised', 'valued' and 'important components in a team or group' (Holmes and Marra 2004: 379). This smooths the way for transactional goals to be achieved. In the 'masculine' workplace, however, relational practices include 'direct', authoritarian talk and 'sparky', aggressive humour (ibid: 393). Thus, 'relational' practices are aimed at fostering interpersonal relationships, but how individuals in particular workplaces and contexts achieve this is shaped by their co-constructed culture. Although Holmes and Marra (2004: 378) claim Fletcher's

(1999) study of relational practices regards them as undervalued, 'dispensable, irrelevant or peripheral', my children overtly listed relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity as vital for successful leadership (2.8). This shows they are highly relevant to leadership for my speakers. I find that, as well as the use of linguistic resources, certain children appear more likely to be positioned as leaders, thus, leadership success may also be related to identity construction. In the next section, I detail how the study of identity is inseparable from language, focusing on how speakers use stance, style and discourses to do their identities, and how this relates to leadership.

2.1.4 Language and Identity

As I have noted, I approach my analysis considering 'whole speaking subjects' (Hymes 1972; see 3.2) finding an individual's success in leadership appears related to their overall identity constructions. Bucholtz (2009: 146) argues 'the sociolinguistic study of identity has increasingly become the study of style'. I therefore consider individuals' talk alongside their social practices, stances and relationships to uncover their styles. In this section, I give an overview of how sociolinguists approach the relationship between language and identity.

My understanding of identity comes from Bucholtz and Kira Hall (2005: 585-586), who, in their overview of identity in sociolinguistics, define it as 'a relational and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction'. This highlights the importance of analysing naturally-occurring talk alongside other social practices to explore how identities are socially constructed and displayed in interaction. They depart from the view that identity is a 'stable structure located in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories' (ibid: 586), a view which, in my opinion, removes all agency and nuance from individual constructions

and risks obscuring what is most meaningful. They propose five principles which serve as a framework for analysing identity as the social positioning of self and other produced in linguistic interaction: (1) emergence, (2) positionality, (3) indexicality, (4) relationality and (5) partialness. Here, I give an overview of these principles and their relevance for my study.

2.1.4.1 Emergence and Relationality

Challenging 'narrow' views of identity as 'static', Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 587) argue that identity is emergent because it is constituted through social action, especially language. In interacting with others, individuals build and manifest their identities, shown in their linguistic and discursive choices (the focus for my study is gender; see 2.2 for my review of studies exploring social constructionist approaches to language and gender).

To illustrate this, Bucholtz and Hall refer to Hall's (1997) study of the discourse practices of hijras, focusing on a hijra named Sulekha. In the Indian subcontinent, hijras are individuals who identify as neither men nor women; they are usually assigned the male sex at birth, but 'typically dress and speak like women' (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 589). A resource they may use to distance themselves from normative masculinity is language. Hindi, Hall explains, often requires gender marking in verbs. Sulekha uses feminine verb forms when self- referring in Hindi, but, when reporting her family's voices who disapprove of her femininity, she quotes masculine verb forms they use when referring to her (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 589). Thus, grammatical gender marking alongside expressing her views which oppose her family's ideas about her gender are deliberate and powerful tools Sulekha uses to construct herself as feminine, allowing this 'innovative' identity to be 'manifested […] in the interactional demands of the immediate social context' as she interacts with Hall (ibid: 591).

Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 590) acknowledge that, although Sulekha's use of verb forms is a more 'dramatic' example, similar processes of identity construction take place in all interactions. Most important is that identities are not 'ontologically prior to the discourse that calls them forth' (ibid: 591), but are brought into being through discourse and interaction (see 2.1.6). Identities are therefore 'relational', as individuals rely on others for interaction to occur, and 'never autonomous or independent, but always acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors' (ibid: 597). For example, in 5.4.2, I show Sam constructs himself as a 'tough' boy. This is accomplished in relation to the other social actors in the context, Frankie and Jordan, who present themselves, respectively, as 'cool' and 'young' (see 2.1.5 for my discussion of stance and style). Sam's 'tough' construction is achieved partly through his discursive positionings (see 2.1.4.3, 2.1.6), but also through his relation to these other constructions.

2.1.4.2 Positionality and Partialness

The gender categories discussed thus far, 'hijras', 'women', 'men' and 'boys', are macro categories: broad, social categories which connect groups of people who do not all know each other, such as age, gender, and race. Historically, identity has been viewed as a collection of these, and other, broad social categories, but Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 591) argue they do not capture the 'more nuanced and flexible kinds of identity relations that arise in local contexts'. An ethnographic approach illuminates the meaningful social identities for speakers in their constructions. For example, in her study of nerd girls at Bay City High, USA, Bucholtz (2009[1999]) explains all the girls were part of a middle-class, European, American cohort from the same California city. This could classify all speakers similarly; however, the identity of the nerd girls was meaningful for them, and indexed in their social practices, including language, clothing and orientation to school (see 2.1.4.3).

I do not wish to deny the importance of macro social categories, as, for example, without the macro category of age, the girls at Bay City High and the children in Penguin Class would not have been placed together for school, but they must be considered alongside local, ethnographic positions (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 592). Furthermore, the temporary interactional roles speakers occupy also contribute to identity construction. For example, when the nerd girls talk, Bucholtz shows they assume roles, such as 'expert' or 'joker'. 'Habitual' occupation of these roles positions them locally as particular types of individuals, occupying a particular ethnographic group (teenage nerds), and a particular macro gender category (adolescent girls) (ibid: 592). All of these combine for the 'nerd' girls to construct their identities. Comparably, many of my speakers share a similar background, like those attending Bay City High, and their local, ethnographic positions, such as 'popular' class member or 'skilled artist', are constructed through stance and style alongside attention to macro categories, such as gender. Departing from studies viewing identity as 'static' (ibid: 587), individuals therefore have choice, or 'agency' (Ahearn 2001), in how they do their identities, but may be constrained by discourses surrounding macro categories (see 2.1.6).

Bucholtz and Hall's principles discussed thus far show the value of examining language to understand its relationship with and constitution of identity. As identity is achieved interactionally, completing linguistic microanalysis of speakers' talk is invaluable in understanding how this is accomplished (see 3.6). Bucholtz and Hall's third principle, indexicality, holds high relevance for my study, which I discuss in the next section.

2.1.4.3 Indexicality

Described as a 'mechanism whereby identity is constituted' (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 593), indexicality has allowed sociolinguistics to 'move away from assigning […] meanings in a correlational fashion through mapping of form to social categories' (Bucholtz 2009: 146; see my

discussion of early language and gender research in 2.2.1). Instead, indexicality shows how

semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings construct identity positions

(Silverstein 1985; Ochs 1992). Indexicality in particular relies on 'ideological structures' where

speakers and hearers consider beliefs, values and ideologies about what kind of speaker is

expected to produce particular kinds of language (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 594; see also Kiesling

2009: 177). This shares much with discourse analysis, which I examine in 2.1.6, but I first explore

indexicality before drawing these connections.

As Ochs (1992: 336) outlines in her influential and widely-cited chapter in Alessandro Duranti and

Charles Goodwin's edited collection critically re-examining context, associations between

language and gender are 'constituted and mediated by the relation of language to stances, social

acts, social activities and other social constructs', as shown in Figure 2.1 (ibid: 337). 'Stances' are

ways in which speakers position themselves in relation to ongoing interaction (see 2.1.5); 'social

acts' are behaviours which achieve an objective such as apologising or ordering (ibid: 341), and

'social activities' are activities in which people engage, such as a gossip session (ibid: 335).

Thus, a speaker using a bald imperative when issuing an instruction, such as, 'Give it to Aiden!'

(7.6), directly indexes an authoritative stance, because the speaker expects to be obeyed, and they

appear to have paid no attention to traditional relational practices (politeness theory challenges

this, but for my speakers, the absence of traditional politeness features was 'marked'; see 2.1.3).

Cameron and Sylvia Shaw (2016: 16) detail in their analysis of UK members of parliaments'

language that authority is both associated with masculinity and perceived as 'normatively male'.

Thus, gender is indirectly indexed in the use of a bald imperative for giving instructions because of

the direct indexing of an authoritative stance, and this stance indirectly indexing normative
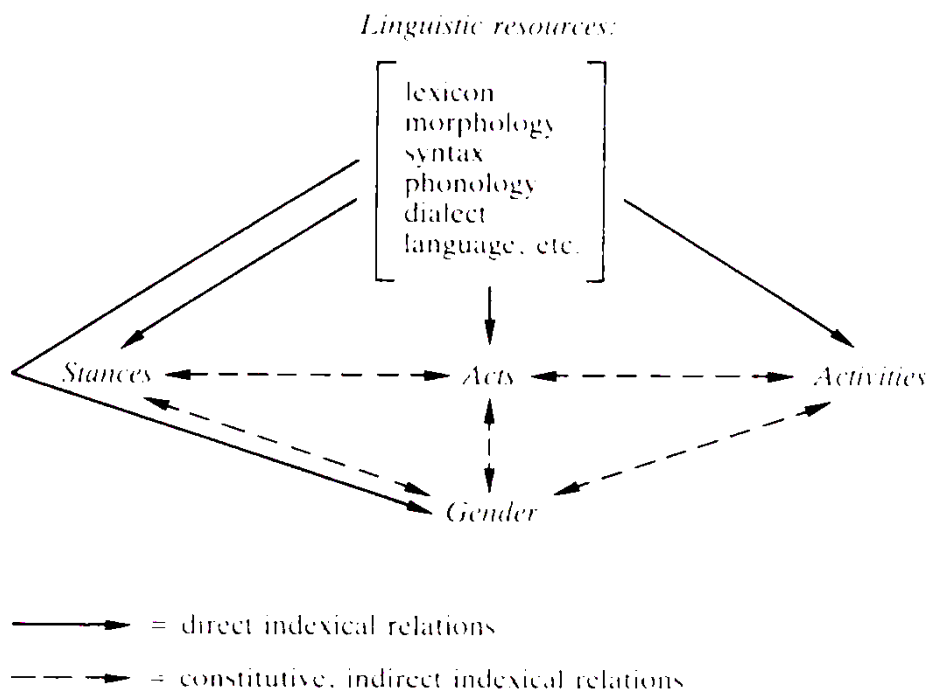
Figure 2.1: Language and gender indexical relations (reproduced from Ochs 1992)

masculinity (this is, of course, context-dependent; see 2.1.3).

It is indirect indexical relations such as this which inform my study. Like Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) study of 'nerd' girls which exposes a meaningful identity construction that may have otherwise been concealed, I use ethnographic observations to examine how stances relate to styles, and how both relate to gender; for example, Aiden's 'nice guy', Sam's 'toughness' and Tilda's 'popular girl' are gendered identity constructions formed through local ethnographic positions, stances and styles. I then consider how these styles relate to leadership. In the next section, I focus on stance and style.

2.1.5 Stance and Style

The authors in Alexandre Jaffe's (2009) edited collection on stance explore how speakers use linguistic form to create stances, why certain stances are taken up, and how forms are associated

with stance. These are questions I also consider when exploring how stance relates to gender and leadership, which I explain in this section.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 595) define stance as 'the display of evaluative, affective and epistemic orientations in discourse', which is developed by Scott Kiesling in his (2022) annual review of stance and stance-taking. Kiesling (2022: 410) highlights the interactive nature of stance, arguing it 'refers to the relationships that a speaker is attempting to indicate to other people in an interaction – the interactants – and to the content and objects being constructed within their talk'. Speakers show their views or feelings towards others, and objects, through the stances they adopt.

Attempts have thus been made to create models for analysts to detect stance in talk. John Du Bois's (2007: 163) stance triangle (reproduced in Figure 2.2) shows speakers evaluating an object, positioning themselves towards or against it, and aligning (or disaligning) with each other. To illustrate, I adapt an example from Du Bois (2007: 159) using an imagined but viable interaction between Aiden and Adam in Chapter 7:

> **Aiden: I like this game!**
> **Adam: I like this game, too!**

For my explanation, I draw on Kiesling (2022). Here, Aiden positions himself as affectively positive towards a game. Adam's agreement aligns with Aiden both propositionally, because he expresses the same view, and metrically, through his similar syntax. The use of 'too' also 'specifically orients' them to the alignment Adam's statement makes (ibid: 418). Thus, this example shows Aiden and Adam adopt similar (positive) stances towards a game. Furthermore, Adam's efforts in alignment position Aiden powerfully, contributing to Aiden's leadership position (see 2.1.7).
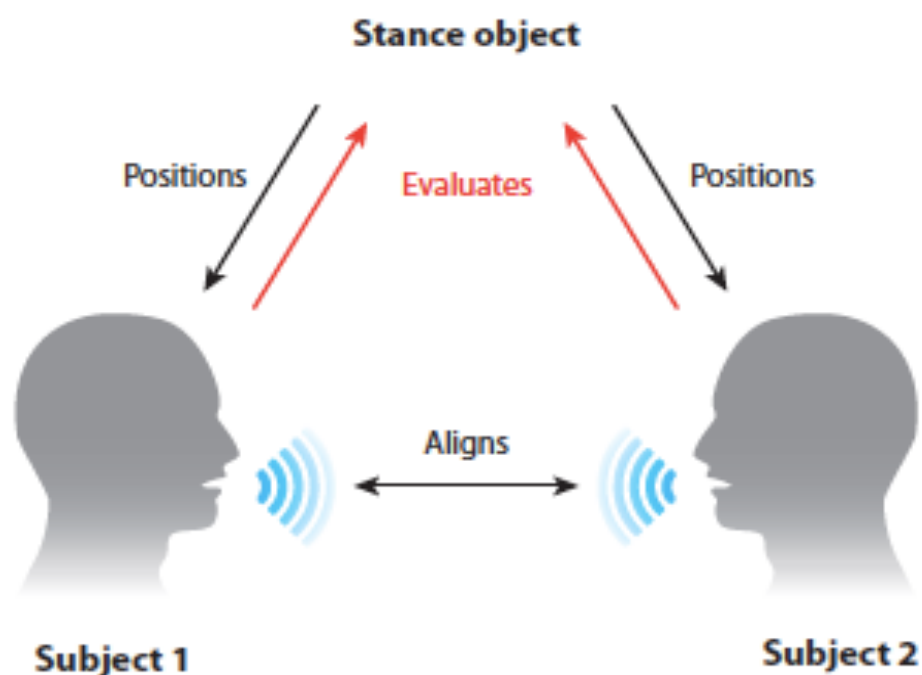
Figure 2.2: The Stance Triangle (adapted from Du Bois 2007: 163 in Kiesling 2022: 418)

Adding an imagined but viable turn from Frankie shows a different stance:

Frankie: I don't really like this game, dudes!

Frankie evaluates the game negatively, but makes some metrical alignment in using a syntax

similar to Aiden and Adam's. This positions him as wanting to maintain positive relationships with

them but taking an affectively negative positioning towards the game. His use of 'dudes', however,

shows his attempt to maintain their friendship as he adopts a stance of 'cool solidarity', effectively

saying 'I disagree with you, but I'm still your friend' (Kiesling 2023, see also Kiesling 2004).

Kiesling (2022: 418) acknowledges, however, that talk rarely follows this 'stance-lead; stance-

follow' structure. To address complexities, he suggests adding a 'third dimension' to Du Bois's

stance triangle. He proposes 'investment', 'the degree to which [a speaker] is invested in an

utterance' (Kiesling 2022: 420). This commitment might be shown epistemically, e.g., 'how certain

they are about their assertions', and interpersonally, e.g., 'friendly' or 'dominating' (Kiesling 2009:

172). It seems to me that being able to detect this requires an ethnographic and discourse-analytic

approach to understand speakers' interactional meanings (see 2.1.6, 3.2). For example, in 5.4.2,

Sam says, 'I want a lanyard, in the hand'. His use of deontic modal, 'I want' with no justification,

other than, his hearers are left to infer, his whims (2.1.10), suggests Sam appears 'certain' about

his idea, and achieves this through 'dominating'. These stances suggest Sam is adopting a tough

stance towards the 'stance object' of the schoolwork in which his triad is engaged. He further

achieves toughness in his local social practices by showing little attention towards their

schoolwork (he distracts others throughout, and this is one of just two occasions he attempts to

do any work in almost an hour), and provokes his teammates about their contributions (either by

openly correcting them, or discussing them 'behind their back'). These examples combine to show

the degree to which Sam is invested in and commits to a 'tough' positioning, constructing his

persona, or style, as a 'tough boy' (2.2.3).

These examples, alongside his other social practices can be combined to show Sam's 'personal

style'. As Kiesling (2004: 173) notes, there are two main ways of defining style. The first is

'intraspeaker variation', where a researcher isolates a variable, such as an accent feature, and

explores its use across contexts (see Labov 1966). The definition of style I explore is 'personal

style'. This considers how the use of many linguistic and non-linguistic resources by specific

individuals 'combine' to create an individual's style (Kiesling 2009: 174; see Eckert 2000). Bucholtz

(2009) makes connections between stance, style and gender when exploring Mexican adolescent

boys' use of Spanish address term, 'güey' (roughly translated into English as 'dude'). She argues

that, like Kiesling's (2004) findings with 'dude', it is not simply use of the term that constructs a

young masculinity; rather, how and when the term is used reveals the masculine stance it is

indexing. For example, 'dude' is often used in single-sex, young men's talk in situations where

speakers take a stance of solidarity, 'but, crucially, in a nonchalant, not-too-enthusiastic manner' (ibid: 282). Bucholtz shows resources therefore index more specific identity constructions; as noted, stance indirectly indexes gender (Ochs 1992; see 2.1.4.3), but Bucholtz (2009: 148) argues that, in fact, linguistic forms (including stance) do not index just 'broad, social categories like 'women', but rather specific identities, such as child-oriented, middle-class mothers (Ochs 1992) or rebellious, 'burnout' teenage girls' (Eckert 2000). This emphasises the importance of an ethnographic approach, where the meaningful identities individuals are attempting can be revealed through local, specialised knowledge of the 'whole' speaker (Hymes 1972). I use ethnographic information to explore my children's styles, and make connections with their local, gendered ethnographic positions, such as pro-school, 'growing-up' boy or popular, funny, easy-going girl.

Although I agree with Kiesling's (2023) view that individuals create their personae and styles through repeated stance-taking (see also Ochs 1992; Eckert 1994; Bauman 2001; Johnstone 2009), I use the term 'identity' where he uses 'persona'. Thus, while I have explicitly aligned with Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) concept of identity, regarding stance, I find Kiesling's theory more illuminating for understanding my speakers. To illustrate, Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 594) state:

> Identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one's own or others' identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups.

This emphasises their concept of stance as fleeting, implied here by 'orientations to ongoing talk'. However, like Kiesling and Bucholtz (2009), I find it is individuals' repeated stance-taking that supports their constructions of gender identity. This is important for my speakers, as, like Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) nerd girls, not only are their identities constructed through stance, but

also social practices and interactional roles. I am, therefore, interested in how styles and stances facilitate or limit leadership, and how this is connected to gender. For example, while Sam's 'tough' style indexed in his stances (see above) might succeed in some business settings, for my participants, it did not support his leadership. Those who adopted a more 'easy-going' or 'nice' style, indexed partially through attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity, were more successful, such as Aiden, Tilda and Marcelo. This shows the importance of local identity constructions for understanding leadership attempts.

Links between style and leadership are also contemplated by Holmes (2009) in her study of male leaders in New Zealand workplaces. Exploring the 'leader as hero' (authoritative style), 'leader as father' (paternalistic style) and 'leader as a good bloke or mate' (egalitarian style), she shows speakers utilise discourse devices to 'do masculinity' at work by constructing different identities (Holmes 2009: 189, 204). Holmes's findings are important, but I find she prioritises how leadership contributes to individuals' identity constructions, whereas I am more interested in how individuals' identity constructions contribute to their leadership. For example, Aiden's adoption of an 'easy-going' stance towards different decisions when the boys play a video game in Chapter 7 (e.g., 'Guys, why don't we all play Rocket League?'), constructs a likeable, relaxed identity which is achieved through stance as well as other local social practices such as sociability. This is alongside the temporary interactional roles he occupies, such as 'supporter' (Bucholtz 2009[1999]). These construct his local ethnographic position as a popular member of the class, which contributes to his warrant to leadership. Thus, individuals' stances construct 'particular *types*' of boy or girl in the form-group (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original), some of whom are also able to take leadership roles and positions.

Identifying stance and style makes use of tools from discourse analysis (Kiesling 2009: 173). In the

next section, I discuss discourses, outlining how they impact on identity construction, and their connections with stance, style and indexicality in language.

2.1.6 Discourse

Discourse has varied definitions across disciplines. In her overview of gendered discourses, Jane Sunderland (2004: 6) explains that, in linguistics, 'discourse' has two main meanings. Firstly, 'discourse' can refer to 'a broad stretch of written or spoken language', or 'the more specific 'linguistic, and accompanying paralinguistic, interaction between people in a specific context' (Talbot 1995: 43), such as 'classroom discourse''. She labels these 'descriptive' discourses (Sunderland 2004: 6). Secondly, she discusses 'interpretive' discourses. Sunderland notes these are sometimes used 'indistinguishably from ideology' and might therefore be viewed as 'ways of seeing the world' (ibid: 6). As interpretive discourses are 'different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice' (Fairclough 1992: 3), they might be viewed as 'carrying' ideology (Sunderland 2004: 6). Therefore, like Sunderland, my interpretation of discourses comes from Foucault (1989[1972]: 54), who defines them as 'practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak'. Discourses are thus, broadly, 'constitutive systems of meaning' which position speakers in certain ways, but are also open to use by speakers, suggested by terms such as 'invoke' and 'reject' (Sunderland 2004: 6).

Discourses are invisible systems which position speakers in different ways. For example, as Coates (1996: 261) argues, there are many versions of femininity available to individuals – mainstream discourses position people in 'more conventional ways' while radical or subversive discourses 'offer alternative ways of doing femininity'. Thus, though individuals have (some) freedom to construct their identities, some identities are regarded more socially acceptable than others because of dominant discourses, and others are limited because of these expectations. However,

as Pichler (2009) drawing on Foucault (1981) shows, discursive identities are not constructed solely through the invocation or rejection of discourses, but how individuals position themselves within these discourses. For example, she shows all her groups of girls discuss sex, but position themselves differently in this discourse; as 'knowing and liberal', 'pro-sex', or 'moralistic'. Like Pichler, I am interested in how my speakers position themselves in discourses in their talk, particularly through stance, as they construct their styles and identities and do leadership.

Like Kiesling (2009) suggests with stances, discourses are detectable through their manifestation in linguistic 'traces' (Sunderland 2004: 7). Sunderland differentiates between 'descriptive' and 'interpretive' discourses in which traces might be found. 'Linguistic traces' may reference a discourse directly, e.g., the lexical item, 'education'; however, many are indexed indirectly, e.g., 'teachers', and 'school' are lexical 'traces' of an education discourse, and a particular 'singsong, instructing' intonation might be a paralinguistic 'trace' of an education discourse through its mimicking of a teacher's voice (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 122-123).

In my study, the stances indexed by speakers point to the discourses in which they position themselves. For example, when Adam and his friends are choosing a game to play in 7.4, Aiden suggests one by saying, 'Guys, why don't we all play Rocket League?'. His use of a question format as well as inclusive pronoun, 'we', are descriptive discourse 'traces' indexing a stance that positions him as considerate of others in the interpretive discourse of friendship, while his use of subject-specific vocabulary, 'Rocket League', positions him as knowledgeable in the interpretive discourse of gaming. These combine to support his 'nice' and 'easy-going' style and higher relative skill. Adam's positive response, 'Yeah, let's play that', interactively ratifies Aiden's suggestion, style, and these positionings. The importance of ratification is shown by Harness-Goodwin (1990; see 2.1.10), and in Eckert's study of girls' style at a USA high school (2000). Eckert shows the

importance of ratification when, by wearing the latest fashions to school, an adolescent girl should succeed in a 'cool' positioning, but receives 'scorn' rather than admiration (ibid: 215).

Discourse analysis can therefore be used to investigate speakers' identity constructions, exploring which discourses they invoke or reject, and how they position themselves. This is explored in Pichler's (2009) study of 'tough and respectable' British Bangladeshi girls. Pichler shows the careful balancing act in which the girls engage, especially towards dating, relationships and marriage. The girls adopt local positions such as 'supportive friend' or 'provocateur' in their talk, but also 'pro' or 'anti' stances towards the discourse of relationships. One speaker, Hennah, distances herself from engaging in the subject of dating by remaining quiet and then shouting, 'Shut up!' when her friends tease her. Pichler shows this must be viewed in relation to dominant cultural and religious discourses in the Bangladeshi community, 'which position dating as incompatible with young, respectable Muslim Bangladeshi femininities' (ibid: 126). Like Aiden balances the discourse of friendship with gender and leadership, Hennah balances the discourse of friendship with gender and religious discourses in her identity construction.

Thus, Aiden's example, 'Guys, why don't we all play Rocket League?', demonstrates how linguistic features show 'traces' of discourses which are used to do leadership and a particular type of masculinity in both the stance he indexes and the ways in which he positions himself. In examining closely the talk and social practices of my participants, I noticed their identity constructions were also intertwined with particular local 'statuses' they were able to hold. In the next section, I explore status and the local social order.

2.1.7 Status and the Local Social Order

The importance of status is demonstrated by McRae's (2009) study of disagreement resolutions in

UK business settings. McRae finds those holding senior job-roles most likely to have their ideas accepted, despite observing 'mitigating features', such as hedging and questioning intonation, in all participants' talk. Thus, almost regardless of linguistic strategy, McRae finds men's decisions are often the ones actioned, which, she proposes, is because of the statuses afforded by their job titles. The statistic she includes, that, during her research in 2005, 65% of senior posts were held by men, offers perspective on the role of gender (McRae 2009: 164). For McRae, it is less overtly about the way gender is constructed by individuals, but status gained through the employment opportunities open to them, usually, though never explicitly, related to their gender. This is similar to the conclusions drawn by Crenshaw (1989) in her observations related to race and gender in USA employment. Their employment-sanctioned statuses then stand as proxy for their ideas being accepted.

Jon Swain (2004) also considers institutional statuses in his ethnography of three UK London-area primary schools. However, he explores the means used by the children themselves, like my participants, to acquire status, rather than considering only the power imbued by holding pre-allocated 'jobs' or roles. Exploring the strategies used by 10–11-year-old boys to construct masculinities in three contrasting settings, he claims gender performances are inextricably linked to the acquisition of status within the peer group. He defines status for his participants as 'having a certain position in the peer group hierarchy, which becomes relevant when it is seen is relation to others'. He argues this is the result of 'intricate and intense manoeuvring […] earned through negotiation, and sustained through performance' of an 'acceptable form of masculinity' (Swain 2004: 171; see also Corsaro 1979; Martino 1999; Lawson 2013). Swain acknowledges the boys' efforts are constrained by their settings, as the means by which his boys acquire status is limited or enabled by access to resources permitted by their specific schools. For example, one school allows pupils to wear trainers, so wearing a brand regarded 'cooler' than others accrues status;

another school has banned football at break-times, so sporting prowess, a 'major factor' affecting a boy's peer-group position, must be realised through other means (Swain 2004: 173; see also Eckert 2000; Harness-Goodwin 2006).

The children in my study have opportunities to acquire status in ways resembling both McRae and Swain's participants. Like McRae, some statuses are institutionally-allocated, such as Fliss, Frankie, Grace, Marcelo and Yasmin's 'Class Captaincies', a role similar to a prefect, and Amy, Lilah, Matty and Sam's selection for multiple sports teams. The most meaningful for them, however, are, like Swain's boys, statuses they build themselves through social practices. Rather than being institutionally-determined, these were areas such as higher relative skill in the activity being completed (Bella, Marcelo, Aiden, Matty), popularity (Aiden, Frankie, Tilda), high achievement at school (Marcelo), and friendships (almost every child had at least one close friend). Swain's (2004: 171) definition of status as children positioning themselves in relation to each other to create a peer group hierarchy suggests his boys are all competing for a common goal of popularity and that this is of equal importance to each child. My children did not seem to be as concerned with a whole-class peer-group hierarchy. They instead appeared to use awareness of their shared history to 'know' which of their peers were the highest-skilled artists and gamers or the highest academic achievers. Without invoking statuses, those in possession of them are, like McRae's managers, able to rely on this shared knowledge to see their ideas actioned. For example, in 5.4.1, Marcelo's status as the highest-skilled artist in the triad and high-achiever in the form-group is unspoken, but stands as proxy for his ideas and decisions being implemented. Although this relies on in-group comparison, it was not overtly competitive like the behaviours shown by Swain's boys. Rather, it was accepted and often celebrated.

Unlike Swain's boys, the children in my study also frequently left particular statuses unstated; like

McRae's managers, no child uttered, for example, 'I'm the best gamer so do what I say', or, 'We should go with Bella's idea because she's the best artist'. The function of their statuses therefore operated in a way similar to McRae's managers, who also did not have to explicitly invoke their 'higher' statuses to see their decisions actioned. Unlike them, however, the children had used local social practices to build the statuses which were meaningful, rather than receiving particular 'senior' jobs (see Weinberger et al. 2005, Schellens et al. 2007 and Johnson and Johnson 2009 who detail teachers' inclination to pre-allocate roles such as 'group leader' or 'scribe' to children). Those who did have 'senior' roles did not invoke them overtly, valuing more highly the statuses gained from social practices. As Harness-Goodwin (2001) also finds, these statuses stand as proxy for their ideas being actioned. In her study of playground jump-rope in a west-coast USA elementary school, higher relative skill gives participants status to make decisions in the activity at hand.

In this, as well as her study of girls' school-based social activities (2006), boys' task-oriented play and a girls' game of 'house' in a predominantly Black, working-class neighbourhood in Philadelphia, USA (1990), Harness-Goodwin finds status can be linked with positionings in and creation of the local social order. 'Social order' is a term often used in sociology which generally relates to macro understandings of social groups. In their review of Émile Durkheim's (1982[1895]) theories of social order and deviance, sociologists Thorolfur Thorlindsson and Jón Gunnar Bernburg (2004: 271) indicate it refers to social groups' 'structural properties', where 'norms, values and ongoing social relationships place constraints on the individual'. However, **local** social order, as used by Harness-Goodwin (1990, 2006; my emphasis), is more similar to Swain's (2004) peer-group hierarchy than Thorlindsson and Bernburg's definition, for it relates to rankings in one setting and a specific group, or groups, of speakers. Harness-Goodwin (2006: 3) demonstrates that the local social order involves individuals building 'a form of rank[ing]' and this 'makes visible

features of […] social organisation'. This ranking of individuals in the peer-group, similar to Swain's (2004) boys, appears important to Harness-Goodwin's children. Those at the top of each local social order have powerful leadership positions often allowing them to control the shape of the activities, direct others, make decisions with no justification, and receive little challenge.

Status is therefore related to children's position in the local social order but remains separate from it. In my research, I consider less the whole form-group's local social order, rather how it is related to leadership attempts, examining who is positioned as a leader, who accepts this positioning, and who is rejected. As leadership occurs as a result of the children's own social practices rather than pre-allocated roles, it involves someone becoming positioned more highly than their peers, even if only fleetingly, requiring others to be positioned below. Status appears to enable higher positionings and therefore leadership, and it involves all or most group members' ratification.

Thus, leadership is an interactive process, relying on the consent of all individuals involved. As I have shown above, for my children, status and stance are used to construct styles which work together to enable individuals' leadership alongside their identity constructions. I therefore align with Baxter's (2015) social constructionist perspective on gender and leadership which shows each is mutually and interactively constructed through individuals' social practices and language. In addition to individuals' status and social practices, the form-group culture Penguin Class had fostered affects which linguistic strategies for leadership are accepted. I explore this in the next section with reference to CofPs.

2.1.8 Leadership and Culture: Communities of Practice

Developed from Lave and Wenger's (1991; Wenger 1998) social theory of learning, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999: 186) define a CofP as 'an aggregate of people who, united by a common

enterprise, develop and share ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, and values – in short, practices'. They note a CofP may develop from both formal and informal enterprises; for example, Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) nerd girls formed their own 'informal' CofP in a wider west-coast USA school-enforced 'formal' cohort-based CofP (see 2.1.4). The children in Penguin Class had been placed together seven years previously by the school borough's allocation system because of their age and geographical location, so might therefore be considered a 'formal' enterprise where individuals merely 'co-exist' (Eckert 2006: 1). However, the friendships that developed and many children's declarations that they are 'friends with everyone' in the form-group and deemed attending school 'fun' because 'you get to be with everyone' suggests they form an informal enterprise engaging in regular, joint, meaningful activity (these quotes come from Frankie and Matty's ethnographic interviews, but it was a sentiment echoed by all the children).

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1999: 186) definition of a CofP places agency with its members to co-construct its culture, customs and practices. Together, as Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) nerd girls show, individuals interactively and mutually construct 'social meaning, social identity, community membership, forms of participation, the full range of community practices, and the symbolic value of linguistic form' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999: 9). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 472) relate this to gender because, they argue, people's 'access and exposure to, need for, and interest in different CofPs are related to such things as their [social] class, age, and ethnicity, as well as their sex'; for example, they state men are more likely than women to be on football teams, women more likely to be members of consciousness-raising groups, and, from my observations, children more likely to be in adult-approved activities like art clubs or dance crews rather than ones they might choose, or create, themselves. Furthermore, they state that gender is reproduced in individuals' 'differential forms of participation in particular CofPs' (ibid: 472). For example, Lilah might hold the powerful position of captain for the school's netball team and show some

leadership using art skills-based status in her project with Tilda and Bella, but, in her family CofP, she is a pre-adolescent daughter who must do as her parents ask. However, netball is often regarded as inferior to a football team captaincy, arts-based skills are less highly-valued in the 'real' world, where STEM subjects triumph, and she is arguably more powerful than any younger siblings. Her differential participation in these CofPs, among the many others in which she engages, is 'inseparable' from her 'continual construction of gender', and she will 'develop linguistic patterns as [she] acts in her various CofPs' (ibid: 473). Similar to McRae's (2009) and Crenshaw's (1989) findings relating managers' authority to their sex- and race-based access to particular job roles, it is the CofPs in which society sanctions her participation that constantly constructs the language and linguistic strategies she uses. I explore her, as well as the other children's, stances and styles in the Penguin Class CofP.

Connections between gender and CofPs have not been limited to speakers. Holmes and Stubbe (2003) and Holmes and Schnurr (2011[2006]) argue workplaces themselves can also be regarded gendered. In their studies, they argue it is not only the gender constructed by speakers which affects the success of strategies used to lead, but the gendering of workplaces themselves as 'feminine' or 'masculine' by their participants and the wider community (Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]: 317).

In their study of leadership in the workplace, Holmes and Schnurr (2011[2006]) examine the institutional talk of women and men, and the role of workplace culture in determining the success of different strategies. Approaching them as CofPs, Holmes and Schnurr (ibid: 317) find in their study of Wellington, New Zealand-based, workplaces that the workplaces themselves are 'recognisably gendered' (see also Holmes and Stubbe 2003). Participants identify different workplaces as being 'masculine' or 'feminine', and these perceptions affect social practices and

ways of speaking. Whether a male or female employee utilises 'normatively feminine talk' to communicate their ideas (ibid: 319, see Holmes 1995; Coates 1996; Talbot 1998), Holmes and Schnurr (2011[2006]) illustrate that, when taking place in a feminine CofP, such talk is regarded as unremarkable and 'unmarked'. 'Unmarked' behaviours are defined by Ochs (1992: 343) as 'certain acts, activities, stances, roles [...] frequently enacted by members of a particular sex' which are therefore not perceived as unusual (Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]: 323, see 2.1.4.3). Holmes and Schnurr extend this beyond individuals' sex to workplace cultures. In a 'feminine' CofP, female and male department managers both make use of 'normatively feminine talk' (ibid: 319). This style of talk indexes normative femininity through linguistic and discursive devices, but is 'unmarked' in this context. In a 'masculine' CofP, a male manager using language which indexes a similar caring stance with 'mitigated' features associated with indexing normative femininity results in (jocular) insults and mock-confrontation, showing it is 'marked' (Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]: 322-323).

Thus, despite traditionally-relational strategies often being associated with indexing normative femininity (see 2.1.3), it is not only women or girls who use them for leadership, and nor is their success related to the gender of the speaker. In my study, children of all genders use linguistic strategies which appear to pay attention to what Holmes and Schnurr (2011[2006]) label 'feminine' relational practices, and they are often more likely to see success than if they use 'masculine' strategies such as bald imperatives (2.1.3). In their ethnographic interviews, the children emphasised how they appreciated this way of leading, describing their preferences for leaders whose language was 'kind' and 'nice' and disliking 'meanness' or 'bossiness'. As their preferences are associated with indexing normative femininity, it is possible they have mutually co-constructed a 'feminine' CofP, where strategies which pay attention to normatively 'feminine' relational practices are 'unmarked' (Ochs 1992: 343).

This aligns with Cameron and Shaw's (2015) study of women in the political arena, who find the 'Venusian' virtues of cooperation, empathy and openness have come to be valued more highly in leadership. They caution, however, that the beneficiaries are not 'prototypical Venusians', but, often, cisgender men (ibid: 16). One reason they propose is that men are given extra credit for showing any skill in relational communication because they are viewed as 'natural' for women (see also Fishman 1978). Swann and David Graddol's (1995: 145) study of pupils' speaking and listening assessments in the UK also highlights this issue. They find boys are rewarded for using collaborative styles of talk whereas girls are given little special credit (see also Cheshire and Jenkins 1991). I find, however, that the strategies themselves appear more important than the gender of the speaker.

Thus, while women or girls may feel compelled to change, adapt or modify their language and adopt strategies more commonly associated with indexing normative masculinity in order to be accepted as leaders in other contexts (see Cameron 2023), this did not appear to be the case for my participants. Rather, the CofP they had mutually-constructed rewarded linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. These were heard and responded to alongside individuals' styles, built through repeated stance-taking and local social practices.

Considering another relevance of gender, by my participants' choice, all the talk in my study comes from single-sex groups. In the next sections, I therefore explore studies of leadership in single-sex groups' work- and play-oriented talk.

2.1.9 Leadership in Work-oriented Talk

Baxter's (2006a) study of leadership in a single-sex, UK classroom-based context shows two

speakers, Sophie and Charlie, each attempting to lead their single-sex groups in an assessed speaking and listening activity, ranking 15 items for their importance in surviving a shipwreck. Baxter argues they negotiate positions both within and across three 'interwoven' competing classroom discourses which constitute their and their peers' subject positions: approval (partitioned into 'teacher-' and 'peer-approval'), gender differentiation, and a model of collaborative talk (Baxter 2006a: 162). Using feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis, Baxter argues pupils' abilities to be authoritative speakers are 'mediated' through their subject positionings in these competing discourses (ibid: 163). Baxter notes the interweaving discourses of peer approval and gender differentiation empower Charlie in his boys' group but constrain Sophie in her girls' group; the boys seem willing to be led by Charlie, shown through lack of challenge, infrequent interruptions, and building on each other's points, whereas Sophie's attempts at leadership are met with disagreement and confrontational interruptions.

Baxter (2006a: 175, 166) claims the discourses empower Charlie as his group was 'more accustomed' to accept one boy's leadership because, unlike girls, they 'do not take the leadership issue personally'. They constrain Sophie because she transgresses the norms of peer approval for girls, thus she is viewed as a 'pushy power-seeker'. According to Baxter's supplementary data gleaned from ethnographic-style interviews, being 'pushy' is incompatible with likeability for these girls, who feel leadership should be the result of popular choice. It therefore results in a negative positioning for Sophie in the discourse of peer approval, directly impeding her leadership attempts.

Baxter's observations contrast with Julia Davies's (2011[2003]) findings from a UK secondary school speaking and listening English lesson analysing poem, *The Lady of Shalott*. The area of leadership is not her focus, though it provides some linguistic evidence of how single-sex groups

make decisions where the pupils were instructed to talk collaboratively. Taking a gender difference approach, Davies describes the talk of the all-female group as 'polyphonous' because the girls employ cohesive devices in their talk, enabling them to share the floor and 'mirror' each other (Davies 2011[2003]: 115, 123; see Coates 1996 for 'polyphony', 'cacophony' and 'mirroring'). In the all-male groups, Davies finds the opposite; their talk is 'cacophonous' (ibid: 118), and, contrasting with Charlie in Baxter's (2006a) study, when one boy, Pierre, attempts leadership by steering the group's focus towards the learning, he is met with homophobic ridicule, interruptions to distract, and apathy for the task.

The stated objective of the activity in Davies's (2011[2003]: 115) study, 'to collaborate and negotiate through tentative exchanges of opinion', requires speakers to use collaborative and supportive talk. Jennifer Coates (2013[1997]: 144) finds this style is commonly associated with all-female friendship talk; the women in her study 'draw on a collaborative model of conversational organisation where their shared ownership of the floor symbolises […] solidarity rather than separateness'. The men she studies often assume a one-at-a-time floor where speakers show 'expertise'. Using collaborative language may have presented a challenge for Davies's (2011[2003]) boys, though not simply because of their gender. Rather, Coates (2013[1997]) attributes gender-based variance to the difference in conversational topics, finding women tend to discuss more personal matters inspiring support such as families, whereas men discuss areas in which they can distance themselves and 'play the expert', like politics. As Davies's (2011[2003]) task requires a personal response, the boys may have found this more challenging as a topic and style to which they are less accustomed.

Baxter's (2006a) boys appear to adhere to the men's style observed by Coates (2013[1997]) in using a one-at-at-time floor, but the girls' talk seems to defy the collaboration she observes in

women's talk (Coates 1996). This could be because of the impersonal topic, which, Coates (2013[1997]) shows, would serve the boys better than the girls, or because Sophie positions herself as a leader not an equal, which challenges the collaborative, egalitarian style often observed in women's talk (Coates 1996, 2013[1997]; Baxter 2015). Baxter (2006a) argues that, rather than the style, the discourse of peer differentiation may be serving the boys while challenging the girls. Although Cameron (2011[1997]: 259) advises it is futile to seek evidence that female talk is unwaveringly collaborative, the girls' negative assessment of Sophie's non-collaborative behaviour suggests these girls deem collaboration essential for enacting acceptable femininity, and, relatedly, bearing similarity to my speakers who said leaders should be 'nice' and 'not bossy', leadership.

Though Baxter (2006a) and Davies's (2011[2003]) pupils have similar English-curriculum learning objectives requiring talking to reach conclusions, the activities themselves differ. In their education-focused study of groupwork, Emma Mercier et al. (2014: 410) find a difference in activity (for them, maths- or history-focused), appears to impact how individual pupils engage in the learning, which, in turn, affects leadership. If a child is less interested, they are less motivated to try, and even less to lead. Mercier et al. do not explore gender, but, it seems to me the difference in task may offer a reason for the success or failure of group, and this might be whether it indexes normative masculinity (Baxter's) or femininity (Davies's).

In her study of adults' groupwork, Baxter (2015) uses a social constructionist, discursive approach to investigate how three hexads of UK-university MBA students – one all-female, one all-male and one mixed-sex – do leadership. They are set the challenge of building a tower using designated materials, and the success criteria about the tower's height and appearance and their time limit are shared. Baxter finds many women in the single- and mixed-sex groups resist stereotypical

discourses of normative femininity, showing assertiveness and competitiveness when required. Like Sophie's group in Baxter's (2006a) classroom study, the women in the single-sex group do not support one of their team-mates, Georgina's, attempts at leadership, resulting in 'very little in the way of orderly turn taking' (Baxter 2015: 442). Baxter (ibid: 443) acknowledges this 'free-for-all, frenetic' interaction seems cacophonous but suggests it might actually demonstrate a more egalitarian approach as everyone is permitted to speak, offer ideas, and share opinions. The resulting problem arises that both the plan and proposed result are unclear.

In the all-male group, however, Adrian immediately establishes himself as the informal leader by taking the first turn to share his idea and securing most of his teammates' agreement. Combined with the group's adoption of a one-at-a-time floor (Coates 2013[1997]), the interaction is 'very orderly' (Baxter 2015: 436), showing a clear hierarchy reminiscent of Charlie's group in Baxter's (2006a) classroom study. Their approach ensures all members understand the proposal and their roles, even if some are prevented from contributing ideas.

Baxter's (2015) use of Interactional Sociolinguistics within a social constructionist framework illuminates the non-stereotypical ways in which groups of varied gender compositions utilise different linguistic practices for leadership. Baxter shows the use of particular linguistic strategies and their indexing of normative masculinity or femininity draws on mainstream gendered discourses which position women and men either within or outside of the realms of what is acceptable for how it is believed they should speak. This may explain Georgina's unsuccessful attempt hierarchising the all-female group, which, Baxter suggests, provides evidence that women themselves 'do not always enable other women to become leaders' (2015: 488). This may also be the issue Sophie faced in Baxter's (2006a) school study. However, the absence of ethnographic information presents us with only a partial picture.

As Baxter demonstrates, language is highly significant for 'doing' leadership, as it enables individuals to agentively select linguistic resources to allow them to accomplish transactional and relational goals, highlighting also the importance of others' responses. As Baxter (2006a, 2015) does not use ethnography, she is not able to provide extensive details about the speakers' local identities, stances and styles, and how they contribute to leadership success (or failure) like my research does. However, she emphasises the interactive nature of leadership by considering the talk of all participants. The relevance of such detail has been shown in studies of play-oriented talk, which I explore in the next section.

2.1.10 Leadership in Play-oriented Talk

Baxter (2006a, 2015) demonstrates leadership is interactive, requiring the acceptance of others alongside attention to linguistic strategies from the person adopting a leadership position. She finds the gender composition of the groups affects this, which is also highlighted in Harness-Goodwin's (1990) study of children's play-oriented talk. Examining the ways in which all-boy and all-girl groups play on Maple Street in Philadelphia, USA, Harness-Goodwin finds the groups organise their play differently, even when, like Baxter (2015), the objective of the activity is similar.

In the boys' play, making slingshots for a battle, brothers Malcolm and Tony are 'acknowledged to be the [team] leaders' (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 76). Harness-Goodwin examines how directives are utilised to ensure the objective of the activity is achieved (see 2.1.3). She shows the success of issuing a directive is determined by the response of the addressee(s); if the leader has their desired requests carried out, their leadership is ratified. Harness-Goodwin uncovers the boys' local

social order in their differentiation between participants which ultimately secures the leader's position (2.1.7). Malcolm uses bald imperatives and insults to direct his teammates, e.g., 'You ain't no good, so go downstairs' (ibid: 79), and he is the addressee of requests for assistance and explanations. Drawing on some ethnographic information about the children's relationships and shared history, Harness-Goodwin shows how his team-mates' deference alongside his acceptance discursively positions Malcolm simultaneously as the expert and leader. This positions him highly in the local social order, and shows the interactive nature of leadership as the children respond to each other.

The girls also do leadership interactively, but are more egalitarian and relationship-focused in managing their task-based activity, making rings from glass bottle-tops. They construct their directives as inclusive suggestions such as, 'We could go looking for more bottles?' (ibid: 110) rather than the bald imperatives observed in the boys' group (e.g., 'Go downstairs'). The girls also choose both if and how to follow instructions. Unlike the boys, the girls do not seem concerned to have a leader. Similar to my Group 3 (4.2.3), the girls' egalitarian approach means that, should they use a directive, it is often justified with a reason, usually relaying the benefit for everyone. In a different play context, however, playing 'house', the girls' behaviour is different. The group is hierarchised through 'family'-role selection, where the girls playing 'mothers' are able to issue commands to their 'children'. Here, Harness-Goodwin uses ethnographic knowledge of their real-life friendships to exemplify these relationships dictate allegiances for the characters, illuminating the local social order. The role of 'decision-maker', which decides the play development, is usually occupied by the 'mother' character. The 'highly-coveted' position of 'sister-of-the-decision-maker' is occupied by their real-life best friend, allowing the girls to display to everyone their allegiances (ibid: 133). This brings the discourse of friendships into the game, and reveals the local social order. Friendships are also used by my children for support for their decisions and suggestions

(2.1.7). For example, in Chapters 4 and 6, Bella and Tilda display their allegiance through verbal support and references to their knowledge of each other's 'private' information.

Gender emerged as significant in various ways in my study: on a level of indirect indexicality and normative femininity, as well as through my ethnographic observations. The children themselves also highlighted the significance of gender to me in their ethnographic interviews. Therefore, in the next section, I outline studies exploring language and gender.

2.2 Language and Gender

2.2.1 Introduction

Cameron (2011[1997]: 255) notes many analyses of language and gender have been organised around a series of global oppositions. Often, men's talk was believed to be competitive and status-seeking, and women's talk cooperative and rapport-seeking. Studies usually identified typical structural features of men's or women's talk, and found evidence to support the speakers' competition or cooperation, often based, unquestioningly, on the speakers' gender. Challenging this dichotomy, the studies in this section, like mine, take a social constructionist approach, and analyse both discourse and structural, linguistic features to evidence their claims about how the speakers 'do' gender in substance and style, approaching gender as a production rather than a monolithic construct (ibid: 260).

Like Butler (1990: 33), who defines gender as the 'repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being', I view gender as a process. Gender is not something individuals are born with encapsulated in a set of features applicable across contexts

for all individuals, but something endlessly learned and developed over time. It must also be noted

that gender is not 'done' in a vacuum, as individual agency is privy to the influence and power of

wider societal beliefs surrounding which performances are 'acceptable'; gender is, therefore,

interactive and co-constructed by all participants (Cameron 1997: 30; see 2.1.4). Stylisations may

take the form of appearance, clothing choices and even academic careers, and individuals,

including those in Penguin Class, may draw on multiple positionings in local and global discourses

to do their gender identity. In this section, I give an overview of studies which examine language

and gender in children's talk. I begin by focusing on girls' friendship talk which takes place inside

and outside of school, and progress to examine boys' friendship talk in these contexts.

2.2.2 Girls' Friendship Talk

Discourse analytic linguistic studies of girls' single-sex friendship talk at primary-school age remain

relatively uncommon. The studies in this section, therefore, either examine the talk

of similar age groups, or consider data from similar settings.

Robin Lakoff (1975) locates the genesis of gendered talk in childhood in explaining the

powerlessness of adult women's talk in the (later-termed) 'deficit' paradigm. Research in the

gender difference paradigm shifted the focus to how children use language, suggesting single-sex

'separate worlds' as the cause of (pre-existing) gendered differences in language-use (see Maltz

and Borker 2011[1982]). Both the difference and Lakoff's deficit paradigms give a 'sum total of

linguistic features', portable between contexts, which define women's and men's language

(Cameron 1997: 28), whereas the postmodern turn emphasises discursive constructions of identity

(see 2.1.6). Asking 'When do girls start to talk like women?', Coates notes that questions regarding

how children do gender discursively in their talk were under-researched in sociolinguistics,

prompting her to, like my study, examine the talk of girls rather than women (Coates 2013[1999]: 79).

In her study of four white, middle-class, British girls' friendship talk, Coates (2013[1999]) discusses the girls' invocation of discourses alongside their use of linguistic features to give a rare longitudinal example of the developmental aspects of language-use in relation to gender. Using data from when the girls are aged 12 up to 15, the lower age being similar to my participants, Coates challenges the deficit and difference paradigms' theories that gendered language is a set of stylistic features carried from context to context, formed irreversibly in childhood (see also Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2007; 2.1.4). Coates finds the girls in her study invoke similar discourses at 12 years old as when they reach the age of 15, but occupy shifting positionings within them as they grow older. Talk is constitutive of friendship and femininity at different ages, but the ways in which they are achieved differ: the girls' language is playful when they are younger, as, like my girls, they flip in between subject positions, sing, and mimic others' voices. However, it becomes more serious as they get older.

Most notably, there is an additional discourse in their later recordings. Coates names this discourse Consciousness Raising (CR), which is characterised by the expression of highly personal information. The introduction of this discourse appears to give the girls the opportunity to 'support' each other, such as when they discuss period pain, through 'reciprocal self-disclosure' (Coates 2013[1999]: 94). Coates argues the support is further manifested in the linguistic-level strategies the girls utilise, such as sustaining topics over several minutes and transitioning between topics smoothly (when they are 12, topic-change is rapid and erratic), and the use of minimal responses and hedges to support each other (both are absent in their earlier talk). These structural features are associated with women's single-sex talk (see Coates 1996, 1997,

2011[1997]), and, Coates claims, show the girls are 'doing' femininity. Coates does not

acknowledge, however, that the girls may be competing for whose experience of periods is worst,

or (covertly) 'scoring points' for who can provide the most empathetic responses (see Cameron

2011[1997] who raises debates about researcher bias using examples from young men's talk).

Whereas early language and gender research suggests women's and men's language-use was

indicative of pre-existing gender differences (for example, Lakoff 1975; Zimmerman and West

1975; Tannen 1991), social constructionism pioneers the view that language is constitutive of

gender, that 'being a woman (or a man) is a matter, among other things, of talking like one'

(Cameron 1997: 28; see also Gal 1995). In adopting the linguistic strategies which have been found

to index normative femininity and talking about 'mature' topics, the girls in Coates's (2013[1999])

study appear to invoke mainstream discourses of femininity to 'talk like women', rather than girls,

making use of symbolic resources of femininity (Cameron 1997: 26). As a key concern for many

children, a concern also apparent for many members of Penguin Class, is that they are not seen as

'babyish' or immature (Cameron 2009: 11, see also Eckert 1996), the girls may be displaying their

maturity by talking in ways symbolically associated with dominant discourses of adult femininity.

Though, as Coates (1996: 261) argues, there is 'no, single unified way of doing femininity, of being

a woman', and subversive or radical discourses offer 'alternative ways of being, alternative ways of

doing femininity', dominant ways of 'doing being a woman' appear to influence these girls'

constructions of femininity.

Pichler's (2009) study of 'tough and respectable' British Bangladeshi Muslim girls from East London

examines the friendship talk of five 15–16-year-old girls who balance global, supra-local and local

discourses to do their identities and resist dominant ways of 'doing' femininity. Further to Coates's

(2013[1999]) study, and similar to mine, the data is collected from school breaktime contexts as

well as home settings, and the girls are united in their experience of the same school and year group. This study, however, presents a synchronic snapshot of the girls' speaking practices at an age older than Coates's and my girls.

Pichler's discursive analysis shows that, in their talk, the girls often resist values such as studiousness and quietness, 'stereotypes frequently associated with (young) Asian women' (Pichler 2009: 148), showing 'toughness' both on a discourse-level in their adoption of an anti-school stance, and a linguistic-level, through challenges and insults in competitive teasing and boasting. Most notably in their talk, the girls frequently position heterosexual marriage as central to their adolescent femininities, which, Pichler notes, is not pursued by the other groups of girls she studies who discuss relationships rather than marriage. This discourse is particularly interesting to explore as it reveals the complex identity work in which the girls are engaged to construct religious, ethnic and gendered young selves.

The girls immediately position marriage as a matter more serious than love or relationships, suggested by their shifting away from the play frame utilised in their other talk (Goffman 1974). Interestingly, the girls do not reject the idea of arranged marriage completely; rather, they resist marrying someone they do not know, challenging particularly the tradition of being married to men from Bangladesh who, they claim, may enter the marriage simply to secure British citizenship (Pichler 2009: 142–3). This demonstrates their careful balancing act: they do not completely align with a discourse of love marriage, which is the traditional motivation for many marriages in the UK, but state they would prefer to marry someone compatible with their British identities. Their acceptance of arranged marriage through a modified discourse therefore suggests their religious identities are important to them, a notion also supported by Pichler's in-group informant, Hennah, who positions religion as the central defining aspect of her identity (ibid: 129–130). This illustrates

clearly the significance of intersectionality. It is important, therefore, to consider the intersectional identities present in studies of gender. In the next section, I discuss intersectionality with reference to this and other key linguistic studies.

2.2.2.1 Intersectionality

The term 'intersectionality' was coined by USA lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to describe how race-based and gender-based discrimination interact to shape the negative experiences of Black women in employment (Connell and Pearse 2015: 85; Crenshaw 2020). Though it was originally used in legal contexts such as this, intersectionality was introduced by Patricia Hill Collins (1991) to sociology as applicable to all women because gender is 'always interconnected with other cultural displays of oppression' (Connell and Pearse 2015: 85). There is still debate about whether intersectionality can, or should, be considered separately from oppression, but it is gradually becoming less associated with it in some areas of social science. In sociolinguistics, intersectionality is often understood as 'the belief that no one [isolated] category (e.g. 'woman' or 'lesbian') is sufficient to account for individual experience or behaviour' (Levon 2015: 295). Separate categories instead 'inform and constitute one another' (ibid: 296), which is supported by Cameron (1997: 33) who argues it is impossible to be a 'generic woman [or man]', as everyone is, for example, raced, classed and aged. Intersectionality, then, is impossible to avoid, but may require active work from researchers to detect.

Mari Matsuda (1991: 1189) proposes researchers 'ask the other question' when studying language to see intersectionality to create a focus beyond what appears obvious, and allows intersecting categories to be visible. For example, in the British Bangladeshi girls' talk (Pichler 2009, see 2.2.2), marriage could be seen as simply invoking a gendered discourse but, if we 'ask the other question', it also indicates heterosexuality as the girls appear to presume they will marry cisgender

men. Further, for Pichler's girls, it indicates a religious identity and, due to their mentioning of Bangladeshi men, ethnicity. For my children, the intersectional identities most relevant relate to gender and age.

In her study, Pichler (2009) sought participant opinion to understand this 'oriented-to' context (Schegloff 1997: 184). Conversation Analysts argue anything the researcher wishes to make relevant must be 'demonstrably relevant to the participants' (Schegloff 1991: 50). However, as Pichler argues, participants also may not explicitly refer to specific social categories in order for them to be significant (Pichler 2009: 12, see Cameron 2011[1997]; Bucholtz 2003; Holmes 2007). For example, the British Bangladeshi girls do not refer to age directly in their talk, but it is clearly important for understanding them as their discussions of marriage mark a transition from adolescence to adulthood. A further example where social categories are relevant yet not explicitly referred to in-the-moment is Deborah Tannen's (2006[1981]) exploration of talk she names New York Jewish style.

In Tannen's (2006[1981]) study of the talk between six participants at Thanksgiving dinner, three, Peter, Kurt and Tannen herself are New York natives of East-European Jewish backgrounds, while the other and three, David, Sally and Chad, are not. Though the ethnic backgrounds of the speakers are complex, Tannen finds the group splits into the two detailed above when conversational style is considered. Like Pichler (2009), Tannen also considers participant opinion to understand the talk, and she, Peter and Kurt later characterised (independently) their evening's interactions as 'New York Jewish'. Unlike Pichler's British Bangladeshi girls, who explicitly invoked discourses of ethnicity and place in their talk, New York and Jewishness were not overtly mentioned in the transcriptions Tannen includes. Tannen therefore examines the features of their talk to establish how it may index New York Jewish style. Although these studies do not explicitly

use the term 'intersectionality', as the term itself only started to be used later in sociolinguistics, it is clearly what they address and consider.

She considers four stylistic features, topic, genre, pacing and expression. She finds that she, Peter and Kurt talk about personal topics, speak with a faster rate of speech, and are participatory listeners (ibid: 457-458). She also accepts the difference in style may have led to participants 'misunderstand[ing] the intentions' of members of the other triad in the conversation (ibid: 458), causing awkward silences or disruptions to question-and-answer sequences. Tannen asserts the use of New York Jewish style was intended to show interest and enthusiasm, but self-reflexively acknowledges while latching and overlapping enhance conversational flow and are viewed as cooperative by Jewish New Yorkers, they may not be interpreted in the same way by all.

An analysis of this conversation which does not consider Tannen, Kurt and Peter's New York Jewish style would be partial, possibly presenting them as rude or uncooperative. Though looking at the group of six as homogenous in social class, age and sexuality would reveal some aspects of their identity in talk, it would miss what is most significant for the speakers themselves: the specific intersection of locality and religion/race (see Imhoff's (2016) discussion of understandings of Jewishness) with these other categories (see Eckert 1989; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1995; Bucholtz 2011[1999], 2011). Tannen, Kurt and Peter never explicitly assert they are Jewish New Yorkers, but invoke their New York Jewish identities through the style they adopt in talk which they recognise as indexing their shared background. Matsuda's recommendation that we 'ask the other question' is therefore vital.

Bucholtz (2009[1999]) also endorses looking beyond homogeneity to reveal meaningful local constructions in her study of five European-American, middle-class nerd girls wishing to challenge

mainstream school identities. Like Pichler (2009), Bucholtz provides a synchronic snapshot of these girls' friendship talk, and, like much of mine, her data is collected from a school setting, but during the girls' breaktimes.

Bucholtz examines the behaviours and language of the nerd girls, detailing linguistic practices through which nerd identity is indexed. She categorises them as 'negative identity practices', practices individuals use to distance themselves from a rejected identity, and 'positive identity practices', practices which individuals employ to actively construct a chosen identity (Bucholtz 2009[1999]: 216). Many of the nerds' positive identity practices draw on discourses to, often competitively, display intelligence, as knowledge is viewed as valuable within their CofP (see 2.1.8). Bucholtz argues that their nerd identity actively resists traditional femininity, and therefore frees the girls from 'hostile' views about female intellectual ability (ibid: 217). As Becky Francis (2009, 2010) also finds in her studies of UK-based secondary schools, intelligence is often viewed as incompatible with social acceptance or popularity, however, this did not seem to have much impact for Penguin Class, where higher relative skill and high academic achievement could be used for status-accrual to support leadership attempts (2.1.7).

In this section, I have outlined three key studies of girls' single-sex talk and discussed intersectionality. The studies demonstrate that wider societal discourses about normative femininity influence young people alongside more local-level positionings. In Bucholtz (2009[1999]) and Pichler's (2009) studies the interaction of local and global contexts are used to interpret how speakers 'do' their identities. This shows the girls are not 'doing' just femininity, but particular kinds of femininity, relevant to their personal circumstances, that the girls invest in. Pichler's and Bucholtz's studies also challenge widely-held beliefs that men's and women's talk can be viewed as 'global oppositions', whereby men's talk is seen as 'competitive', but women's talk is

regarded 'cooperative' (Cameron 2011[1997]: 255). Indeed, the children in Penguin Class draw on multiple positionings to construct their identities, including, for example, locally as friends and classmates and sports team-members, and globally as gendered pre-adolescents. In the next section, I discuss findings in studies of boys' single-sex friendship talk in school and non-school settings.

2.2.3 Boys' Friendship Talk

Though once the unquestioned norm in sociolinguistic research (see Coates 2004 on the 'Androcentric Rule'), men's and boys' talk was first broached by those working in the 'difference' paradigm but further explored by social constructionists. Masculinity is now viewed as much a gender performance as femininity, so men's talk has become more of a focus in sociolinguistic studies (see Benwell 2014; Milani 2015a, b). Coates (1996: 261) defines masculinities as ways of 'doing being a man', and Kiesling (2007: 659), 'social performances which are semiotically linked (indexed) to men, and not to women, through cultural discourses and cultural models'. These definitions are flexible and left open to interpretation, and individuals wishing to 'do' masculinity can use many social practices.

Cameron's (2011[1997]) study of five white, USA, middle-class, 21-year-old men's friendship talk is similar to Coates's (2013[1999]) study (see 2.2.2) in that the talk takes place in a non-education setting, but the speakers' friendships have been facilitated by an educational institution. The study was pivotal as it openly questions the competitive/cooperative dichotomy detailed in 2.2.1, and demonstrates that an analyst's preconceptions may affect their interpretation of what is happening in their data to 'exemplify certain patterns of gender difference' (Cameron 2011[1997]: 251).

Using examples from one conversation, Cameron (2011[1997]) shows the talk may be deemed cooperative or competitive by how linguistic strategies are interpreted: when the group gossips about men they label 'gay', Bryan and Ed's latching could be cooperative because it shows they are attending closely to each other's contributions, but may also indicate competition, as they compete to 'cap' each other to make the most extravagant statement (ibid: 257; this is sometimes referred to as 'topping', see Labov 1972; Coates 2003; Maybin 2009; Pichler 2009). Attempting to fit talk into these oppositions is, therefore, unhelpful, and obscures how speakers are actually constructing gender in their talk. Though their talk is an example of gossip which, in western cultures, has associations with femininity, Cameron (2011[1997]) shows the speakers are doing masculinity by how they engage with the gossip rather than claiming they are participating in a stereotypically feminine style. In mixed-sex interactions, real women are present who the men can use to differentiate themselves from in speaking style, and if the women are girlfriends, they can stand as a symbol of the speaker's heterosexuality. In this single-sex context, however, the speakers use gossip about men they position as gay and their own (hetero)sexual encounters to distance themselves from queerness or femininity to display their heterosexuality. The speakers' main concern to assert a hetereosexualised, gendered self is evidenced in the discourses invoked and rejected.

Janet Maybin (2009) also finds the boys in her study are concerned to assert their heterosexuality in their friendship talk. Using data from her (2006) study of children attending a middle-school in southeast England, Maybin documents a synchronic snapshot of a form-group of children between 10 and 12 years old, an age similar to Penguin Class. She uses discourse and linguistic analysis to explore single- and mixed-sex children's friendship talk, though I will focus on her analysis of single-sex boys' talk which forms part of her 2009 analysis here.

Maybin notes that in the form-group, like Coates's (2013[1999]) girls, many children are beginning to use language to construct adolescent selves to mark their departure from childhood (see also Eckert 1996). Maybin's speakers use narratives to depict themselves as certain types of people, and switch rapidly between competing discourses of childhood and adolescence (Maybin 2009: 50). Two boys Maybin focuses on, Martie and Darren, are dominant boys in the form-group and utilise childly and adolescent discourses to present (hetero)sexual identities. In his story about a holiday flight, Martie presents himself as a child who likes to leave his seat to sit on the floor but also a (hetero)sexually-knowing male who can use this location to admire the legs of female flight attendants. Maybin argues Martie's presentation shows he is beginning to experiment with his sexuality, without committing completely to a child or adolescent identity.

In Darren's anecdote about an altercation with someone regarded a 'real man', he draws on a discourse of gay male sexuality or femininity (Maybin comments it is unclear which) to 'other' non-masculine identities (ibid: 55-56). According to his story, Darren replies, "Not tonight, darling" when an adult man proposes a fight, deliberately stylising his voice in falsetto pitch. This indexes either a feminine or gay position, but his deliberate change in voice shows, like Cameron's(2011[1997]) men, he is othering this alternative identity and marking it as different from his own 'macho' construction, a convincingly intelligible construction which allows him to play with these identities without threatening his masculinity (Maybin 2009: 56).

Darren also uses his story to 'cap' Martie's prior turn. This, as well as the one-at-a-time floor organisation and verbal duelling they appear concerned to maintain, shows they are experimenting with styles more commonly associated with adult men's talk (see Coates 2006, 2011[1997]). These features are also generally associated with toughness, which have also been identified in the talk of American working-class girls (Eder 1990; Goodwin 1990) and British

Bangladeshi working-class girls (Pichler 2009) (see the discussion of Lawson (2015) below for toughness and masculinity). Like Coates's (2011[1997]) girls with adult femininity, they appear to draw on this style as an accepted form symbolising mainstream adult masculinity. Both narratives involved in this 'capping' detail an altercation with a different 'real man', and Maybin (2006) claims this is typical of the dominant boys' communicative style and content of their talk. Strikingly similar to Cameron's (2011[1997]) men, despite the age difference, they are concerned to assert a heterosexual, tough identity, commensurate with the hegemonic western ideal of masculinity (Connell 2005[1995]; see Martino 1999; Swain 2004; Francis et al. 2010 for how this manifests in schools). Differently from Cameron's (2011[1997]) men, however, Martie and Darren's narratives take place in mixed-sex settings, where girls are nearby or engaging in the talk. Even if the girls do not participate in the talk, they may be used by the boys as a marker of heterosexuality, allowing their masculinities to remain unthreatened.

The studies discussed thus far have documented the masculine constructions of dominant boys in school settings, but Rob Lawson (2015) shifts the lens to capture subversive and alternative discursive constructions of masculinity in his longitudinal study of boys' talk in a secondary school in Glasgow, Scotland. Lawson identifies four CofPs, the 'Neds', who are actively anti-school, the Schoolies, who are actively pro-school, and the Alternatives and Sports who each view school as an opportunity to socialise. He maps phonetic variation onto CofP membership (see also Eckert 1989's example from a USA high school). Lawson is particularly interested in how the different groups orient to violence as an accepted symbol of masculinity, and how this manifests in discourse (Lawson 2015: 65). Though the 'Neds' orient positively towards violence and use the 'masculine dividends' associated with toughness to ensure they were not targeted (ibid: 63, see Pichler 2009 on tough femininities), Lawson argues that Victor, a Schoolie, positions himself as a different kind of tough by saying he would not fight back if targeted; he can withstand pain rather

than hurting others. Though he reformulates toughness, Victor's position shows he still orients discursively to some aspects of it, demonstrating the influence of dominant forms of masculinity, even to those who do not construct these forms for themselves.

Though distinct, children and young people's single-sex talk bears many resemblances with findings in adults' single-sex talk. When they are younger, their language is playful but this gives way to more typically adult discourses as they age. The prominence of heterosexuality in many of the studies appears to symbolise growing up, something many of the speakers are keen to do; however, this did not seem as overly important to Penguin Class, who appeared to show growing up in other ways such as distancing themselves from babyishness or engaging with grown-up media, such as higher-age-rated films.

2.3 Conclusion

The above review of studies in language and leadership, identity construction, and children's language and gender gives the background for my approach to answer my research questions. As my research considers how the children in Penguin Class do leadership, I aim to show its interactive nature and how this is related to gender with reference to the studies in this chapter. This review, therefore, offers the basis for me to be able to examine which strategies are successful, with attention to 'transactional' (goal-oriented) and 'relational' (relationship-oriented) practices and their relationships with gender (Holmes 2009). This is through how they are used in speakers' gender constructions and the gendered social meanings certain strategies index. By analysing their curriculum-oriented and play-oriented talk using additional information from ethnographic observations, I can establish which strategies succeed, fail, or are negotiated in these contexts, and examine the influence of Penguin Class's mutually and interactively constructed

local culture, or CofP (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999), and other statuses, such as popularity and higher relative skill.

My research questions also consider the relationship between leadership and identity construction. I have therefore reviewed studies of identity construction, detailing the importance of linguistic analysis in detecting the 'traces' (Sunderland 2004) of discourses speakers use to construct their identity. I have also explored findings on stance, which inform speakers' identity constructions. I use this to establish how certain identity constructions appear to enable leadership in the contexts I study. This marks the departure of my study from previous work, as there is a lack of research which examines how leadership is related to an individual's identity construction as a whole speaking subject, and how it occurs in natural contexts rather than when speakers are told the purpose of their talk is for them to show collaboration (Baxter 2006a; Davies (2011[2003]). My research addresses this gap in the literature.

I have stated that, as I completed my analysis, gender emerged as a relevant aspect of identity construction in many ways. This was from my own researcher viewpoint, and it was also an area identified by the children themselves. Although the children discussed 'gender', 'boys' and 'girls' when bringing it to my attention, I find that, beyond explicit naming, their local ethnographic positions, social practices and styles demonstrate the relevance of gender (Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Bucholtz 2009[1999]; Bucholtz 2009). I have thus reviewed here studies of language and gender, with a focus on studies of young people's talk. Some of these were classroom-based and others play-based, but all give a thorough background for exploring young gender identities in the contexts I analyse.

In the next chapter, I explain my methodology, linguistic ethnography; a methodology I chose to

provide knowledge of the speakers' local and meaningful practices which are used in their identity

constructions.

Chapter 3: Data and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises four main sections outlining the methodology I employ, the data collected, my analytic methods, and ethical considerations. I begin this section by outlining my understanding of linguistic ethnography (LE), proceeding to detail the research sites and how the spoken and interview data were collected during the period of fieldwork, spanning October 2017 to July 2018. I then outline how I analysed the data using tools from Interactional Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis. Finally, I describe the ethical considerations I made, contemplating particularly my participants' status as children.

3.2 Linguistic Ethnography

I begin this section by considering separately the principles of ethnography and linguistics before explaining how they are combined in a linguistic ethnographic approach.

3.2.1 Principles of Ethnography

Emerging from the discipline of anthropology, ethnography is a qualitative research method 'concerned with the description and analysis of culture' (Saville-Troike 1989: 1) which seeks to 'capture and understand' meanings in a particular setting (Rampton et al. 2014: 2). Pioneer of LE, Dell Hymes (1996: 4-5), notes that while anthropological work has tended to focus on 'making the strange familiar', which usually involves the study of other, often remote, peoples' ways of life (typically in countries or continents unfamiliar to the researcher; see Malinowski 1922, Mead 1928 and Bateson 1936), ethnography brings the focus of its research 'back home', seeking to 'make the familiar strange' (Erickson 1990: 92). Researchers are encouraged to look 'in our own backyard' (Rampton 2007: 598) to understand and examine the social practices that surround us, looking for

interesting or 'telling' cases rather than seeking to make grand and generalisable abstract claims (Mitchell 1984: 237 cited in Rampton et al. 2004). In ethnography, the researcher places themselves in the research setting and spends time participating in the environment they are documenting, using, most distinct to ethnography, participant observation.

Participant observation, which records the ethnographer's 'outsider' interpretation, often with fieldnotes (see 3.4.2), must be carefully balanced with the participants' 'insider' views of the areas being studied. Thus, ideally, ethnographies are collaborative, and try to 'do justice' to participants' understandings while also paying attention to etic perspectives; the researcher considers what the participants see alongside what they see, carefully but continuously 'alternating' between perspectives to conceptualise features and practices of the community (Rampton et al. 2004: 2). As noted in 1.1, I view the children as agentive and whole individuals. Therefore, as recommended by Pinter (2014: 174) in her exploration of children's participant roles in applied linguistics research, I made a 'conscious attempt' to portray children's own experiences and understandings, valuing them as highly as if they were adult participants.

However, it was me, an adult researcher, writing up and reporting the findings. Researchers are, therefore, encouraged to acknowledge the 'partiality' of their impressions (Hymes 1996[1978]: 13), and understand they can never be a true participant, even if studying their own community. Considering my role as the children's class teacher, and thus studying a community very close to me, ethnography was especially useful as, like Fiona Copland and Angela Creese (2015: 13) detail in their overview of linguistic ethnographic methods and case studies, the society under examination was so familiar to me, that I 'may no longer pay attention' to the routines, institutions and interactions of the group. I was able to use ethnographic principles such as fieldnotes and observation in my endeavour to be more removed. In attempt to understand my

children's practices and culture, I used these ethnographic tools alongside linguistic analysis. I explain understandings of linguistics in the next section.

3.2.2 Linguistics

Prior to the onset of poststructuralist approaches to linguistic analysis endorsed by LE (see below), a structuralist approach to linguistics, which focuses on the structure, or Ferdinand de Saussure's (2011[1916]) *langue*, emphasised language as a system of signs, with clear rules and little consideration for contextual variance. Hymes (1972: 273, cited in Copland and Creese 2015: 18) challenged this, claiming such an approach to linguistic study 'idealises' speakers as machinic users of universally-applicable grammatic rules when communicating. This refocused linguists, such as Hymes, John Gumperz, Erving Goffman and Frederick Erickson, who called for an analysis of usage and meaning, in context, rather than pursuing a model of discrete, fixed codes. Hymes (1972) conceptualised 'communicative competence', emphasising speakers' need to pay attention to context and style in addition to the language they use to function successfully in spoken interactions. This assertion, that language and culture are inseparable, that 'one does not exist without the other' (Sapir 1921 cited in Blackledge and Creese 2010: 69) validates the need for LE as an approach, where culture is used to inform linguistic analysis.

Although linguistics and ethnography could be viewed as two opposing and irreconcilable disciplines, ethnography is subjective, whereas linguistics requires objective, concrete evidence; like Ben Rampton et al. (2004: 4) and Creese (2010), I find these 'contradictory pulls' to be the very advantage of LE. Ethnography forces researchers to consider culture, whilst the application of linguistic analysis brings accountability and formal, proven methods which can support or question ethnographic observations. For example, when Aiden suggests a game he and the other boys at Adam's party might play by saying, 'Guys, why don't we all play Rocket League?' (7.4), I can use

understanding from linguistic analysis to establish this as a directive which appears to pay

attention to relational practices, practices which build relationships (see 2.1.3, 2.1.8), through

questioning intonation, solidarity marker, 'guys', and inclusive pronoun, 'we'. Using ethnographic

observations and participant interviews, I was able to establish Aiden's status in the form-group as

someone regarded as 'easy-going' and a 'nice guy', and the whole form-group's preference for

strategies which considered relational goals associated with indexing normative femininity when

issuing directives. Furthermore, I could use ethnographic interviews to confirm my interpretations

that the other boys had followed Aiden's suggestion because they appreciated him 'being nice'.

Thus, tools from ethnography support my analysis of Aiden's directive choice here.

In this study, I employ a linguistic ethnographic approach to capture the practices of the form-

group (Penguin Class), as, like Hymes, I believe that their linguistic behaviour cannot be

understood or appreciated without considering their culture, relationships, social practices,

opinions and actions. It also encompasses three of the five 'commonalities' of linguistic

ethnographic research outlined by Sara Shaw et al. (2015: 5), particularly:

1. Topic-oriented ethnography;
2. Combine linguistics with ethnography;
3. Bring together different sources of data.

I now give more detail about commonalities 1 and 3, as these areas have not yet been outlined.

3.2.3 Topic-oriented Ethnography

As noted above, traditionally anthropology 'makes the strange familiar' and ethnography,

'the familiar strange'. Departing from anthropological concerns, however, ethnography is usually a

more focused approach, concentrating on the 'particular aspects of everyday life' of a social group

rather than the entirety of a people or culture (Green and Bloome 1997: 183). My study of the

practices of a form-group considers only their practices when they are together rather than when they are with their families or other friends, giving a partial account of their whole lives but a detailed account of their language and leadership. This is similar to Karin Tusting's (2015) linguistic ethnographic study which focuses on paperwork for teachers at a further education college rather than their entire remit as teachers or paperwork for all teachers in all settings, and Yang Zhang's (2023) linguistic ethnography focused on how a small group of Chinese men use talk for doing friendship rather than considering how they talk at work or to their parents.

A topic-oriented approach worked well because, as I detail in 3.4, my time with the participants was limited, requiring my research to be focused. In contrast with Lian Malai Madsen and Martha Sif Karrebœk's (2015) view that researchers should undertake long-term engagement over several years in multiple research sites, my topic-orientation to leadership, identity and gender determined my focus and allowed me to gain a deep understanding of my participants' views and practices (see 3.5 for my explanation of how leadership and gender became my focus). Although not employing the breadth of Madsen and Karrebœk, I used multiple data sources, which I explain in the next section.

3.2.4 Bringing Together Different Sources of Data

I outline in 3.4 that I use audio recordings, participant observation, fieldnotes and ethnographic-style interviews as data sources to present the fullest possible picture of Penguin Class. Shaw et al. (2015: 10) caution against hierarchising sources, and I agree that it is in their combination in which their strength lies, but I acknowledge the 'productive tensions' (ibid) that linguistic ethnographers must contemplate. For example, Rampton (2006: 32) openly states that the central data collection technique used in his linguistic ethnographic study of an inner-London secondary school is audio-recording, but he also undertook interviews and participant observations. Creese, Arvind Bhatt,

Nirmala Bhojani and Peter Martin (2008), however, initially prioritise fieldnotes in their study of a Gujarati complementary school in an English city. These studies exemplify that the researcher must choose what is most appropriate for their research and participants.

For my study, audio recordings of talk formed my starting point as the children were most keen for this, and because I thought audio-recordings would generate the most interesting data. When listening and noticing themes, I then considered my fieldnotes detailing participant observations, and used both to build interview questions (with input from the children, see 3.4.3). The interviews then provided further data which informed my analysis.

I acknowledge that, as their teacher and an adult, I could never be completely and unequivocally accepted as one of them or live as they live, but I attempted to 'lurk and soak' (Werner and Schoepfle 1989) to gather my initial data and continue to understand it, spending much time with them and taking a genuine interest in their lives. Despite every effort made to understand the world as participants understand it, however, Hymes (1996: 13) reminds us that 'there is no way to avoid the fact that the ethnographer […] is a factor in the inquiry'. This was especially pertinent for me as I was their teacher and not their equal. In the next section, I explain the steps I took in attempt to manage my positionality.

3.3 Research in an Education Setting

3.3.1 Managing the Teacher-Pupil Relationship

In order to understand their culture, to 'allow me to tell my story of someone else's experience' (Heller 2008: 250), I assumed the dual role of researcher whilst also being Penguin Class's teacher (see 3.7 for my ethical considerations regarding this). In UK primary schools, form-groups typically

have one teacher for all their subjects, except for certain specialist areas. Therefore, as their teacher, I saw the pupils every day, allowing me to develop a 'deeper understanding of the culture under study by adopting a functional role and becoming a participant' (Saville-Troike 1989: 108). However, I acknowledge that the role of a teacher is very different to the role of a pupil, and I accept my potential influence and position of power, so my 'participant' status was markedly different to the children's (see 3.7 for my ethical considerations).

I had known the participants for two years when the fieldwork commenced, so I had strong, trusting and positive relationships with them; however, this was as a teacher rather than a participant observer. After Hymes (1996) and Jenny Cheshire (1982), I made efforts to reduce the social distance between myself and them, as I felt this would make them feel more comfortable with my new 'role' as researcher. Firstly, I took an active interest in their hobbies, which is an effort I make with any form-group when I am building relationships. For Penguin Class, this included watching their favourite TV shows such as *Brooklyn 99*, developing an interest in K-pop bands, engaging with men's Premier League football, and learning to 'floss', a celebratory dance move popularised by video game, *Fortnite*. Secondly, as the data collection progressed, I began to dress more casually. Despite being a teacher, who was expected to follow the school's dress code of 'smart and professional', I started to wear jeans, Vans trainers and Adidas Originals[2] t-shirts in the hope that the children would see me as distancing myself somewhat, and, in turn, also distance me slightly, from the institution. A third factor I felt gained their acceptance as the research progressed was the lack of consequence from recordings. Some children recorded themselves swearing on the voice recorders, especially earlier in the data collection period. Seeing

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[2] Adidas and Vans are brands they wore and liked themselves.

that there was no punishment for using 'bad' or 'inappropriate' language, they seemed to grow in respect for me, and, interestingly, the swearing significantly decreased.

3.3.2 Reflexivity and My Positionality

Contemplating my positioning in relation to the children and their perception and acceptance of me is a key consideration of ethnography. As the researcher, I must also consider my personal subjectivity: who I am, the social categories I occupy for the children beyond, and including, being their teacher, and my own knowledge and perceptions about the world (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Julia Snell (2015: 230) discusses her experience of returning to Teesside, UK, the area in which she grew up, to complete a linguistic ethnographic study of 'working-class' and 'lower middle-class' schoolchildren's speech. She finds that coming from the local area and speaking with a similar dialect enables her to 'tune in' to activities, concerns and values which were important to the children, and build positive relationships with participants (ibid: 230).

Skipwith Primary is located in an affluent, middle-class area of North London, and most of the pupils come from middle-class backgrounds (this is indicated by the low percentage of children registered as 'pupil premium'; 7% in the whole school. The London schools' average was 15.7% (Local Government Association 2018)). Despite not growing up in London, I experienced a similar setting during my own schooling, so, like Snell (2015), I felt able to 'tune in' to some of their practices. This included their hobbies and interests, as well as empathising with the 'pressure' they may have felt from expectations to be high-achievers, where high grades were expected and only certain (professional) careers deemed 'acceptable'.

Unlike Snell's children, who were, like herself, mostly from white European backgrounds (Snell

2008), Penguin Class children, like all the form-groups at Skipwith Primary, were of many heritages and backgrounds (see 3.3.3.2). This included any one, or more, of British, South-East Asian, South Asian, Central Asian, Black Caribbean, Black African, Black British, white British and white European. I therefore acknowledge that, as a white British European woman with no non-white, non-European or mixed heritage, they may have perceived and positioned me as different to themselves. Though I do not wish to argue they were 'blind' to race or ethnicities, like Harness-Goodwin's (2001, 2006) schoolchildren, they did not appear to pay much attention to these as they did other areas, specifically, gender and age. In contrast with Sarah Winkler Reid's (2015) secondary school students, where ethnicity and race contribute to individuals' access to particular peer groups and resulting friendships (3.3.3.2), gender and age appeared to most significantly influence who Penguin Class children chose to spend time with both in and out of school. Same-sex friendships from the peer group were the most valued.

Because of our strong prior relationships, the children knew I had a general interest in gender and of my feminist identity (even though, as stipulated in the Teachers' Standards (Part Two), I ensured that my 'personal beliefs were never expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law'). As detailed in 3.7.2.1, when I discussed the idea of this study with the children, I had said that I was most interested in how they talk with their friends. I explained gender and age might be a focus, but did not raise the idea of leadership, as this was not yet a clear direction (see 3.7.2.1). Their knowing of my feminist standpoint as well as the possible focus on gender in the study may have affected how they perceived me and my motivations in undertaking this study. Coates (2003) comments on this effect for her; as a female researcher of men's talk, her data often showed less homophobic and sexist subject-matter than data collected by male researchers, potentially because participants were influenced by her gender (and stereotypes of normative femininity) when making their recordings.

The area of 'feminism' arose in one of the Year 6 English units of work, where the main character in Candy Gourlay's *Tall Story,* Andi, is prohibited from joining a basketball team because, despite being the best player in her school, she is a girl and the team is 'boys only' (her brother is accepted simply because he is a boy who is very tall). Penguin Class was outraged by this, and aligned with a feminist position that the team should change the rules, as, 'They can't leave Andi out if she's the best just because she's a girl!'. When *Tall Story* came up in Tilda, Bella, Fliss, Grace Alice, Lilah, Lan, Yasmin, Naomi and Amy's interviews, however, they said they were uncomfortable with the term 'feminist', perhaps associating it with misandry, and preferred something like 'equalist', as they 'did not think girls were better than boys' but that 'everyone is equal'. They therefore empathised with feminist views, even though they were not comfortable using the term. This may mean that, like Coates's men, they felt influenced by the views they knew I held, but may have also seen it as beneficial and trusted me to represent them and their views about gender comprehensively. However, I must also be aware that my own feminist standpoint could 'bias' my analyses, leading me to 'romanticise' the speech of these children (Snell 2015: 230; see also Bourdieu's (1991) issues with Labov). Like Snell (2015: 230), I have tried to temper this by subjecting my data to 'rigorous and accountable' analysis (I explain my analytic frameworks in 3.6).

I have discussed managing the teacher-pupil relationship (see 3.3.1), but, as Carolyn Jackson (2010) shows, there is more than one way of 'doing' being a teacher, and I will now reflect on how the type of teacher I was viewed as may have been an influence.

I trained to teach through the Schools Direct graduate teacher training programme in 2014-15, where I was placed in a form-group with a qualified teacher who acted as my co-teacher and mentor. This was in a Year 4 class for the autumn and summer terms, and a Year 5 class in the

spring term. One way I learned how to manage a classroom was observing my mentor and reflecting on which strategies I could adopt. The teacher of the Year 5 class in which I was placed in my second term was inspirational to me. I learned how to balance likeability and fun with fairness, while using pedagogical knowledge to help children learn. After qualifying, I subsequently became regarded as a teacher who was, like my mentor, 'fair' and 'fun' but 'strict when she needed to be' and 'one of the ones that cares about you'. Many children said they valued this as I 'didn't let some children get away with things they shouldn't, like, messing around and distracting others'. Penguin Class even said some teachers could be 'too nice' and took issue with teachers who 'wanted to be liked rather than teach'. My teaching style will inevitably have had an effect on their perception of me as I carried out this research, and may even have affected the data they submitted, for example, saying things they predicted I wanted to hear or avoiding topics they thought may have got them into trouble. As I outline in 3.7, I was very clear with them when I shared my ideas for completing this study that their talk would have no effect on their grades, and they would not be sanctioned for anything I heard when listening (see 3.3.1 for my discussion of swearing). I also think that the positive relationships we had built led them to trust me that I was not completing this project to 'catch them out' or be negative. That they commented on how frequently they forgot about the voice recorders suggests they were not making deliberate attempts to speak in a certain way for the 'benefit' of the study.

Participant observation, and involvement, is a requirement of an ethnographic approach, but the fact exists that I was, and was known as, their teacher. As suggested by Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (2007: 15–16), we 'cannot avoid having an effect on the social phenomena we study', meaning I must accept my teacher positioning as well as my teacher construction impacted the children's presentations of themselves and talk. However, coming from a similar social class background and the efforts I made to reduce social distance, as well as their appreciation of my

teaching style, should have gone some way in mediating these effects. This observer impact is an 'un-get-round-able fact' of ethnography (Geertz 1988: 144), but, as Alan Peshkin (1988: 18) reminds us, we must seek to 'manage' our subjectivity rather than letting it become 'burdensome', which I feel I did as successfully as possible by making as many considerations as I could, such as those detailed above, while being at peace with accepting the impossibility of eliminating our differences completely.

In the next section, I give further details about the participants and the research sites.

3.3.3 Research Participants and Research Sites

Penguin Class was a Year 6 class in a three-form entry community primary school, Skipwith Primary[3], in North London. It had 30 children, myself as the teacher, and a full-time teaching assistant. The children were aged between 10–11 and in their final year of primary education. On leaving, they progressed to a range of secondary schools, so this was their final year together. In line with the ethics explained in 3.7, one child did not wish to participate in the study, therefore, the participant group of 29 is smaller than the size of the form-group of 30.

3.3.3.1 The School and Classroom

Skipwith Primary is situated in a residential area, and has lots of play equipment, including a climbing frame, a rock-climbing wall and many sports facilities: a multi-use games area (MUGA), basketball court, netball court, and a generous field, big enough to accommodate multiple football pitches – a rarity in London. The playground and field are surrounded by trees, which are home to many animals, and squirrels frequently run across the playground, much to the children's delight.

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[3] In order to preserve participant anonymity, pseudonyms are used for individual names and other related information. For a discussion of name choice, see 3.7.2.2

There were 680 pupils at Skipwith Primary at the time of the study, aged between three and 11, split into 22 form-groups. Each form-group remains the same from Reception to Year 6 and retention is high, meaning pupils are often in each other's company for seven years. The area the school accepts for admission is small; in September 2017, only children who lived within 0.5 miles of the school received one of the 90 available places for Reception[4].

Penguin Classroom was located on the first floor of the school. Once a science laboratory, it was one of the school's biggest classrooms, and the many windows saturated it with natural light. There was a partitioned area at the back of the room containing an overflowing bookcase, cushions and bean bags. This area was often transformed into a topic-related role-play area, becoming a Scottish moor, a basketball coach's office and a 'den', corresponding with the curriculum area or class novel of the half-term (see pictures).

3.3.3.2 The Participants

Penguin Class had 13 boys and 17 girls. All the girls and 12 of the boys partook in the study. Table 3.1 gives more information about the children whose talk forms the subject of my analysis chapters, which I obtained from interviews.

Most of the children were born in London, where they had also grown up. Based on the UK context of social class, the majority may be considered middle-class. Most came from double-income families where their parents were professionals, such as teachers, lawyers, and actors. Most families were home-owners of properties in the sought-after local area, increasing their children's chances of acceptance at some of the highest-rated community primary and secondary

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[4] I obtained this information from an official government source but do not include a reference because it would reveal the area in which the school is located.

Penguin Class classroom: teacher view (left) and pupil view (right)

Partitioned area at the back of the classroom as 'a Scottish moor' (Macbeth – autumn term), a basketball team's 'locker room' (The Crossover – spring term), and a 'den' (SATS respite – summer term).

Name	Sex	Ethnicity	Interests	Skills	Other information
Adam	M	White British	• Football • Playing video games	• Video gaming	• Frankie's neighbour • In Forte!, school's boys-only singing group
Aiden	M	Mixed White British	• Performing arts • Video games	• Singing (selected for choir) • Acting • Video gaming	• Popular • Attends drama outside of school
Alice	F	White British	• Spending time with friends	• High academic achievement	
Amy	M	Mixed White British	• Performing arts • Sport	• High academic achievement • Dance • Singing (in choir) • Performing arts • Sport (selected for athletics, gymnastics and netball teams)	• Attends street dance outside of school
Bella	F	Mixed White British	• Visual arts • TV shows: The Great British Bake-Off • Fashion and make-up, but often related to film, e.g., how to use make-up for a black eye	• High academic achievement • Highest skilled in art	• Peer mentor
Cenk	M	White European British	• Football • Basketball • Video games	• High academic achievement	• In Forte!
Fliss	F	Mixed White British	• Spending time with friends • The world/ current affairs	• High academic achievement • Sports (selected for athletics team)	• Class captain (prefect role) • Peer mentor
Frankie	M	Mixed White and West Asian British	• Football • Video games	• Cooking • Sport (selected for cricket team)	• Popular • Class Captain (prefect role) • In Forte!

Name	Sex	Ethnicity	Interests	Strengths	Other
Grace	F	Mixed White British	• TV shows e.g., *Brooklyn 99* • Fashion Performing arts	• High academic achievement • Singing (in choir)	• Class captain • Peer mentor
Isaac	M	Black African British	• Video games • Football	• Handwriting	• Member of Forte!
Jordan	M	Not enough information	• Playing video games • Playing football	• Video gaming	• Member of Forte!
Lan	F	South-east Asian British	• Visual arts • K-Pop	• Visual arts	• Lives far from school
Leon	M	Mixed White European and White British	• Football • Video games	• High academic achievement	• School eco-councillor • In Forte! • Member of Scouts
Lilah	F	Mixed Black African and White British	• Sports • Visual Arts • Performing arts • K-Pop • YouTubers	• Sport (selected for athletics and netball teams) • Dance • Singing (in choir) • Acting	• Plays netball outside of school
Marcelo	M	White British	• Visual arts • Performing arts • Tag-rugby • Athletics • Reading	• Highest academic achiever (all subjects) • Sports (selected for athletics and tag rugby teams) • Singing (in choir) • Acting • Handwriting	• Class captain (prefect role) • Member of Scouts
Matty	M	White British	• Football • Video games	• High academic achievement • Sports (selected for football, cricket, athletics teams) • Video gaming	• Member of Forte! • Plays for a local football team outside of school
Naomi	F	Mixed Black Caribbean and White British	• Performing arts	• Acting • Dancing • Singing (in choir)	• Attends street dance outside of school

Sam	M	Mixed South Asian and White British	• Sports (rugby; cricket) • Playing video games	• High academic achievement • Sports (selected for tag-rugby, football, cricket and athletics teams) • Video gaming	• Peer mentor • Trains with professional sports teams outside of school • Member of Forte!
Seyda	F	Mixed White European British	• Performing arts • Cooking • Video games • Animals	• Singing (in choir) • Cooking	• School eco-councillor
Tilda	F	Mixed Black African and White European British	• Performing arts • YouTubers	• Dance • Singing (in choir) • Acting • Performing arts	• Popular • Attends drama outside of school
Yasmin	F	South Asian British	• Performing arts	• Singing (in choir) • High academic achievement	• Class captain

Table 3.1: Research Participants

schools in North London. As noted in 3.3.2, the children, like all form-groups at the school, were of many heritages and backgrounds. When I discussed with children where they felt they were 'from' (Winkler Reid 2015: 27), a term to which I was led by them, their answers spanned: Persian, Norwegian, Russian, Portuguese, French, Zimbabwean, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, Jewish, Turkish, Polish, Vietnamese, Cypriot, Ghanian, Welsh, Irish, Scottish, Bajan, Somali, and Israeli. 27 from the 29 said they were 'British' (the exception being two who had recently migrated from other countries). Many children also said they had 'mixed' heritage, such as Polish and Jewish. As noted in 3.3.2, I do not wish to assert that these backgrounds were meaningless for them, but share them to provide further context on the form-group and setting. It is important to note that, like Harness-Goodwin's schoolchildren (2001, 2006), they did not appear to centralise, make salient, or even acknowledge, these backgrounds in their day-to-day practices, talk and interviews; gender and age appeared more important.

The friendships were mostly well-established in Penguin Class, and Figure 3.1 shows the main

friendships. I used participant observation and interviews to ascertain the larger friendship groups marked by the circles, where I considered with whom they spent the most time while in school and at break-times, as well outside of school (though, I decided the time spent together outside of school was not always a reliable source as, like Emi in Harness-Goodwin (2006), some children were members of lots of clubs, lived far away from their friends, or had caring responsibilities; each made it more challenging to see friends). The pink lines connecting some individuals shows a particularly close friendship within and across groups, which is information I obtained from interviews alongside observations. I asked them, 'Who would you say your closest friends are, and has this changed over the years?'. Their answers usually matched the observations I had made, though one exception is that Marcelo said Frankie was a close friend, but Frankie did not reciprocate, and I had not observed a particular closeness. Children outside circles were those who wished to be part of specific groups, but had not yet found a permanent way in. These groups often influenced the data that were given to me: in the curriculum task, they were able to choose their triads, and often opted to work with friends (see 4.1, 5.3); the play-based data were games played between friends (see 6.2, 7.2).

In the next section, I explain the ways in which I have used a linguistic ethnographic research method to acquire and analyse the data in this site with these participants.

3.4 Data Collection

To build as full as possible a picture and generate my data, I used audio recordings, interviews and participant observation as my data sources. In line with current thinking outlined by Pinter (2014, 2023) about the value of children's contributions to research as children, this acknowledged and allowed them to develop their agentive capabilities to take more responsible roles in research.
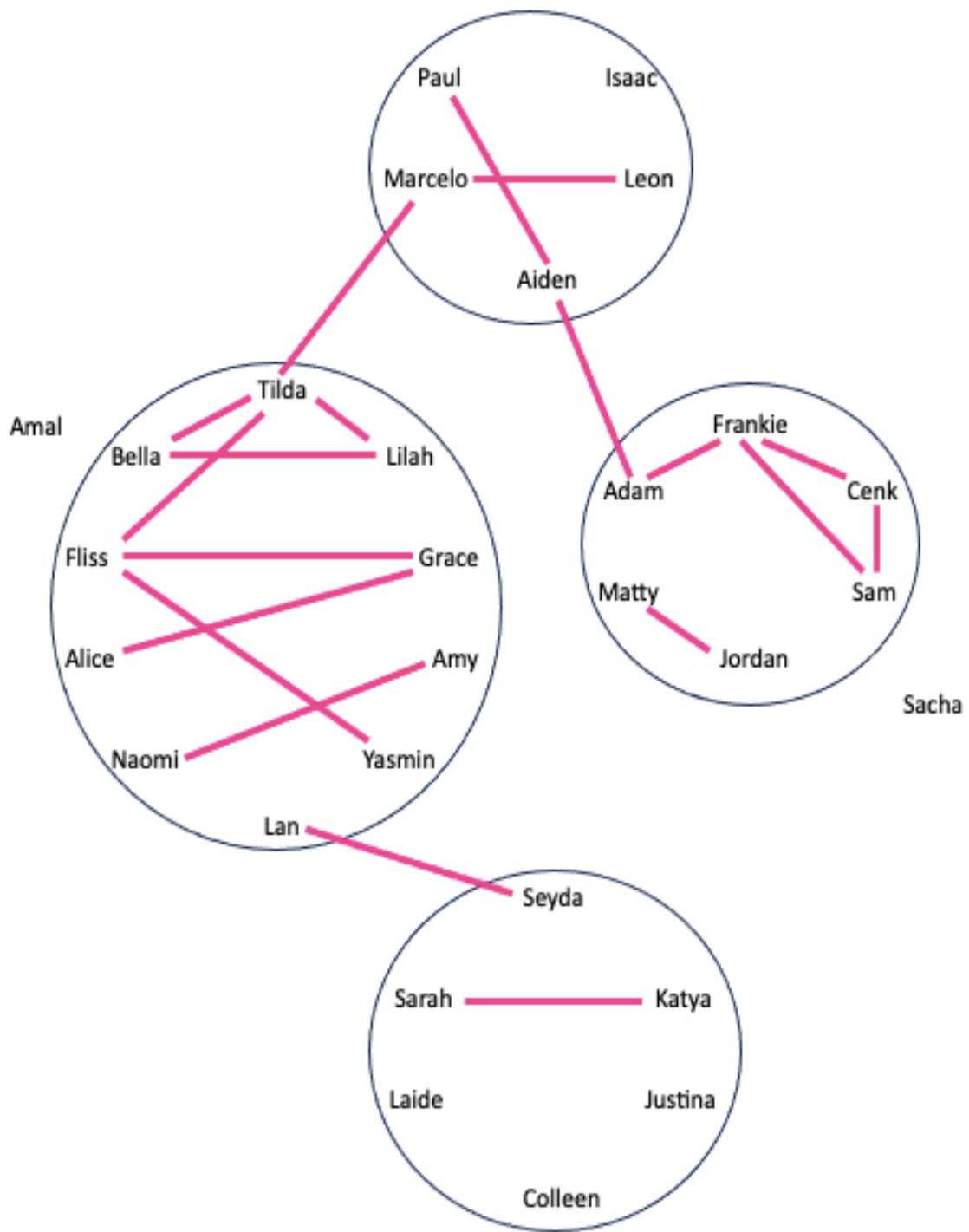
Figure 3.1 Friendships in Penguin Class

3.4.1 Audio Recordings

As this study is linguistic ethnographic, recording the participants' everyday conversations was vital for providing as much information as possible about the children's everyday lives. I could then transcribe their talk for linguistic microanalysis. Like Pichler (2009), Blackledge and Creese (2010) and Copland and Creese (2015), the participants operated the equipment themselves. I chose LEOP KINOEE-123 8GB digital recorders, as they are both easy to operate and small enough to fit in the palm of the children's hands. Selecting small devices was informed by reflecting on my own experiences of self-recording while on my Master's degree; I found that when I could see the voice recorder (VR), I felt on edge and didn't speak much, but when I moved it out of view, I became much less apprehensive, feeling able to talk more 'naturally', as it felt to me. I hoped the VRs' size meant they would appear less noticeable during recordings, and allow the children a greater opportunity to forget its presence when talking.

When the children were introduced to the idea of the study and gave their informed consent, I taught them how to use the VRs. Following Pichler (2009), I also said they could (and taught them how to) delete a section of or an entire recording, switch it off, or choose not to be recorded at any time. Despite this offer, I found that there were only a small number of occasions where the children deleted recordings.

The children were positive about the prospect of participating, and frequently took a VR, giving them agency to be involved as much or as little as they wished. When the children returned a VR to me, I transferred the recordings to my laptop, then erased each one so it could be used again. As the children became more accustomed to using the VRs, they began to use them more. In their advice on collecting interactional data for a linguistic ethnographic study, Copland and Creese (2015: 48) caution against this 'as much as possible' approach, warning of the 'huge amounts of

analytic time' that will ensue when listening and transcribing. Though they advise that researchers instead plan instead, I opted for the 'as much as possible' approach because I was already limited by time: the children would leave in under 10 months, and July 2018 would mark the end of their time as a homogenous social group.

3.4.2 Participant Observation and Fieldnotes: Finding Research Focus while Working with Children

Observation in a linguistic ethnographic study can be described as 'open ethnographic observation', where researchers 'write down what [they] see, hear, smell, feel and sense in the field (Copland and Creese 2015: 37). These observations are recorded using written or pictorial fieldnotes. Like Copland (ibid: 41), I prefer the term 'observational notes', defined as 'rough notes taken in the field' for my own observation records. At the start of my research, I approached my observations with a blank piece of paper and no specific focus attempting to write as much as possible. As the study progressed, I began to fine-tune my focus to leadership and the actions of particular (groups of) children. I described what appeared significant to them, such as when Tilda started the practice of children forming the fingers on their non-dominant hands to resemble a duck's beak while writing (see 4.2.3). This was alongside my own reflections and interpretations.

When ethnographies are completed by research teams, fieldnotes might be compared for overlaps and differences (see Creese et al. 2008). I, however, worked as the sole adult researcher when completing this study, and I acknowledge that my notes are not 'neutral'; I positioned myself in relation to what I observed. For example, another researcher may have thought the ducks were a silly childish thing and dedicated nothing more than a sentence to them. As a teacher who had taught several form-groups by that time, I had not experienced a class who created such a

practice, one engaged with by every form-group member, and which I, as the teacher, was also

invited into when they allocated me a duck. I therefore drew on my prior experiences and

knowledge to help establish areas that were interesting (Hymes 1980: 99; see also Miles and

Huberman 1994; Erickson 2004). Although I attempted to write as much as I could, there will be

aspects that I did not notice or unconsciously deemed uninteresting or irrelevant and omitted.

However, my notes were useful when revisiting talk to remember what I had noticed at the time,

'conjur[ing] up the experience again' (Copland and Creese 2015: 43).

Considering practices like the ducks, I was inspired to conduct this research as I felt I had an

unmissable opportunity to 'investigate an interesting situation or group of people' (ibid: 28), but,

at that stage, I did not yet have an exact hypothesis. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 21) note

in their discussion of the principles of ethnography, the starting point for any social research could

be a well-developed theory and hypothesis, but it is 'rare' for ethnographic research to do so,

where foci are established in the observation process. Thus, after I had collected my spontaneous

talk, I remained 'open' to the data, 'allow[ing] them to speak to me' (Copland and Creese 2015:

48). As Copland and Creese (2015) note in their interdisciplinary guide to conducting LE projects,

this enables important themes to emerge even if I had not initially identified them as such.

The area of interest that soon emerged from these recordings and my observations was leadership

in curriculum-oriented and play-oriented talk. I noticed the decisions being actioned were either

made or endorsed by particular individuals, and tried to understand why this was. Initially, I

thought four girls, Tilda, Lilah, Grace and Fliss, were the leaders in the form-group. While they

certainly showed leadership, when I listened to all of the recordings more closely, I noticed the

speakers who had acquired a particular status in the form-group (for example, high relative skill in

art or popularity through friendships) used this, combined with linguistic strategies that paid

attention to relational practices (such as maintaining good social relations; see 2.1.3), usually

being successful when making suggestions or giving directions. Relational practices have been

associated with indexing normative femininity or masculinity (2.1.3), which brought my attention,

with the help of the children in my 'conscious attempt' to portray their own experiences and

understandings, to gender (Pinter 2014: 174).

The recordings submitted to me were of single-sex talk, and when I asked the children about their

recordings in their interviews (see below), they also made gender salient, explicitly or indirectly as

I shall argue, when I asked about leadership. They said, for example, Tilda was a good leader, 'the

main girl', that Amy was a good leader and 'gets things done', but 'she can be bossy sometimes';

Marcelo was a good leader because 'he's nice' and 'everyone is friends with him; he splits his time

nicely between playing with the boys or girls so when he's in a group, especially if it's mixed,

everyone gets on really well with him, and I think that helps when he's trying to lead a group'. The

children's comments complemented my observations about children's local ethnographic

positions, such as 'funny, popular, easy-going girl' (Tilda) and 'friendly, thoughtful, growing-up boy'

(Marcelo). This, as I show in my analysis, made gender relevant because their identity work

indexed certain gender positionings which combined with their linguistic strategies to do

leadership.

Listening to the data, I agreed that Tilda, Amy and Marcelo, among others, often attempted

leadership, but noted they did not always use the strategies that had been documented in prior

studies. For example, Marcelo did not use bald imperatives like Malcolm to control the single-sex

boys' group's actions (Harness-Goodwin 1990), but his decisions were often actioned by others.

When I explored his talk in more depth, I noticed he often used mitigated strategies, strategies

more often used by girls (Harness-Goodwin 1990). This confirmed my inclination to focus on

leadership and gender, where I felt there was a connection between leadership, gender and identity construction to explore (see 3.4.2).

3.4.3 Interviews

The topics made salient in listening to the recordings informed the interviews that I conducted. Interviews are frequently used in ethnographic research to 'capture the perspective of and give a voice to the participants' (Hammersley, 2006: 9), so my interviews gave the children an opportunity to tell me about their cultural practices and perspectives, and I was able to probe them about my observations, 'creat[ing] a dialogue between researcher and researched' (Pichler, 2008: 1). This not only built our positive relationships, but enabled me to gain a fuller, ethnographically-informed understanding of my data and speakers.

Copland and Creese (2015: 37) encourage interviewers to pay attention to a range of factors, including venue and interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, where, Saville-Troike reminds us (1989: 126), interviewing children involves additional considerations. In selecting a semi-structured interview (De Fina 2020: 155, see also Edwards and Holland 2013), I considered the structure with which I felt the children would be most comfortable. I predicted they might feel discomfort or awkwardness about the very idea of an interview, but if I had labelled it a 'chat', they might have thought they were in trouble and approached the event feeling defensive. This is because 'chat' is a term that other teachers and I often used when behaviour for learning was to be addressed; we would often say something like, 'Taylor, can we have a chat?' trying to prioritise a conversation over a reprimand. Despite our best intentions for dialogue, however, children still generally inferred they a 'chat' meant they were in trouble. Therefore, to accommodate their expectations and, consequently, put them at ease, I opted for a semi-structured format and explained in detail beforehand what would happen during it.

As I discuss in 3.7, the children understood the general gist of the study when I first presented the idea to them. By the time we got to the interview stage, I was able to give more detail about leadership becoming the focus. I explained I would like to conduct some interviews with them in groups or pairs, where we could talk about what I had heard, check I was correct, and ascertain their opinions on what had been recorded by listening to them together. I had some idea of questions, but, as Alderson et al. (2005) recommend and in line with my efforts to encourage their active role in the research, I asked the participants what they felt I should ask them before conducting the interviews. They gave me a list of questions I could use, including: 'How did you become friends?', 'How do you behave differently around different people?' and 'How do you think you speak?', from which I wrote a structure to follow for my own guidance, alongside questions about my observations (see Appendix 3). For each interview, I asked the children where in school they wanted it to be held (all chose Penguin Classroom), and ensured that I was in casual dress (see 3.3.1) and smiled throughout to put them more at ease.

Saville-Troike (1989: 127) claims that a 'critical issue' in any kind of interviewing is 'developing sensitivity to signs of acceptance, discomfort, resentment or sarcasm,' and that we should read these signs to know when to terminate an interview. Two interviewees, Sam and Cenk, appeared to feel awkward during the interview, despite being with each other and having another friend present. At the time of the interviews, I thought I might be exploring the children's use of slang, as I noticed some boys, particularly Sam and Cenk, using slang terms when I listened to their recordings. I therefore asked them some questions based on their recordings, where I enquired about their usage of a sexually-charged euphemism. This was challenging for me, as I was asking as the researcher not the teacher (see 3.7.1), and I did not want them to feel pressured to answer, or interpret my questions as demands rather than curiosities. I received only 'I don't know' from

them, and Sam in particular seemed to find making eye contact tricky. Sensing their discomfort, I opted to terminate the interview early.

Interviews are a valuable resource in this linguistic ethnographic study as they provide an 'alternate perspective to that recorded by the researcher […] and support the interpretation of naturally-occurring data' (Copland and Creese 2015: 30). I used them to understand and gain insight into the participants' lives, for clarification, and to further build relationships. I was also able to play back sections of recordings to ask for their interpretations. For example, in Tilda's interview, I played back some examples of curriculum-oriented talk to ask them who they felt was leading based on what they could hear. They enjoyed hearing themselves and being able to read along with the transcript I had made, commenting, 'Oh this is so cool!'. I am therefore able to share children's 'valuable insights' about 'important matters' (Pinter 2023: 3), using their views to offer an additional angle.

In the next section, I give an overview of all the data I collected, proceeding to explain my analytic frameworks.

3.5 Data

For this study, I used audio recordings of spontaneous talk, interviews, participant observations and fieldnotes. The children submitted over 80 hours of audio data. These included recordings made at school from the classroom and during break, in their four- or five-bed dormitories on our Year 6 week-long residential trip, and when they spent time together at their homes. I used my continuous process of transcribing and working through the data to decide my focus (see 3.4), and then used the interviews and participant observation to choose the recordings on which to focus

for my analysis. The recordings of talk I selected for analysis are detailed in Table 3.2, and the

interviews in Table 3.3.

Participants	Type of Talk	Venue	Time
Tilda, Bella, Fliss, Grace, Lilah, Alice, Amy, Yasmin, Lan, Naomi	Play-oriented (*Who's Most Likely To?* game)	Partitioned area at back of classroom	59 minutes
Adam, Aiden, Frankie, Isaac, Matty	Play-oriented (*Rocket League* video game)	Adam's house	90 minutes
Tilda, Bella, Lilah	Curriculum-oriented	Classroom	69 minutes
Amy, Seyda, Lan	Curriculum-oriented	Classroom	75 minutes
Fliss, Grace, Alice	Curriculum-oriented	Classroom	25 minutes
Marcelo, Leon, Adam	Curriculum-oriented	Classroom	89 minutes
Frankie, Sam, Jordan, Cenk	Curriculum-oriented	Classroom	50 minutes

Table 3.2: Overview of spontaneous talk data analysed

Participants	Type of Talk	Venue	Time
Bella, Grace	Interview	Partitioned area at back of classroom	32 minutes
Fliss, Yasmin	Interview	Partitioned area at back of classroom	29 minutes
Aiden, Adam, Matty, Isaac, Paul	Interview	Partitioned area at back of classroom	43 minutes
Cenk, Frankie, Leon, Marcelo	Interview	Partitioned area at back of classroom	40 minutes
Tilda, Bella, Fliss, Grace, Lilah, Alice, Amy, Yasmin, Lan, Naomi	Interview	Partitioned area at back of classroom	41 minutes
Sam, Isaac, Cenk	Interview	Partitioned area at back of classroom	18 minutes

Table 3.3 Interviews

Like Maybin (2006), I aimed to complete the interviews in small, self-selected groups, which I was largely able to do. The exception is that the interview with Tilda and her friends is larger than I would have chosen. This is because several of the participants had been absent either because of illness or required attendance at Year 7 transition days when the interviews took place in the final weeks of the summer term. It was only on the penultimate day of the year that all of them were present; therefore, understanding how important the interview was and knowing I would not have another chance to complete it, I opted to interview them, with their encouragement, as a group of 10. Children's absence is also the reason that I was unable to complete more interviews.

I have thus far detailed the methods deployed to gather both linguistic and ethnographic data: self-recorded conversations, interviews, participant observation and fieldnotes. For analysis, my linguistic ethnographic approach is combined with tools from Interactional Sociolinguistic (IS) and discourse-analytic approaches, which I detail in the next section.

3.6 Analytic Frameworks

When I listened to the audio, letting it 'speak' to me (Copland and Creese 2015: 48), I found hearing the children's leadership when making decisions to be 'rich points' for exploration (Jewitt 2008, see also Agar 2008). I then made use of 'sensitising concepts' (Shaw 2015, see also Blumer 1954; Rampton et al. 2004). As recommended by Snell and Adam Lefstein (2012: 11) in their overview of interpretative and representational dilemmas in linguistic ethnographic analysis, sensitising concepts allowed my data to 'guide [me] in looking in a particular direction' in my choice of analytic tools for analysis, opting for tools from IS. This approach is supported by Rampton et al. (2004), Copland and Creese (2015) and Snell et al. (2015), who detail the varied analytic frameworks and concepts researchers might use when completing a linguistic

ethnographic study, championing the freedom afforded to researchers to select the tools most appropriate for their data and research goals (see 3.6).

After deciding upon the research goal of finding out how the children show leadership when making decisions as they interact in groups in work- or play-oriented activities, I compared examples of decision-making talk within and between groups. I considered directives, first exploring the linguistic strategies used by speakers and the responses of hearers. I assessed which suggestions were successful by establishing what was actioned; for example, when the girls finally settle on playing a verbal game, *Who's Most Likely To?* (see 6.4), I considered who suggests this, and how. Discovering some differences in success related to linguistic strategy between groups (for example, some used question directives, 'Shall we play Rocket League?' while others opted for bald imperatives, 'Put it down!'), I examined the participants more closely. I found success in having decisions actioned to be related not only to linguistic strategy, but also to speakers' identities as whole speaking subjects (Hymes 1972). For example, when Tilda makes suggestions, it appears that her decisions are actioned because of her linguistic strategies paying attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity. However, she also uses language and local social practices to construct a 'fun' and 'playful' femininity. I knew from ethnographic observations and interviews that she was popular in the form-group, and this may have added weight to her suggestions. I therefore contemplated their identity constructions as I refined my research question to ask, 'Who does leadership in this group of children, why are they successful, and how do they achieve this?'

When I asked the children, they said they preferred it when a leader was 'nice', 'not bossy' and someone 'that everyone in the group likes'. They also said they appreciated being asked to do things 'nicely', by saying, 'What do you think about this?' rather than, 'Do this now!', and certain

people, such as Marcelo and Tilda, were 'good' at this. Through their comments about 'niceness' and 'likeability', I was drawn to explore the relationship between leadership and local identities the children had constructed. I noticed that decision-making success was usually enabled by a speaker utilising linguistic strategies that consider relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity (or, to use their words, 'being nice'), but I also began to notice that status also often stood as an unspoken reason for a speaker's suggestions being accepted or actioned. For example, Marcelo holds a higher relative skills-based status in Part I; his peers know of his high skill in art, and it stands as proxy for why his decisions should be actioned (see 5.4.1). They also appear to be actioned because of his attention to linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity when he makes suggestions.

Traditionally, the use of the relational strategies I observed in Penguin Class has been associated with indexing normative femininity, even though they are not used statically and exclusively by women (2.1.3, see also Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]; Cameron and Shaw 2016). I asked the children their opinions on what made leadership successful, and they said they felt gender was 'definitely important', confirming my inclination to explore if and how gender, particularly the children's gender identities, contributed to success in decision-making. For example, Aiden favours relational strategies for suggesting ideas (e.g., 'Guys, why don't we all play Rocket League?', see 7.4) while simultaneously constructing an 'easy-going', 'nice guy' masculinity in his talk. I therefore consider ethnographic observations to arrive at more holistic interpretations to see how identity, and particularly gender identities, connect with language and leadership.

The relevance of gender was also evident because all data submitted after groups had been selected were always single-sex. When I questioned this, they said they 'preferred working with girls/boys' or they 'worked better with friends'. Using ethnography and their 'valuable insights'

about 'important matters' (Pinter 2023: 3), I can therefore discuss gender with their input on meaning for them, as well as using tools from linguistics to explore the interaction of language, gender and leadership.

In the next section, I explain how I use IS as my main analytic method alongside ethnography. I give an overview of how analysts use tools from discourse analysis to identify stance and style in 2.1.6, so, in these sections, I exemplify how I use IS. Because of my thesis's focus on leadership, I illustrate using examples of them suggesting decisions.

3.6.1 Interactional Sociolinguistics

IS is an approach to discourse which analyses how speakers both interpret and create situated meaning in their talk (Schiffrin 1994: 133, see also Jaspers 2014; Copland and Creese 2015: 19). IS pioneer, John Gumperz (1982: 131), proposes 'contextualisation cues', cues which act like clues used by speakers to indicate the intended meaning of an utterance, 'construct the contextual ground for situated interpretation'. As Jürgen Jaspers (2014: 135) outlines in his overview of IS and discourse analysis, contextualisation cues can flag context explicitly and directly, e.g., 'I'm joking,' (Tilda, 6.3.1) or implicitly and indirectly. It is the latter to which IS has paid most attention, considering speakers' signalling devices which provide material for hearers to make suitable inferences about intended meaning, for example, prosodic vocal resources including intonation, and non-vocal channels such as gaze, gesture and objects. If a speaker laughs while making what appears a serious comment, the laughter provides a 'cue' that their comment might be intended as a joke or sarcasm. In some contexts, however, laughter can be used to intimidate or belittle. Understanding the true meaning is established effectively by supplementary ethnographic knowledge, where researchers can determine the meaning for speakers, in their context, as they see it.

To illustrate how I use IS within a linguistic ethnographic approach, I use an example from 4.2.1, where the girls are choosing which colour to paint a section of their door-frame design. I focus on Bella's turn, 'We could do it orange' (stave 6):

Extract from Orange Paint
```
5
Lilah:      shall I do the bottom bit as well to make it look as


6
Tilda:                                        ^ooh:^ no:\
Bella:          yeah (.) ooh we could do it orange/{SMILING}
Lilah:      bright/                                          we


7
Tilda:      {SMILING/LAUGHING}
Bella:      LAUGHING}
Lilah:      could what the (.) edges/
```

Here, Lilah makes a suggestion for their design, 'Shall I do the bottom bit as well to make it look as bright?' (stave 6–7), using an imbedded imperative (Ervin-Tripp 1976: 33, see 2.1.3) with, like Harness-Goodwin's (1990) girls, all imposition placed on herself. Bella agrees, then appears to be using a 'modal directive' (Ervin-Tripp 1976: 33) about the colour of paint they should use, 'We could do it orange?' (stave 7). Tilda disagrees with Bella, saying, 'Ooh, no' (stave 7), suggesting she also interprets Bella's utterance as a proposal but rejects it. Crucially, however, Bella's smiling cues that this is not intended to be serious. Using ethnographic knowledge, I can relay that Tilda and Bella are best friends, and through this closeness, Bella knows Tilda dislikes the colour orange. I therefore conclude Bella's smiling is a contextualisation cue that this is a tease rather than a genuine suggestion, and that Tilda's laughter shows she has inferred the cue as such. Their laughing together confirms their mutual understanding of this sequence's teasing frame (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997; see also Goffman 1974), and the cues Bella provides 'tell' Tilda how to interpret her utterance. Lilah, however, misses the cue, and responds seriously, 'We could, what, the edges?' (stave 6–7). This shows that Bella's local ethnographic position as a highly-skilled, cool,

pro-school girl causes Lilah to discursively position her as a leader, and takes steps to action her proposal, interpreting it as a decision to be actioned.

Schiffrin (1994: 103; see also Tannen 1984 on metamessage) also notes that contextualisation cues can serve as framing devices. Erving Goffman's (1984) 'frames' indicate how utterances should be interpreted; for example, joking or serious. Tilda and Bella's teasing shifts the talk from a serious to a playful frame, where utterances should not be taken too seriously. Their teasing can also be used to examine their discursive positionings and resulting identity constructions. In the turns pre-stave 6, Lilah tries to incite Tilda and Bella to join her in doing the work, but they instead resist and engage in the teasing routine, positioning them as childly and Lilah as grown-up. Tilda and Bella's unison in resisting the work and opting to engage in teasing also indicates their close friendship, confirmed by my ethnographic observations. The girls' talk in this short extract thus show how IS can be combined with LE to understand speakers' talk and actions.

Like Bucholtz's (2009) focus on slang terms in her study of teenage Mexican boys' friendship talk, I concentrate on one analytic area in my attention to decision-making. Because my research question asks, 'What sort of person is able to lead, how, and why?', I consider the whole speaking subject, not just the directives they use, to establish how they lead. As I explain in 2.1.4.3, I consider the indexicality of particular ways of speaking. Bucholtz uses Ochs's (1992) direct and indirect indexical relations between linguistic form and gender to reject the direct mapping between forms, meaning and social categories, arguing that researchers need a tacit understanding of the pragmatic work of language alongside social identities of the speakers, hearers and referents (Bucholtz 2009: 146–147). I therefore consider speakers' whole linguistic repertoires to ascertain their style and, alongside considerations of their local social practices and related statuses, the gender constructions they index.

In my analysis chapters, I use contextualisation cues and frame analysis from IS to explore the children's talk, where I examine closely the linguistic resources utilised as they speak, such as laughter, imperatives, inclusive pronouns and tag-questions. I consider which discursive positionings use of these resources indicates. For example, Bella's laughter positions her as easy-going and fun, but Lilah's resistance positions her as more serious. I then link these to their local gender identity constructions and ethnographic positions, such as Tilda's 'popular, funny girl' and Lilah's 'cool, grown-up' girl identities, which are established by their invocation in other contexts. I then consider how these identity constructions work with or against their ability to be leaders. As my use of examples to illustrate my use of IS shows, I consider how speakers communicate using more than just words in their doing of identity and leadership. In the next section, I discuss how I use their ties with indexicality to explore gender constructions.

3.6.2 Approaching the Analysis of Indexicality

I outline theoretical understandings of indexicality in 2.1.4.3. In this section, I explain how I approach the analysis of indexicality using tools from IS to show how speakers position themselves in discourse (see 2.1.6) and construct their local gender identities and ethnographic positions. To exemplify this, I use an extract from 5.4.2:

Extract from Breadcrumbs
```
5
Frankie:   if we want them to be like bread/crumbs\ (.) shall I

6
Frankie:   do like (-) [hands/
Sam:                   [oh my God (.) I want a a a lanyard/ in the

7
Sam:       hand\
```

Here, Sam makes a decision of including hands in his group's doorframe, 'Oh my God – I want a a a lanyard in the hand' (stave 6–7). To find indexical links, I notice the linguistic strategies of an

expletive, a declarative acting as a directive, and no justification but his whims. I notice Sam's strategies are similar to Malcolm's (Harness-Goodwin 1990), and appear to indirectly index 'toughness'; he does not pay attention to others' wishes, he swears, and his falling intonation provides a contextualisation cue for his seriousness and authoritativeness (Jaspers 2014: 87). Noticing similar conduct in other extracts and using ethnographic knowledge of his frequent adoption of a rebellious stance towards school indicates his investment in these linguistic and social practices. These combine over time as his 'personal style' (Kiesling 2002, see 2.1.5) and contribute to his local ethnographic position as a 'tough boy'.

As Jaspers (2014: 87) notes, these linguistic resources are not 'free-floating'; Jaspers's imagined female CEO undertakes interactive work to index the 'suitable context in which to interpret her words', including 'falling intonation when issuing directives' and 'a hard gaze' to cue seriousness. However, because she is a woman, they may be interpreted negatively by her staff as dominant views 'picture' women as submissive and insecure. They might therefore expect contextualisation cues such as rising intonation and smiling which often cue tentativeness and friendliness, and indirectly index normative femininity. This example demonstrates how links might be made between the local practices with more global expectations about particular speakers. I can interpret Sam's style as 'tough' because of global discourses surrounding toughness and masculinity.

Some strategies are similar to those of Lawson's (2013) secondary-school-aged boys in Glasgow, Scotland. Lawson notes the linguistic and discursive resources speakers use to construct tough masculinities in their stances. One boy, Victor, who is not traditionally 'tough', shows a modified toughness through his stance towards violence; he withstands, rather than inflicts it, but still regards violence important (see 2.2.3). As Lawson shows toughness is a social practice associated

with indirectly indexing normative masculinity, Sam's language indirectly indexes his gender construction of a tough masculinity. However, his directive is not actioned, and barely acknowledged. Tough constructions and the use of linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity did not succeed in this Group or in the form-group more generally.

I therefore argue that using IS supplemented by ethnographic observations illuminates speakers' local identity constructions. I have shown with this example that, with knowledge of their co-constructed CofP, Sam's leadership attempt was unsuccessful.

As noted earlier, because my speakers are, like Sam, children, I have made several deeply-considered ethical decisions. I detail these considerations in the next section.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

I secured ethical approval from the Department of English and Creative Writing's (then called English and Comparative Literature) Research Ethics Committee at Goldsmiths, University of London, on 19[th]September 2017, for which I used guidance from The British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) *Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics*. I already held a valid DBS check. In this section, and in line with the 2016 guidance (the version I used to complete my Ethical, Risk and Safety Approval form), and 2021 guidance, I discuss the ethical considerations I made regarding my research, relationships with and responsibilities to the participants.

3.7.1 Research Relationships

Because my study involves the participation of children (aged 10–11) rather than adults, I thoroughly considered all ethical decisions when undertaking fieldwork and writing up my

findings. Furthermore, while my employment was beneficial for allowing the study even to take place (see Troman 1996 for a discussion of the obstacles surrounding gaining access to schools), further ethical decisions had to be considered as I was not an 'outsider' who the children might view as a 'friend' (Snell 2008: 44, though I do take issue with the idea of children regarding adults as friends), but a teacher who held a 'powerful' role in the institution. I found it helpful to see myself as wearing two interchangeable 'hats' throughout, and being clear with myself, and the children, when I was wearing my 'teacher hat' and when I was wearing my 'researcher hat'. For example, when I was preparing new classroom seating plans each half-term (a frequency I felt worked best for this form-group, see Clarke 2008), I could have taken advantage of the power afforded to me through my job title to purposefully seat certain children together in the hope it might generate data which would be useful for my study (for example, seeing who would emerge as a leader if Sam, Tilda, Marcelo and Amy were together). However, I reminded myself of the high ethical standards to which I hold myself, and made decisions such as this wearing my 'teacher hat', contemplating which children would be best grouped for their academic learning and enjoyment of school. In turn, as noted in 3.4, when I heard swearing on the recordings, I wore my 'researcher hat' and did not reprimand the children for breaking a school rule. I have also considered these two 'hats' in my write-up, contemplating whether I had learned certain information as teacher or researcher; for example, when Jordan and Frankie came to me for support with a personal matter (see 5.3), this was as their teacher, so I do not include any details. At times this distinction was challenging, but, as is also the case in my teaching practice, I was always governed by what I believed best for the children when making any decisions (see also Scheper-Hughes 2000; Murphy and Dingwall 2001).

3.7.2 Responsibilities to Informants

3.7.2.1 Informed Consent

While the children's interests were always my primary concern, I was hopeful they would want to partake in the study. In attempt to encourage voluntary participation rather than children feeling 'undue pressure' (BAAL 2021: 10), I dedicated time to discussing my research idea with Penguin Class (a discussion we revisited over the year), letting them know that they did not have to partake if they did not want to, and they could opt out at any time. I told them that my reason for conducting the research was because I was interested in the way they speak when they are with their friends, and that I would like them to record themselves talking with their friends in the form-group. I said that I would provide VRs for them to use, which would be laid out on the side every day, and they could take one and use it whenever they wanted; they would not need to request permission, and I would not ask, let alone tell, them to record themselves. I also explained that I would never record them without their knowledge, it would always be on their own terms.[5]

I emphasised that their participation (or lack thereof) would not impact any grades or parent feedback. However, I was clear that, in line with the school's safeguarding policy, if they recorded anything that made me concerned for their safety or the safety of someone close to them, I would need to speak to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL), Ms Emery-West (like the children, all staff names are pseudonyms; see 3.7.2.2). I said that I would speak to them before and after I went to Ms Emery-West, and they would be kept informed throughout.

On the morning of 22 September, 2017, I held a meeting with the children's parents in the school's

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[5] A challenge I encountered here was a recording where four boys realise a VR is on, but all claim not to have been the person who pressed 'record' (as the researcher, I did not see who took it or switched it on). However, as they talk, they decide to keep recording themselves, and did not choose to delete any of their recording.

'meeting room' to describe my PhD research idea, explaining that having enjoyed teaching their children two years prior and listening to them talk, I felt they were presenting me with an unmissable opportunity to explore how they talk to one another at school and what this shows about them. I was honest and said I did not yet know what the exact focus would be, but that I was interested in how the children talk with their friends and classmates in school contexts and that I thought gender and age might be a focus. I told them that if a child said something about which I was concerned, then I would inform the DSL, but no-one else would be permitted to hear the audio and only transcriptions would be presented in my thesis. I handed out consent forms and information sheets (see Appendix 2). Most signed and returned them immediately, and some wished to take them away to consider independently.

I then met with the children immediately after, in the classroom, without parents present. At that stage, the children did not know if their parents had agreed, meaning they were less likely to be influenced by thinking it was something their parents wanted them to do (see Morrow 1999, 2009; Hill and Morton 2003; Hill 2005). I explained to them how much I enjoyed teaching them, and that I had become interested in how they talk from overhearing them in class and at break-times. I said that I would like to be able to analyse it for a PhD, and this would involve them recording themselves talking. I explained that I did not know the exact focus but that it might be an area, such as accents or voices, that show other people 'who we are'. Most had never heard of the subject of linguistics, so, at first, some children thought I meant I would like them to record monologues explaining their language in a YouTube-style presentation, but I was able to use these misconceptions to clarify what would actually be involved. I also emphasised that there was no expectation for them to take part; it was entirely their choice.

All the parents and all but one child consented to participating. Although it was a shame not to have that child's involvement, it demonstrated to me that they felt comfortable saying no to me as both an adult and a teacher, reducing concerns surrounding compulsion based on my status. The consent forms I provided contained a summary of the research I planned to complete, what their involvement would be, and statements they had to sign to say they agreed with such as 'I understand that I am doing this voluntarily' and 'Ms Cheetham has explained this project to me and answered my questions'. I advised the children, whose form was written in child-friendly language to aid understanding (see Appendix 1), to take the form home over the weekend, think about it, and to return it the following week if they wished to participate. I explained that I would anonymise everything about them that I could, which I discuss in the next section.

3.7.2.2 Anonymity

One step I took to protect anonymity was obscuring personal details about the children because I want to protect their identities as far as possible. For example, Lan and Lilah like K-Pop, but their favourite band is not EXO, and Frankie is a football fan, but does not support Liverpool. Another way was selecting pseudonyms for all children, parents, siblings, peers (in other form-groups) and teachers. Like Hall (2011[2009]: 399), I tried to convey the 'spirit' of the children's actual names, with particular attention to gender and linguistic origin. To illustrate this, I will give an example of the decisions I would make about my partner's name, Martyn, had a participant also had this name. Martyn is usually spelt 'Martin' in England. 'Martyn' was chosen by his parents to reflect his Welsh heritage, but it is a name familiar to non-Welsh speakers. Thus, if I were to choose a pseudonym, I would choose a name such as Alyn or Rhys as they are also Welsh-origin names for which there is a non-Welsh equivalent (Alan; Reece). Opting for a name such as Geraint or Hywel would not be in the spirit of 'Martyn', as there is not a non-Welsh equivalent and might go against his parents' intentions. However, choosing a Welsh-root name such as Gavin risks not appearing

'Welsh enough', also going against his parents' wishes. Thus, I endeavoured to select names in line with parents' intentions, which were often related to culture or family backgrounds. The only exception to this was 'Tilda' where I could not find a pseudonym that adequately reflected the spirit of her real name. I took great care to ensure the names I selected were not names of anyone they were related to, but any mistakes I have made with this are unintentional. The only name not anonymised is my own.

3.7.2.3 Objectives of the Study

As is the nature of completing a linguistic ethnographic project, I was unable to provide the clarity I would now be able to when I outlined the project to the parents and children. Having let my data 'speak' to me (Copland and Creese 2015: 48), leadership and identity emerged as my focus (see 3.4.2). Because I scheduled interviews for after I had listened to all the recordings, I was able to explain to the children that I had become interested in these areas based on what I had heard. They seemed intrigued by this, and were able to share their opinions with me before and after I played recordings to them. As explained in 3.4, I used their reflections and ethnographic information to support my analysis. Thus, I do not believe they would react negatively to the findings in my study. If I have argued that a child has presented themselves negatively, I hope to have mediated this by explaining this is just one situation and context and it does not mean they are like this all the time, as well as providing positive examples.

3.8 Conclusion

My many ethical considerations percolated my thinking throughout writing this thesis, and ethics were and are prioritised in both my data collection and proceeding analysis. As noted above, this meant that, when making methodological decisions, I always prioritised the child's best interests.

However, I have discussed the ways in which they were actively involved in the research because they decided when and what to record, suggested interview questions (which I included), and partook in interviews to share their opinions and views. This enabled them to support and further focus my initial observations, sharing their 'valuable insights' (Pinter 2023: 3) about matters important to them, which was the relationship between language, leadership and gender.

This section has outlined my linguistic ethnographic approach, detailing how I utilise ethnographic knowledge alongside 'rigorous and accountable' linguistic analysis (Snell 2015: 230) to present the children as 'whole' speaking subjects (Hymes 1972) in order to understand how the children's leadership relates to their identity construction in their curriculum- and play-oriented talk. It has introduced the research sites and participants, and made clear my reflections on my positionality, especially the power imbalance between myself and my participants. I now progress to sharing the analysis of my data, beginning with leadership in school-based, curriculum-oriented talk.

Part I: Curriculum-oriented Talk

I.i Introduction to Part I

The two chapters in this part explore leadership in a curriculum-oriented context. I examine the talk of three triads of girls and two triads of boys simultaneously engaged in the same curriculum activity, designing and creating a doorframe from cardboard to display at the entrance to the classroom. I explain the task further in Section I.iii, and share information about the groups in 4.1 and 5.3. These chapters offer a comparison between the children's leadership in a less formal, play context (Part II) and in this curriculum-based learning context. As I explain in I.ii, other studies in similar school-based settings consider adolescents', rather than pre-adolescents', language and leadership in teacher-selected groups (Baxter 2006a; Davies 2011[2003], see 2.1.9), and studies of similar age groups consider children's friendship and play-based talk in playground or out-of-school contexts (Harness-Goodwin 1990, 2001, 2006; Coates 2013[1999], see 2.1.10). My analysis in this chapter therefore presents an intriguing insight into pre-adolescent children's leadership in self-selected single-sex groups as they work together towards the achievement of a curriculum objective in a school-based, learning context.

I analyse episodes of decision-making talk as 'rich points' (Agar 2008; Jewitt 2008, see 3.6) for observing leadership. I consider how the children make decisions about their doorframe designs in order to progress through the task, where whichever child's decisions are agreed to or actioned often shows successful leadership. I explore how this is achieved by contemplating their choice of linguistic strategy and how it is responded to by others. These chapters therefore pay close attention to speakers' directives, 'utterance[s] designed to get another to do something' (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 65, see 2.1.3), considering which are selected, accepted, or rejected. The success or otherwise of directives also illuminates the children's groups' 'local social order', 'a form of

rank[ing]' where individuals position themselves in relation to each other (Harness-Goodwin 2006: 3, see 2.1.7). Thus, leadership is further evidenced by establishing who is positioned above or below others.

In this task-oriented talk, using directives provides opportunities for speakers to balance 'relational' practices, practices 'concentrat[ing] on fostering relationships' (Holmes 2009: 189) and 'creating team' (Fletcher 1999), with 'transactional' practices, 'focus[ed] on the task to be achieved [or] the problem to be solved' (Dwyer 1993: 572). This Part's context provides a particularly unique opportunity to observe this: the work needs to be done, but, because they had selected their groups and opted to work with friends (see 4.1, 5.3), relationships must also be maintained. As noted in 2.1.3 and 2.1.8, Penguin Class had co-constructed a normatively 'feminine' CofP (Fletcher 1999; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Holmes and Marra 2004; Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]), where directive strategies associated with indexing normative femininity are preferred. The children mostly share this preference (see 4.2.2 for an exception), however, as I use linguistic ethnography to view each child as a 'whole' speaker (Hymes 1972, see 3.2), I go beyond examining only the use of particular strategies. Like Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) study of 'nerd' girls, I consider how their identity constructions, built through interactional roles, local ethnographic positions, local social practices and stance-taking support or limit leadership, especially their constructions as 'particular *kinds*' of girls and boys (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original). However, my children do not attempt officially 'labelled' group identity constructions such as 'jocks', 'burnouts' or 'nerds' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992, 1995; Eckert 2000; Bucholtz 1996, 2009[1999]), or 'neds' and 'schoolies' (Lawson 2009). Rather, like Pichler's (2009) cool and socially aware, tough and respectable, and sheltered but independent girls, I consider more local constructions of speakers' subject positions. This information is detailed in Tables 4.1 and 5.1. Many of my findings in this Part match the children's constructions in Part II; for example, Tilda

frequently invokes a play frame, making visible how her stance and style contribute to her local

ethnographic position as a popular and funny girl. 'Popular, funny girl' is her 'local,

ethnographically specific cultural position' in the form-group (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 592).

However, also important in these chapters, and differentiating them from Chapter 6 and 7, are the

children's constructions as particular kinds of learner. Most, though not all, of the children are pro-

school; some actively so, while with others it is implied. To establish this, I consider the stances

they take, 'the relationships that a speaker is attempting to indicate to other people in an

interaction – the interactants – and to the content and objects being constructed within their talk'

(Kiesling 2022: 410; see 2.1.5), towards the project.

I find that for understanding how the groups make decisions in this Part, it is also important to

consider speakers' statuses, built through local social practices (see 2.1.4). For example, in Groups

1 and 4, Bella's and Marcelo's decisions are often actioned because they hold the status of 'highly

skilled artist'; they each have the highest relative skill in art in their groups, and Bella is the

highest-skilled artist in all of Penguin Class (see I.ii, 4.2.1). This was built through her enjoyment of

arts-based activities outside of school, her parents' careers, her own interests, and her effort and

investment in the subject at school. However, like in Chapter 6, she can also use her friendship

with Tilda to gain support for her ideas. Similar to McRae's (2009) managers, Bella and Marcelo

never explicitly state that their ideas should be followed, nor do they assert their higher relative

skill, but, because of Penguin Class's shared history, their teammates know of it (2.1.7). It

therefore stands as proxy for their ideas being accepted; they accept that, if the highest-skilled

artist is suggesting ideas for an art-based project, they are likely to yield the best results. In Groups

2, 3 and 5, however, different statuses are relied upon and stand as proxy, which I show in my

analysis.

In these chapters, I therefore explore how the children's local social practices and statuses, as well as how their stances towards the project and each other, contribute to their identity constructions. I explore how these constructions facilitate leadership. In the next section, I outline previous, similar studies of task-oriented talk offering more detail than Chapter 2 to better place my analysis in the field.

I.ii Children and Young People's Task-oriented Talk

Baxter's (2006a) study of single-sex groups undertaking an English speaking and listening assessment shows how speakers complete a task alongside considerations of interpersonal relationships. Her pupils' groups are also self-selected, but the group size is bigger (eight pupils), and the speakers are older (aged 14–15). Like my groups, their objective and success criteria are clear (see I.iii), and pupils are not assigned any particular roles, such as 'chair' or 'note-taker', so they must self-manage to complete the task within the 30-minute time limit.

Baxter shows her girls find it challenging to separate the work from their interpersonal relationships; in their task, finalising a ranking of the importance of objects for surviving a shipwreck, the girls appear to use their out-of-class friendships as reasons to agree or disagree with speakers and many of the girls support one 'voluble' speaker, Sophie's, ideas (ibid: 165). Despite Sophie's tendency to forego any attention to relational practices, shown discursively by overlapping and interrupting to express disagreement, the other girls show their support through explicit agreement and supportive laughter. Baxter notes this appears to be because of Sophie's peer-group popularity rather than the value of the points she is making, arguing that her dominant position in a discourse of peer approval allows her to gain others' support. In the boys' group, Baxter again shows the influence of out-of-class relationships on leadership attempts. One boy, Charlie, assumes a leadership role for his group engaged in the same 'shipwrecked' task. Baxter

shows this is both permitted and limited by his out-of-class friendships, particularly his best friend, Tom. Tom supports Charlie by actively agreeing with him and ensuring others are quiet when he asks questions such as, 'Right, you go – say why you thought the first aid kit', to move their learning forward (ibid: 171, 175). However, Tom also 'proscribes the limits' of Charlie's leadership by disengaging from the task through bantering with another boy during their decision-making, and making Charlie the butt of some light, subversive humour to draw the talk to a close at the end (ibid: 175). Tom's friendship is therefore both empowering and limiting for Charlie, showing how personal relationships, particularly friendships, impact leadership.

Though I would make similar observations and argue that Sophie and Charlie's local statuses as popular form-group members stand as proxy for why their ideas are accepted, how this status is acquired is not explored by Baxter. In these chapters I therefore consider the social practices in which the children engage which support local ethnographic positions such as 'popular', and how this might be used as status for enabling leadership. I also find that statuses other than popularity stand as proxy to enable leadership, encouraging an understanding of 'whole' speakers in this ethnographic context.

Another study of a similar context is Davies's (2011[2003]) observation of a secondary school English lesson. Like my study, single-sex small groups respond to the same task, but my data vary not only in speaker age (her pupils are 14 years old), but also in group composition and academic subject. Firstly, Davies's tetrads are part-selected by the teacher by joining two self-selected pairs, whereas my pupils are given complete freedom to choose their triads. Secondly, the learning objective (LO) of my groups' art-focused RE lesson is 'To create a doorframe', and we 'co-generated' (Clarke 2008: 93) success criteria (SC): (1) show our class's 'personality'; (2) use at least three different art techniques; and (3) work as a team throughout. The 'stated goals' of Davies's

English lesson are: 'To collaborate and negotiate through tentative exchanges of opinion, ideas and memories' (Davies 2011[2003]: 115), but no SC are documented.

Davies finds the girls collaborate, speaking almost as 'one voice' (ibid: 116), and I notice that, in her data, no-one appears to emerge as a leader. Unlike Baxter's (2006a) girls, all speakers make a similar volume of contributions and do not interrupt each other to ensure their ideas are acknowledged by others. Instead, like Group 3 (see 4.2.3), they constantly refer to a 'neutral' resource, in this case, teacher-provided scaffolds, to structure their conversation. Looking at her transcripts, it seems to me that Davies's girls pay attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity, supported by a 'neutral' resource. The boys, however, are not able to complete their task because, in this case, social relationships are a hindrance and 'demonstrations of their social loyalties severely challenge the work process' (Davies 2011[2003]: 118). The 'male culture' to which they are all exposed, and in which most of them invest, means they view completing schoolwork as incompatible with 'doing boy'. As Cameron also finds in her (2011[1997]) study of university-aged men, Davies's boys use women and non-heterosexual men as othering devices to police and maintain the masculine culture of which they appear concerned to be members. For example, any boy who tries to complete the schoolwork is labelled 'gay' (to them, an insult), and, instead of doing much work, the boys discuss their alleged relationships with girls, using them as points-scoring ancillaries to evidence their heterosexual attractiveness. Although Group 5 also does minimal work, the boys never use (hetero)sexual relationships or girls for points-scoring, insults, or reasons why they cannot engage with the task (see 5.2, 5.4.2).

The difference in Baxter's and Davies's findings could be attributed to the influence of situational context. Baxter's pupils must reach a final answer rather than explore the reasons items might appear on their list of options for desert island survival, whereas Davies's are expected to discuss

poetic techniques, not rank their effectiveness. However, neither Davies nor Baxter discusses variation within their like groups' approaches; Baxter because she compares an all-female group with an all-male counterpart, and Davies because she finds similar 'polyphonous' talk among all the girls' groups in her study (Davies 2011[2003]: 118, using Coates's (1996) terminology) and only discusses one boys' group's response to the English task. However, for my study, the difference between each group's management of this task is what I find to be particularly interesting about the ways in which the children show leadership.

A study able to make comparisons and finding some differences among speakers is Harness-Goodwin's (1990) ethnography of children's single-sex play-based talk. Her data differ from mine because all talk takes place in an out-of-school context in the USA and her speakers are aged between four and 14. Unlike Baxter (2006a) and Davies (2011[2003]), Harness-Goodwin explores the differences between the ways speakers issue directives and the objective of an activity. When her girls are engaged in task-oriented play, making rings from glass-bottle-tops, they appear to pay more attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity through their use of inclusive pronouns, e.g., 'we', and modal verbs, e.g., 'could'. In this context, they suggest future action rather than demand it, e.g., 'We could go around looking for more bottles' (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 111). In contrast, when role-playing as members of a make-believe family in their game of 'house', some girls use strategies, which, it seems to me, pay attention to transactional practices, such as bald imperatives and raised volume, e.g., 'GET IN THE CAR!' (ibid: 127, 128). However, this is related to the roles players assume, such as 'mother', which affords them the status-based authority to use bold forms towards their 'children' without sanction. Unlike my study, this status is clearly awarded to and invoked by the girls in role-allocation, which also reveals their local social order; the role a girl is permitted to play, such as 'mother' or 'child', is directly related to her friendships and positioning above or below others in the peer group.

In contrast, when the boys engage in task-oriented play (they are not documented playing make-believe games like 'house'), making catapults from wire hangers in preparation for a battle, two boys, Malcolm and Tony, are positioned as leaders. This is not because of relationships or friendships, but because status is gained through age and physicality (they are older and stronger), and land ownership, as the task takes place on their property. Here, leaders issue bald imperatives based on their whims, with the expectation they will be followed without question. Harness-Goodwin's study therefore highlights not only the importance of situational and contextual knowledge in striving to understand directives in children's talk, but also hints at the role of status without explicitly exploring it. I view her ethnographic approach as invaluable, as she is able to offer more social information about the girls' and boys' friendships and relationships than Baxter (2006a) or Davies (2011[2003]), giving perspective not only on how status affects leadership, but how statuses are awarded and accrued. This is similar to her study of jump-rope (Harness-Goodwin 2001), where the importance of higher relative skills-based status is highlighted.

Though also occurring in a play context, Harness-Goodwin (2001) demonstrates clearly the relationship between status and warrants to issue directives in her study of jump-rope. She explores how a group of middle-class children of a similar age to mine attending Hanley Elementary School in LA, USA, use directives to define the rules and manage play in games of jump-rope. Harness-Goodwin finds those who are more highly skilled in the activity are permitted to lead by making decisions about rules, roles and team selection. They issue directives, which, like Bella and Marcelo, is a result of holding a higher relative skill-based status, although, in contrast with my findings, Harness-Goodwin finds this status warrants their use of forms indexing boldness such as bald imperatives, e.g., 'Hold it!' (ibid: 92). Like my speakers and McRae's (2009) managers, this status is not overtly acknowledged by anyone, but it seems to me that it stands as proxy for

their directives being followed because the children know of each other's skill level. Harness-Goodwin's study is therefore crucial for illuminating the relationship between accruing a local higher relative skill status and leadership. However, she does not detail the 'types' of femininity or masculinity her children construct, which, I argue, are important for understanding my speakers' leadership.

My analysis of the talk in these chapters shows that the children make use of various directives to progress with their task. While on first glance it may appear that directives are used merely to move work forwards, they also serve to demonstrate speakers' stances, alignments, friendships and local social order. Furthermore, the groups appear to have access to, and utilise, different statuses: in Groups 1 and 4, relative skill in art; in Group 2, quality-control; in Group 3, friendship, and in Group 5, popularity. Though their statuses are not directly stated or acknowledged, they afford speakers the authority to see their wants actioned. This is similar to McRae's (2009) findings that, almost regardless of the linguistic strategy used to issue directives, male managers in the workplace see their wants actioned because of the status afforded by their job title. However, my speakers have accrued status through local social practices rather than being awarded a special 'title' (see 2.1.7), and those who use linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity often see more success. In the following section, I explain the requirements of the task where these statuses and strategies come into play.

I.iii The Task

My groups' task formed part of their Year 6 religious education (RE) learning. The class had been studying Hinduism in RE, and they had researched images of a local Hindu temple after an in-person educational visit was cancelled because of snow. The borough's locally agreed syllabus stipulated at the time that children both learn about religion (Attainment Target (AT) 1) and learn

from religion (AT2) in RE lessons. This project, to make a doorframe to display outside the classroom, wove together these areas of enquiry under 'forms of expression' (AT1) and 'identity and belonging' (AT2). Inspired by the vivid colours and 'deeper, philosophical meanings' of the temple's door frame (Sharman 2018) which caused it to stand out on a mundane road, the class discussed how passers-by could recognise this as a Hindu temple over any other building and any other place of worship. They then considered their own ideas about the form-group's identity, and how this could be integrated into a doorframe design to be displayed outside the classroom.

Like Baxter's (2015) MBA students, who were tasked with working in small groups to make a paper tower, the pupils were told they would work in small groups to design and make a doorframe. They also had a clear learning objective and outcome-focused success criteria which were co-constructed and displayed for them (Clarke 2008: 93, see 2.1.9, I.ii), and they had access to the same materials (though some pupils brought in items from home, see 4.2.2, 5.4.1). Baxter's participants were allotted 45 minutes to plan and make their tower, but, in-keeping with the school's focus on project-based, independent learning, the pupils in my study were allocated several Topic lessons for their doorframes.

This project, then, was clearly a competition, but, as stipulated in the co-generated SC, teamwork was considered vital (see I.ii). The pupils therefore had to balance working collaboratively with their desire to win. This may have affected the linguistic strategies they draw upon, as might their prior relationships with teammates and local ethnographic positions.

In Chapter 4, I begin by describing the girls' triads' compositions and give details about their identity constructions and local ethnographic positions. The remainder of Chapter 4 explores the girls' leadership, while Chapter 5 explores the boys' leadership.

Chapter 4: Leadership in Girls' Curriculum-oriented Talk

As detailed in I.i, this chapter explores girls' leadership in a curriculum-oriented context. I examine the talk of three triads of girls simultaneously engaged a like curriculum activity, the same as the boys in Chapter 5, creating a doorframe as part of a cross-curricular Religious Education (RE) and art project (see I.iii).

As noted in I.i and 3.2, I find that understanding the girls as 'whole' speakers gives a greater understanding of how they do leadership. Ethnographic information about the girls is provided in Table 4.1. Their 'local ethnographic positions' are my labels using observations and discussions with the children. In the next section, I give more detailed information about their group composition and dynamics.

4.1 The Girls' Groups

The three triads were self-selected by the pupils: Tilda, Bella and Lilah (Group 1), Amy, Lan and Seyda (Group 2), and Fliss, Grace and Alice (Group 3). The girls all said their group choices had been friendship-motivated, and Figure 4.1 shows the girls' friendships within and between groups. As I show in my analysis that higher relative skill in art appeared relevant, this is also indicated.

In Group 1, Tilda and Bella had been best friends since starting school at the age of four. Although Lilah had historically been closer with Amy and Colleen, she had become closer to Tilda and Bella, and, more recently, Lan, through shared interests. Bella's local ethnographic position as a 'cool' and 'likeable' girl alongside her higher relative skill in art allows her to lead; she is regarded as the most talented artist by all members of Penguin Class and considered 'gifted' in art by teachers. She frequently aligns with Tilda, which allows her another claim to leadership as she can count on

Name	Close friends	Ethnographic information	Local ethnographic position/style and *local status*
Tilda	Bella Lilah Fliss	• Popular member of Penguin Class. Lots of children keen to be her friend. • Talented across all performing arts. In choir; often selected to sing solos. Lead roles in assemblies • Witty sense of humour; often self-deprecating • Wears fashionable clothing: denim dungaree dresses or t-shirts with denim shorts over leggings	Funny, popular, easy-going girl *Popular*
Bella	Tilda Lilah Grace	• Well-liked in Penguin Class; not as popular as Tilda • Talented artist • Loves 1980s music, fashion, TV shows • Regarded 'cool' • Wears fashionable clothing, makes some herself. She sometimes wears vintage/vintage-inspired items	Cool, likeable, easy-going girl *Highly skilled artist*
Lilah	Tilda Bella Lan	• Sporty; fastest runner in Penguin Class. On school netball and athletics teams • Well-liked; not as popular as Tilda • In choir • Historically close with Amy, but grew apart a few years earlier. In Year 6, she grew closer to Lan as they both like K-Pop • Regarded 'cool' • Wears fashionable, sporty, clothing	Cool, grown-up, actively pro-school girl *Skilled artist*
Amy	Naomi	• High-achieving across all subjects • Member of athletics and netball teams and gymnastics squad • Also starting to enjoy K-Pop • In choir • Describes herself as 'a bit bossy'. Some other children also (reluctantly) described her this way, but others said she was 'assertive but nice about it' • Wears fashionable clothing, similar to Tilda and Lilah's styles	Assertive, serious, ambitious actively pro-school girl *Skilled artist*
Lan	Seyda Lilah	• Dry sense of humour • Recently close with Lilah – mutual love of K-Pop • Loves art • Clothing is emblazoned with names of her favourite K-Pop bands • Caring	Sarcastic-humoured, assertive, growing-up girl *Skilled artist*

Seyda	Lan	- Quite reserved - In choir - Caring - Conscientious	Conscientious, actively pro-school girl
Fliss	Grace Tilda Yasmin	- Zest for life; enjoys being with friends - High-achieving across all subjects - In athletics team - Interest in political issues, e.g., gender - Class Captain - She and Tilda started to spend more time together and grew closer with Yasmin in Year 6 - Wears fashionable clothing, similar to Tilda	Diplomatic, pro-school girl
Grace	Fliss Alice Bella	- Dry sense of humour - Enjoys being her friends - In choir - Interested in political issues; can be outspoken, e.g., 'Donald Trump is so stupid' - Class Captain - Enjoys fashion - Close with Alice, though now closer to Fliss - Wears fashionable clothing – a mixture of Tilda's 'modern' and Bella's 'vintage twist'	Assertive, dry-humoured, principled, pro-school girl
Alice	Grace	- Dry sense of humour; sometimes draws on grotesqueness - Reserved - Good at drama – a recent realisation	Unconventional, pro-school girl

Table 4.1: Ethnographic information about the girls

Tilda's friendship-based support. Lilah is also high-achieving in art, but constructs herself as a grown-up, serious girl, and her stance towards the project shows she is actively pro-school in this chapter, contributing to her local ethnographic position as a grown-up girl. As detailed in Table 4.1, Tilda was regarded as a 'funny, popular' girl in the form group. In the task, she contributes to this local ethnographic position by attending to humour through her invocation of a play frame and self-deprecation. However, unlike the game in Chapter 6, her local ethnographic position in the form-group is not enough to facilitate leadership attempts; she perhaps understands this, and does not attempt to lead. Thus, like Harness-Goodwin's (2001) study of jump-rope, higher relative skill stands as proxy for Bella's decisions being followed, but I show that, unlike Malcolm

Marcelo

Tilda ⇄ Fliss

Yasmin

Bella

Grace

Lilah

Alice

Amy

Lan

Naomi

Seyda

Name *(dash-lined box)*	Dash-lined box shows Group 1
Name *(single-lined box)*	Single-lined box shows Group 2
Name *(double-lined box)*	Double-lined box shows Group 3
Name *(highlighted)*	Highlighted name shows high-achieving in art
(pink arrow)	Pink line shows close friend as declared in ethnographic-style interviews (arrow indicates direction, e.g., Bella and Tilda said each other)
(blue line)	Blue line shows they spent time together outside of school in-person
(green line)	Green line shows they spent time together outside of school online

Figure 4.1: Girls' friendships within and across triads

(Harness-Goodwin 1990), whose requests were actioned almost unfailingly without question, she is only able to see them actioned with the support of either Lilah or Tilda.

In Group 2, Seyda and Lan had also been best friends since starting school. Lan had recently become closer with Lilah, and they spend time talking to each other on Signal; this is rather than in-person because of the distance between their homes. Amy had historically been close with Lilah, but had become closer to Naomi in recent years through shared interests. However, she likes Lan, so when Naomi teamed up with others, she was able to find a different person she likes to work with. As shown in Figure 4.1, Seyda and Lan often spend time together outside of school, but, because of their family homes' geographical distance, not as frequently as those in Groups 1 and 3. However, neither spends time with Amy outside of school.

Amy is high-achieving across all subjects, but in art she is outperformed, marginally, by Lan. Amy's local ethnographic position as an assertive, serious, pro-school girl is clear in this chapter, and matches her style in Chapter 6. Rather than attempting to align with her teammates, Amy positions herself as a 'quality-controller' defining what is 'good enough' to include in their design. Amy's unwavering belief in and commitment to her self-imposed quality-controller role is made possible through her status as a high-achieving girl. This appears to fuel her boldness, as, although she accepts and utilises Lan's higher relative skill, her directive strategies appear to pay almost no attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity. Amy mentioned in her interview that she regarded herself competitive, however, so her conduct may be motivated by her desire to win. Her success is possible because of Lan and Seyda's tolerance, shown in their responses. Lan is high-achieving in art, and often spends her spare time drawing and painting. Her local ethnographic position as a sarcastic-humoured, assertive girl is shown in the talk I analyse. Lan makes some leadership attempts, but her higher relative-skill and securing of Seyda's support

are not as effective as they are for Bella in Group 1. Seyda enjoys art, but is not as high-achieving. She does not make any leadership attempts, but her local ethnographic position as a conscientious, pro-school girl means she is a great supporter of Lan's ideas.

In Group 3, Grace and Alice had historically been best friends, facilitated and supported through their parents' friendships. Although Grace and Fliss had always been friends, they had recently grown closer, and named each other first when listing their best friends in the interviews. As shown in Figure 4.1, all three girls spend time together outside of school, as well as with Group 1. Fliss, Grace and Alice are similarly mid-achieving in art. They are all implicitly pro-school in a way similar to Tilda and Bella, where they are attentive in their project, but do not show Amy's or Lilah's level of investment. Their styles seen in Chapter 6 are also present here. Fliss's orientation to fairness contributes to her local ethnographic position as a diplomatic girl, a stance she takes throughout. Grace's local ethnographic position as an assertive, principled, dry-humoured girl is also seen in this chapter through her alignments with Fliss and Alice and her approach to the work. Though she directs Alice, this is something Alice requests. Alice, therefore, occasionally positions herself below Grace or Fliss in their local social order. However, I show in my analysis that leadership is more equal in this group because their fairly equal friendships combined with their fairly equal relative skill appear to serve for a much more egalitarian approach to the task. Nonetheless, Grace and Fliss's slightly closer friendship also sometimes positions them as marginally higher in the group's local social order, which I also discuss.

In the next section, I explore in depth how each group makes decisions related to their design.

4.2 The Girls' Decision-Making Talk

In this section, I make connections between the girls' linguistic strategies, statuses they hold, their

interactional roles and local ethnographic positions when making decisions related to their designs. I consider how their social practices position them as 'particular *kinds*' of girl (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original), and how this relates to leadership. As noted in I.ii, the different Groups do and achieve leadership differently.

4.2.1 Group 1: Tilda, Bella, Lilah – Higher Relative Skills-based Status

Like Harness-Goodwin's (2001) study of children's jump-rope, where relative skill warrants children's rights to issue directives and control play (see I.ii), Bella's status of higher relative skill in art appears to serve as a proxy for her decisions being actioned in Group 1. Tilda, Bella and Lilah's talk also makes clear their friendships and relationships with each other, as well as how these are used alongside their local ethnographic positions and identity constructions to facilitate leadership. The vision this group had for their doorframe was to create a 1.5m penguin which would be positioned by the side of the classroom door with a rainbow attached to hang above.

Similar to Coates's 2013[1999]) longitudinal study of four middle-class, white girls, and marking a change from their enforced 'one-topic' rule in Chapter 6, topic change in Group 1's talk is somewhat, but not completely, erratic. Prior to stave 1 they had been discussing Bella's parents' hot-glue gun, but this was related to their project; they were commenting how much easier it would be if they had access to it at school. They therefore appear to be growing up by beginning to talk in ways similar to Coates's (ibid) girls when they reach adolescence. In this extract, Tilda, Bella and Lilah are still discussing the project, but they are now deciding which colour to paint their penguin's beak, using a photograph of a penguin for reference:

Orange Paint
```
1
Tilda:                                           oh {xxxxxxx}
Bella:     look at that (1) isn't that a "<beau:ty>"{COCKNEY ACCENT;
```

```
2
Tilda:      {POURING PAINT}          (laugh[s) (–) I'm gonna end up in
Bella:      SARCASTIC} OH NO: (.)           [TILDA

3
Tilda:      trouble in this project{SMILING} (–) where's the glitter

4
Tilda:      (1) oh they're there I                        (laughs)
Lilah:                        Tilda Bella come on {EXASPERATED}

5
Lilah:      shall I do the bottom bit as well to make it look as

6
Tilda:                                          ^ooh:^ no:\
Bella:          yeah (.) ooh we could do it orange {SMILING/
Lilah:      bright/                                          we

7
Tilda:      {SMILING/LAUGHING}               [(lau[ghs)
Bella:      LAUGHING}                        [(laug[hs)
Lilah:      could what the (.) edges/ but  [erm   (1)  [we could do

8
Tilda:                      no we can't copy it
Bella:                                      no but that's what
Lilah:      like do like tha:t

9
Bella:      a penguin [is                        =look see that
Lilah:              [well that's what a penguin is=

10
Tilda:                                  [yeah let's do a (xxxx) (.)
Bella:      [one/
Lilah:      [yeah we need to do it like [that

11
Tilda:      I'll get the orange from Adam {TILDA LEAVES}
```

Bella constructs a playful interactional role by invoking humour and a play frame through her use of sarcasm to say, 'Isn't that a beauty?' (stave 1). In my ethnographic observations, I noted she had just absent-mindedly mixed together several blobs of differently coloured paint, creating a murky green-brown. Bella's sarcasm shows self-denigration, a 'play-activity a speaker initiates about themselves that makes them the centre of the verbal playing' (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997: 284). Diana Boxer and Florencia Cortés-Conde (1997) argue that criticising one's own intellectual shortcomings allows others to view a speaker as 'approachable'. Thus, despite her higher relative

skill in art, Bella's self-denigration constructs her as likeable and funny, contributing to her local ethnographic position as a 'supportive' girl – she does not show-off about her higher relative skill in art, but creates a deliberately 'bad' piece of art to suggest she is not as high-achieving as she is in reality, reducing the distance between herself and her teammates.

Tilda then pours paint into a palette but loses control and it overflows, spilling onto the floor. Like Bella, she also uses self-denigration, joking that she is 'going to end up in trouble in this project' (stave 2–3). Her smiling quality is a contextualisation cue to Bella and Lilah that she is maintaining Bella's play frame and self-teasing. Self-teasing is a strategy Tilda used often during my ethnographic observations and became typical of her style (see 6.3.3). The way Tilda self-teases here is similar to the sales-clerk Boxer and Cortés-Conde (1997: 284) observe who cannot unlock a fitting room for her customer. Like Tilda, she uses self-teasing to 'present herself as human and therefore not altogether competent, creat[ing] a positive image for herself'. Tilda's interactional role as a joker showing social awareness and willingness to find humour in her own actions contributes to her local ethnographic position as a funny and popular girl in the form-group. It also appears to communicate that she is aware that Bella and Lilah are more skilled in art, reinforced, almost ironically, in her spilling the paint.

Lilah shifts away from the play frame to a more serious one, and utters a bald imperative, 'Tilda, Bella, come on' (stave 4). This may be related to their age, as Coates (2013[1999]) notes that her girls tend to show directness when they are younger and are not yet paying much attention to maintaining friendships. However, as noted above, they are beginning to talk like adolescents in some ways, such as their topic change becoming less frenetic, and they show mitigation in other directives which I discuss below. Considering politeness, it might also be argued the girls' closeness explains Lilah's willingness to be direct. While bald imperatives are more commonly

observed in boys' task-talk (Harness-Goodwin 1990), it seems to me that Lilah's use of 'come on' is a result of her actively pro-school stance. She seems to want to get the work done, an outcome which will benefit them all. She appears to position herself authoritatively as someone able to issue orders, however, this is slightly mitigated as she does not specify exactly what they should do, but Tilda and Bella can infer that Lilah views their current actions (painting a smudge and spilling paint) as unhelpful towards their ultimate goal of completing their project. This shows Lilah's stance towards the schoolwork; she is constructing herself as actively pro-school by trying to refocus her teammates on their work, a stance she also adopts in 'Wait for it to Dry', below.

Tilda, however, laughs (stave 4) rather than beginning any work, maintaining her play frame and resisting Lilah's seriousness. In not ratifying Lilah's directive, Tilda questions Lilah's attempted authoritative position. Perhaps recognising the futility of her directness, Lilah then tests a modal construction more in common with Harness-Goodwin's (1990: 110, 113) observations of girls' task talk, 'Shall I do the bottom bit as well to make it look as bright?' (stave 4–5). Like Harness-Goodwin's girls, who are younger than Lilah showing that directness is not always the result of young age, she shows attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity, a strategy endorsed by the normatively 'feminine' CofP (see 2.1.8). She suggests future action rather than demanding it immediately with her use of modal, 'shall', she places all the imposition on herself with her use of 'I', and her questioning intonation implies the others can decline or offer their opinions. Her use of the project as a reason for taking action shows again her actively pro-school stance, contributing to her local ethnographic position. However, this suggestion is also made in her own interests as it will lead to someone completing the work, which, as noted, appears her ultimate goal.

Lilah's attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity when issuing

this directive serves her well as she is ratified by Bella, who agrees, saying, 'Yeah' (stave 6). This suggests Bella aligns with Lilah, and therefore also Lilah's stance towards the schoolwork. Bella then suggests, 'Ooh, we could do it orange?' (stave 6). Though this might appear a genuine suggestion uttered to support Lilah, it in fact operates to display her closeness with Tilda, as this is actually a tease. From ethnographic observations, I know that Tilda vehemently disliked the colour orange, further confirmed in her response which rejects this idea, 'Ooh, no' (stave 6). Bella's laughter throughout her utterance contextualises it as a tease, but, like Pichler's (2006) girls, also publicly displays their closeness by referring to some personal information of which others may not be aware (see also Eder 1993). Tilda's reaction is playful, contextualised through her laughter, evidencing that she has 'recognised the tease and [is] attempting to sustain the teasing frame' (Pichler 2006: 230). Tilda's metrical alignment by also beginning with 'Ooh', also displays their friendship. Lilah does not engage with their playfulness, however, and again tries to introduce seriousness, 'We could, what, the edges? But erm we could do like that' (stave 6–8), referring to a photograph of a penguin they might use as a reference for their work. Asking a serious question here implies that Lilah was not aware of Tilda's opinion on orange, so she is not privy to Bella's reasons for her tease. Her utterance is also interrupted by Bella and Tilda's laughter, who continue to resist her seriousness, displaying clearly Tilda and Bella's best friendship, as well as positioning Lilah as an outsider because they refuse to ratify her directive attempts, despite her attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity.

In stave 8, Tilda eventually replies with, 'No but we can't copy it'. Her use of 'No' as a direct expression of polarity (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 178; Harness-Goodwin 1990: 145), rather than, for example, a more neutral 'hmm' or 'I dunno', boldly opposes Lilah. However, there is something of an alignment as, from ethnographic observations, I know that copying was regarded as 'cheating' by Penguin Class across all subjects (despite my encouragement of Pie Corbett and Julia

Strong's (2011) 'magpie-ing' ethos as their teacher). Thus, Tilda also appears to be adopting a similar pro-school stance by using the quality of their work as a reason for not taking Lilah's proposed action, but it is slightly different to Lilah's. Now also prioritising the quality of the work, Bella genuinely sides with Lilah, and says to Tilda, 'No but that's what a penguin is' (stave 8–9), using metrical alignment to maintain their friendship while she suggests that realism is more important than avoiding copying. Bella now aligns with Lilah, and matches her quality-driven, pro-school stance towards the project. Perhaps grateful for some support, Lilah strengthens this alignment by emphasising Bella's point, shown metrically in her repeating of Bella's words almost exactly, 'Well, that's what a penguin **is**' (stave 9). Bella further supports her stance by referring to their physical resource, their photograph of a penguin from a *National Geographic* magazine, saying 'Look, see that one?' (stave 9–10), indicating a specific shade of orange. Immediately understanding, Lilah again supports Bella, saying, 'Yeah, we need to do it like that' (stave 10). Finally, Tilda relents, saying 'Yeah let's do a (xxxx) – I'll get the orange from Adam' (stave 10–11).

This shows the complex work in which Tilda, Bella and Lilah are engaged as they progress through their task. Lilah and Bella have authority to suggest decisions, specifically, here, the colour they will paint their penguin's beak; being the skilled artists in the group, Lilah and Bella have the higher relative-skills-based status (Harness-Goodwin 2001) to make decisions. Tilda's compliance in stave 10–11 ratifies their higher position in the local social order, and simultaneously confirms Tilda's lower relative skills-based status, though she presents herself as easy-going by opting to get the paint they need while forfeiting her dislike of the colour for the benefit of her group, a practice typical of her style (see 6.3.3, 6.6), and one which arguably contributes to her local ethnographic position as a popular girl. However, it must be noted that Lilah's attempt to achieve action alone in staves 4–5 is not successful, it is only because Bella moves away from the play frame and explicitly aligns with her in staves 8–10 that Lilah's ideas are actioned. This positions Bella, through her

esteemed art skills, as the ultimate authority in making design-based decisions. This is shown in the extract below:

Wait for it to dry

```
1
Bella:                                  what/ (3) no we're gonna wait
Lilah:     Bella do that or I'll do it/

2
Bella:     for it to (.) dry:
Lilah:                         this is the last time Bella we won't be

3
Bella:             [no we're gonna have a bit more time (2) but
Lilah:     able to [try

4
Bella:     without you (-) wait no see/{TOUCHES PAINT} (.) we need

5
Bella:     to >wait for it to< dry otherwise that
Lilah:                                     oh no Bella we

6
Bella:                     yes we do: (-) me and (.) me and Tilda
Lilah:     don't have time

7
Bella:     can go up after lunch
```

Occurring around 30 minutes after *'Orange Paint',* Lilah wishes to proceed with painting more layers on their penguin's beak for they will not be able to work together on it that afternoon as she is offsite for an athletics competition. However, Bella points out that they cannot as the first layer will not yet be dry. Despite two protestations from Lilah that they will not have time to do further layers (staves 2–3; 6–7), it is Bella's opinion, 'Yes we do' (stave 6), which marks a final decision that they will not apply another layer of paint at this moment. Although each girl uses similar strategies to make their point, it is Bella's that 'win' because of her higher relative skill in art.

These extracts show the stances the girls invoke to construct their pro-school and actively pro-school identities as well as how their local ethnographic positions in the form-group contribute to

leadership. Lilah presents herself as actively pro-school in her task-focus and seriousness, Tilda as pro-school but less so in her play-focus and comicality, though she does show some investment in the project. Bella is pro-school in a way similar to Tilda, and successfully balances task- and play-foci while presenting herself as easy-going. These contribute to the girls' local ethnographic positions in the form-group detailed in Table 4.1, which also facilitate their ability to lead. Most important for this group, however, is that Lilah, but especially Bella's, higher relative skill-based status stands as proxy for ideas being accepted. Yet, Tilda's willingness to abandon her stance towards orange must be celebrated, and perhaps presents a reason for her popularity in the class; unlike the girls in Baxter's (2006a) classroom study, Tilda does not take things personally or hold grudges. Bella's higher relative skill in art would most likely not be enough to see her decisions actioned if she did not also construct herself as cool, likeable and easy-going in her style, and if she did not have the support of Lilah or Tilda. This shows the importance of the girls' local social practices in constructing local identities which enable leadership.

In the next section, I explore how Group 2 makes design decisions, focusing on their attention to and definitions of quality.

4.2.2 Group 2: Amy, Lan, Seyda – Quality Control-based Status

As noted in 4.1, Amy is high-achieving across all curriculum areas, but Lan marginally outperforms her in art, something of which Amy is aware. However, Lan's higher relative skill does not serve her in the same way it does Bella (Group 1), as it is Amy's focus on and definition of quality which has the biggest influence on decision-making. Acknowledging Lan's higher relative skill, Amy appears to use her personal definition and understanding of quality, or what will be 'good enough', to direct Lan in using her skills. Thus, in my analysis of Group 2, I demonstrate that Amy issues most of the directives, and, using her (self-awarded) status as 'quality-controller' based on

her high academic achievement, assumes hearers' compliance. This is shown in Amy's directive strategies and reasons given for following them, although, perhaps empowered by her higher relative skill, Lan presents some challenges. All group members show a pro-school stance towards the project, but Amy's is actively pro-school because she cares deeply about it being of the highest quality and believes only herself capable of determining what this means. To achieve this, Amy often discursively positions herself as something of a classroom teacher.

Like the game in Chapter 6, I find that considering the identities, stances, styles and alignments constructed in Amy, Lan and Seyda's early interactions particularly illuminating for understanding their design-related decision-making. I therefore begin by examining three key moments in their talk before analysing their decision-making talk. Like Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) study of 'nerd' girls and 4.2.1, I examine interactional roles and discursive positionings, considering how these contribute to local ethnographic positions, which affect leadership.

As I detailed in 4.1, this was not Amy's first choice of group, however, she and Lan considered each other friends. Despite this, Amy is confrontational more than once in their pre-task talk. In the first extract, high-quality appears to be the motivator for this:

Glitter Paint
```
1
Amy:        Lan (3) ple:ase{HOLDING LAN'S PAINT} =thank you     cause
Lan:                                         why/=           why/

2
Amy:        you want it good don't you/{SQUEEZES PAINT; MIXES} I said
Lan:                                I didn't say yes though

3
Amy:        yes
Lan:           but I didn't (2) and that was my paint    in Year Four
Seyda:                                                (xxx)

4
Amy:                                                      [I bought
Lan:        (.) or Five you were like (1) "^oh^ (.) my ball [my rules
```

```
5
Amy:         that ball
Lan:         (1)           ^my^ ball my rules"{SLIGHT SOUTHERN STATE

6
Amy:                                 [that was (xxxx) (.) I paid it/
Lan:         AMERICAN ACCENT} oh [I paid it                    yeah

7
Amy:         paid for it (-) I don't know how you can afford it
Lan:                                                         .HHH

8
Amy:                           {NERVOUS LAUGH}
Lan:         that's ru:de                I'm offen:ded{SARCASTIC} (-)

9
Amy:                                         "no offe:nce" {WEST
Lan:         and then: you'll be like (.) ^no offence^

10
Amy:         COAST USA ACCENT}   [that makes them: (.) worse{POINTING
Lan:                           .HH[H{ADDING GLUE TO PAINTING} (2) %I

11
Amy:         TO LAN'S WORK; PVA IS SMUDGING PAINT} I like unicorns
Lan:         like {laughter} (2) %I like ^Se^hun:%

12
Lan:         EXO is not (xxx) same thing (1) oh my cousin she's a fan

13
Lan:         of unicorns/ and then I said (-) unicorns or EXO and she

14
Amy:                                     I like EXO more
Lan:         said EXO and like I was s:o surprised

15
Amy:         because [(.) %err I don't know% (.) I found like a jumper
Lan:                 [.HHH

16
Amy:         and I'm gonna wear it tomorrow     my u/nicorn\ jumper
Lan:                                          WHAT/
```

This extract takes place about 10 minutes into the lesson. Immediately prior to stave 1, there is

silence in the group; Lan has gone to her bag to retrieve a bottle of glitter paint which she has

brought from home especially for adding a sparkly accent to their doorframe.

Lan places the bottle on the table, but Amy takes it and suspends it over a dimple in her palette

already containing green paint as she says, 'Lan… please' (stave 1). Lan does not say 'yes', instead asking Amy, 'Why?' (stave 1). Amy appears to interpret Lan's lack of 'no' to mean she has some flexibility and says, 'Thank you' (stave 1). This use of 'thank you' is a strategy noted as 'corrective direction' in many teaching manuals related to classroom behaviour, where its use is recommended to enable teachers to focus on 'desired' behaviour rather than negative correction, e.g., 'Pencils down, thank you' rather than, 'Pencils down, please' (Rogers 2003: 99; see also Rogers 2007). Classroom behaviour 'expert', Bill Rogers (2003, 2007), argues that teachers' use of 'thank you' after a request suggests it obliges all parties' compliance, rather than 'please' which presents requests as optional, and it is a strategy most teachers at Skipwith Primary used, but after issuing an instruction either to move the lesson forward or promote children's safety (e.g., 'Can we put those scissors down, thank you'). Amy might therefore appear to be constructing herself as considerate with 'please' (stave 1), suggesting she views her proposal as conditional on others' consent, but the fact that she already has the paint bottle poised and then says, 'Thank you' (stave 1) shows she intends to carry out this action regardless of whether Lan agrees; in stave 2, she then goes ahead and squeezes the glitter paint into her palette. Ethnographic observations show she then mixed it with poster paint already dispensed to make sparkly green.

This is the first time Amy uses a positioning similar to a teacher, utilising linguistic strategies she may have heard in classrooms (see also '"Properly"', below). Although she uses a strategy that might appear on the surface to pay attention to relational practices indexing normative femininity with her use of 'please' and 'thank you', 'Lan, please… thank you' (stave 1), with the support of ethnographic observations, it is clear she is paying limited attention to Lan's wishes and their use could not be labelled relational. She therefore shows her boldness. This boldness is reconfirmed when, in response to Lan's, 'Why?' (stave 1), Amy says, ''Cause you want it good, don't you?' (stave 2). Though it may appear Amy's 'it' is referring to painting she will complete, she is actually

referring to the mixing of Lan's glitter paint with green paint; she believes only herself capable of mixing the paints to the ratio and standard she deems adequate. While showing her boldness, this also shows her actively pro-school stance towards the project: she is aiming to create the highest-quality project possible, and, though Lan will do the painting, believes only herself capable of creating a high-quality material. Her stances and strategies in this interaction reveal and constitute her style. They also contribute to her local ethnographic position as a serious, ambitious and assertive girl.

Lan, however, challenges Amy, saying, 'I didn't say **yes** though' (stave 2) to which Amy responds, '**I** said yes' (stave 2). Each girl's use of 'contrastive stress' (Ladd 1978: 78) is a contextualisation cue indexing their differing stances about who has the 'right' to dispense the glitter paint. Lan's emphasis on 'Yes' in, 'I didn't say **yes**' shows her stance that consent is most important, especially as this is an item she has brought from home. Amy's emphasis of 'I' in '**I** said yes' shows her stance that her right to quality-control is most important, which is apparently of greater importance than Lan's right to give consent based on ownership. Amy therefore disaligns with Lan in her stance.

Amy's strategies and stance bear many similarities with Malcolm's towards his rights in Harness-Goodwin's (1990) study of boys' task-talk, for example, when he takes a set of hangers belonging to another boy, claiming he has the right to direct how they will be used for their slingshot battle despite them not being his. Like Malcolm, Amy appears to be attempting to position herself highly in their local social order, where she has the 'right' to make decisions and others do not. However, Lan reciprocates some of Amy's boldness and proceeds to position Amy as hypocritical with reference to her historic conduct while also reinforcing her own stance regarding the glitter paint, 'But **I** didn't… and that was **my** paint. In Year 4 or Year 5 you were like… oh, my ball, my rules. My ball, my rules' (stave 2–4). From ethnographic knowledge, I know that Lan here refers to a

previous school year when Penguin Class enjoyed playing 'Foursquare' at break-times. Like Ann-Carita Evaldsson (2004) finds in her observations of pre-adolescents in a Sweden-based school, my children enjoyed debating rule-making when playing Foursquare. Although school provided balls with which to play, these were sometimes deflated or used for other activities. Amy's parents had therefore bought a ball specifically for her to take to school for Foursquare. During play, she would sometimes pick it up to halt the game's continuation if she was declared out, saying that, because it was her ball, she would make the rules about what counted as out. She was not the only child who did this, but others who did are not members of any Groups discussed in this chapter. Amy's stance towards the glitter paint therefore should align with Lan, that ownership dictates who makes decisions, as it is one she has quite forcefully taken before, but her preoccupation with quality-control supersedes it.

Lan then uses Amy's claimed 'right' to make the rules in games of Foursquare based on ownership, and says about the paint, 'I **paid** it' (stave 6). Lan is thus confirming that, if Amy has been able to use ownership to justify being able to make decisions, then she, herself, also has that right as she bought the paint. However, rather than acknowledging this, Amy again shows boldness and brings into focus Lan's grammar, saying, 'I **paid** it? Paid **for** it' (stave 6–7). This bears similarity to 'Jetlagged' in 6.3.2, where Tilda corrects Amy's pronunciation error of 'jetlagged', meaning it was something the girls may have done quite frequently (indeed, at this time, teachers were encouraged to insist upon "Standard English" in children's talk which may be influencing their correcting of each other; thankfully this initiative is now being called into question, see Cushing 2020, 2021; Snell and Cushing 2022). However, unlike Tilda's efforts to pay attention to CofP-approved relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity by smiling and invoking a play frame when making a correction in 6.3.2, Amy doubles down on her boldness and adopts an interactional role of a critic, and says, 'I don't know how you can afford it' (stave 7). This

has the potential to be interpreted as extremely offensive; even Malcolm does not go to such lengths when insulting the boys on Maple Street (Harness-Goodwin 1990). Lan and Amy are from largely similar middle class backgrounds, so positioning Lan as less well-off in the discourse of wealth positions Amy not as assertive, but unkind. Amy may intend this to be teasing or 'banter' and symbolic of their closeness thus not intended as nastiness, however, this is at odds with the normatively 'feminine' CofP co-constructed by Penguin Class, and humour goes against her 'serious' style.

Lan appears shocked, and takes a sharp intake of breath before telling Amy, 'That's rude – I'm offended' (stave 8). Her use of sarcasm to say, 'I'm offended' is in-keeping with her humorous style and shows she is not taking Amy's possible insult too seriously. In fact, her sarcasm belittles Amy slightly; her very use of sarcasm implies that though Amy might have intended offence, she has failed as Lan is not actually bothered. Her implication that she is 'rising above' Amy's comment contributes to her growing-up femininity. It could also be that she realises a challenge is futile; she predicts Amy will not apologise, 'And then you'll be like, no offence' (stave 8–9), which is shown to be true when Amy responds, 'No offence' (stave 9). However, this is after a nervous laugh, which suggests Amy may realise she has gone too far. That Lan predicted her 'no offence' suggests this is a formula Amy uses often, presumably to offset anything she might say which does cause offence and 'absolve herself of responsibility' (Kiesling 2023). Amy does not apologise, supporting her interactional role as a critic. Again showing her preoccupation with high-quality, Amy instead corrects an art-based activity Lan is completing of applying a layer of PVA over some painting which has caused it to smudge, saying, 'That makes them worse' (stave 10). After a two-second silence (stave 10), it is Lan, not Amy, who attempts to restore harmony with her topic change, where she declares 'I like Sehun' (stave 11), referring to her romantic crush on a member of K-pop band, EXO. This positions her similarly to Tilda in 6.3.1, using the discourse of heterosexual

femininity to construct herself as a growing-up girl as well as find a common topic to which they might all contribute. This topic is sustained until the end of the extract.

Amy's wish to mix the paint because she appears to believe she will do a better job than the others (stave 2), and attention to correcting Lan's work by telling Lan she has made the artwork 'worse' (stave 10), show her stance towards the project, a stance she repeatedly takes as their talk progresses. She is actively pro-school, and wants their work to be of the highest quality so they might win the competition. However, her (possibly jocular) insults, refusal to apologise, perceived rights to Lan's paint and proactive correction of Lan's grammar see her adopting an interactional role as a critic, and possibly sometimes an unkind one (e.g., stave 7). These show boldness and reveal her style, contributing to her local ethnographic position as an assertive, ambitious girl. As noted, however, Lan stands her ground, and sometimes reciprocates Amy's boldness, but this is usually in retaliation to Amy's declaratives. Lan's interactional role as a challenger alongside her use of sarcasm contribute to her local ethnographic position as an assertive, humorous girl. Despite Lan's attempts to challenge, ultimately, Amy positions herself as the leader. She succeeds insofar as Lan and Seyda do end up actioning many of her decisions. However, unlike other Groups, I do not think this is especially willingly. Their ratification seems to be based on a mixture of apprehension regarding her reaction and their related preference for an 'easy life' by going with the flow.

'Glitter Paint' shows Amy and Lan's styles, which are evident throughout the other extracts I analyse. Their stances and alignments towards the project and each other are made clear in 'River Island', which affect their decision-making talk. Although Seyda is almost completely silent during this recording, in this extract, her friendship with and support of Lan is clear:

River Island

1
Lan: I don't/ kno:w\
Seyda: Lan was her size the **ri:ght** (-) size

2
Amy: what do you mean size
Lan: when erm (.) we %don't% give

3
Amy: what do yo[u
Lan: her these (.) clothes yet do we (-)   [she's

4
Amy: presents/
Lan: only like eight weeks born   oh yeah Dad got

5
Lan: a present for Nancy and it's a (1) it's a River Island

6
Lan: (-) jump (.) cardigan and and I'm like (.) she's gonna

7
Lan: wear it when she's one million years **old** %I'm joking%

8
Lan: you only (.) you when/ ^you^ (.)
Seyda: I don't know (xxxxx)

9
Amy: but
Lan: when she's like (3) a **month** old she can wear them

10
Amy: there's no baby clothes in River Island do you not

11
Amy: know that=   [there's not   where\
Lan: =there i\/s   there is
Seyda: ye[ah

12
Lan: there's a bab (-) well (-) m (.) mini girls' section

13
Amy: which isn't **baby**   they're meant for like tall kids
Lan: well mini

14
Amy: which on:e >did you do that< (.) <did **you** do [that> (.)
Lan: no   [the thing

15
Amy: no Lan did you do that then:={*POINTING AT A PAINTED LEAF*}
Lan: (.) the   thing like   =yeah

16
Amy: do it quickly >do it with another one< (.) I wanna see if

```
17
Amy:        you're good enough
```

Seyda's question, 'Lan, was her size the right size?' (stave 1) refers to a conversation from a few

days before about Lan's baby sister. Because of their close friendship, Seyda knows Lan's dad had

bought her some clothes, and Lan shared that she was unsure whether they would fit. That Seyda

needs only to utter, 'her', and Lan knows exactly to whom she is referring shows their closeness;

like Tilda and Bella in 4.5.1, they are privy to personal information about each other. Opting to

have this discussion in front of Amy displays clearly their friendship and positions her as something

of an outsider. This is further clarified when Amy asks, 'What do you mean, size?' (stave 2), and,

'Presents?' (stave 4), after which Lan explains, 'Dad got a present for Nancy and it's a River Island

jump-cardigan, and I'm like she's gonna wear it when she's a million years old! I'm joking' (stave

4–7).

Lan's hyperbole and explicit contextualisation cue that she 'is joking' contribute to her local

ethnographic position as a humorous girl. She also discloses her feelings that she cannot believe

her sister will ever grow big enough to fit the baby clothes her dad has bought, illustrating how

small she is. However, rather than empathising, Amy says, 'But, there's no baby clothes in River

Island – do you not know that?' (stave 10–11). Perhaps hurt that she was excluded from Lan and

Seyda's prior interaction about Lan's sister and that she had to make multiple attempts to get

clarification about the topic (an exclusion also observed in 6.3.3), she questions the authenticity of

Lan's statement, claiming her father could not have bought baby clothes from River Island because

they do not sell them. She also shows boldness by asking, 'Do you not know that?'. Lan

immediately responds, 'There is', which is supported by Seyda's, 'Yeah' (both stave 11). This

support again displays Lan and Seyda's alignment and friendship. Convinced of her accuracy, Amy

asks for evidence, saying, 'Where?' (stave 11). This causes Lan to modify her assertion, 'There's a

baby, well, m- mini girls' section' (stave 11–12). This suggests Lan's understanding of 'mini girls' includes babies, whereas Amy declares mini girls 'isn't baby' (stave 12–13). Although Lan tries to make both girls correct with, 'Well, mini', Amy departs even further and suggests River Island does not sell clothes even for toddlers, 'They're meant for tall kids', which Lan contests with, 'No' (both stave 13). Perhaps realising the futility of the conflict over 'baby' versus 'mini girl', and maybe because she knows she is wrong, Amy redirects the attention towards their project, asking, 'Which one – did you do that?' (stave 14).

Amy's self-awarded status as the quality-controller is now again visible. After asking Lan, 'Did you do that?' while pointing to a painted leaf (stave 14), she says, 'Do it quickly, do it with another one – I wanna see if you're good enough' (staves 15–17). Noticing some well-executed ombré painting, Amy tells Lan to repeat her efforts, using a directive strategy frequently associated with indexing normative masculinity similar to Malcolm (Harness-Goodwin 1990) with her bald imperative, 'do' and adverb, 'quickly', to express her whims. Acknowledging Lan's higher relative skill, she positions herself as the one able to determine whether another's contribution meets the high-quality standards she has set for the project. This is particularly clear when she explicitly tells Lan she has to prove she is 'good enough' (stave 17), a standard which Amy will set and determine. Amy's strategies position her as domineeringly assertive. As the children said leaders should be 'nice' and 'not bossy' and the co-constructed 'feminine' CofP sanctions strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity, it led others to sometimes dislike working with her. However, as noted, some children appreciated her style as 'things get done with Amy'. While others may not have appreciated her choice of strategy, they did often appreciate the results she was able to achieve. This opinion may contribute to Amy's self-awarded 'quality controller' status.

The next extracts I analyse are episodes of decision-making talk. The styles and stances evidenced

in Group 2's pre-task talk are apparent and affect claims to leadership. In 'Palette', taking place

shortly after 'River Island', Lan and Amy are both painting cut-outs of horse chestnut tree leaves:

Palette
```
1
Amy:                    [hey/ (.) (acknowledging laugh) (.) ah so
Lan:        that one's [so cu:te{POINTING AT AMY'S WORK}

2
Amy:       that's (-) that one's really good but that one I don't

3
Amy:       think has enough paint on it        so I've got that
Lan:                                     (laughter)

4
Amy:       song in your head/ but are they [done now
Seyda:                                     ["blinded (.) by your

5
Amy:                       you laugh (.) so loudly {LAUGHING}
Lan:          (laughter)                            "yeah we're such
Seyda:     face"{COCKNEY ACCENT; QUOTING STORMZY}

6
Amy:                          I need some (.) Seyda can you pass me
Lan:        a quiet environment"{SARCASTIC}

7
Amy:       the palette %please%
Seyda:                         erm yeah there you are:{PASSES

8
Amy:                                   and yes [(xxxx)
Lan:                                           [what's this called/
Seyda:     PALETTE} (-) there you are
```

In this extract, Lan compliments Amy's work, 'That one's so cute' (stave 1) while pointing at a leaf,

and Amy accepts while rebuffing the compliment, saying, 'Ah, so, that's, that one's really good but

that one I don't think has enough paint on it' (stave 1–3). She accepts that one of her leaves is

'really good', but admits another needs more work. This shows Amy paying attention to some of

Penguin Class's preferred relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity as she

does not take the opportunity to brag about the first leaf to which she refers and draws attention

to the leaf which she perceives as being of lower quality. It also shows her actively pro-school

stance towards the project for which she values quality. Therefore, while she said to Lan in 'River

Island' that she wanted to see if she was 'good enough', she also holds herself to comparably high standards.

In stave 6, Amy has made the decision to add the paint she perceived was needed in stave 2–3. She says, 'I need some – Seyda, can you pass me the palette please?' (stave 6–7). Amy's strategy here pays attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity more than any other that she uses in the whole recording. Her use of modal, 'can', and politeness marker, 'please', alongside her friendly tone to mitigate the request bears more in common with Harness-Goodwin's (1990) girls than with Malcolm, with whom she has shown a striking resemblance thus far. That Seyda responds immediately by passing her a palette shows her appreciation for this as her request is ratified immediately, 'Erm, yeah, there you are' (stave 7). Unfortunately, however, Amy ignores the fact that Seyda has carried out her directive as Seyda has to repeat herself, 'there you **are**' (stave 8), and Amy does not acknowledge her efforts, by saying, for example, 'Thank you'.

This extract shows that Amy will sometimes use relational strategies associated with indexing normative femininity approved by the CofP. When she does, she is successful, and it does not detract from her actively pro-school stance or her efforts to make their project the highest quality it can be. However, in the following extracts, her actively pro-school stance and positioning of herself as similar to a teacher prioritising her definition of 'quality' results in directness and the use of linguistic strategies more typical of her style. Just before this extract, which takes place 15 minutes after 'Palette', Tilda (Group 3) had visited Group 2, asking for their favourite memories of school to include in her Group's doorframe. Amy objected on behalf of the group, interrupting Seyda to contest, and she and Tilda engaged in a countering sequence. Tilda then left the group without her desired information.

I Don't Wanna Die

```
1
Amy:      Lan/         Lan\{IRRITATED}(xxxxxx)    you just start the
Lan:          yeah{PAINTING} yeah/{LOOKS UP} huh/

2
Amy:      dip the (xxx) in there\ yeah/ (–) so bring [the
Lan:                                                 [how come

3
Lan:      you're only doing one (.) please/\ (.) I don't wanna

4
Amy:         no you're gonna go like this you're gonna do (.) like
Lan:      die

5
Amy:      [rainbow/\                                        [wait
Lan:      [wait for the st (.) wait this doesn't have a star [(–)

6
Amy:      no Lan           [Lan
Lan:      Sacha got a star [we can put that on the star
```

This extract begins with Amy attempting to secure Lan's attention. After Amy's initial 'Lan?', Lan's response, 'Yeah' (stave 1), is uttered while she focuses on painting from which she does not look up. Amy proceeds to repeat, 'Lan' (stave 1), but this time with falling intonation. This provides a contextualisation cue to Lan that this is a demand for her attention. Like her attention to standard English in 'Glitter Paint', in expecting Lan's eye-contact to indicate she is listening, Amy again positions herself like a teacher; eye-contact is an expectation many UK-based classroom teachers are encouraged to enforce. This positioning is in-keeping with Amy's style, and here, it appears to work; Lan looks up from her painting and presents her second, 'Yeah?' (stave 1) as a question, as if to ask, 'What do you need?'.

Now that she has Lan's attention, Amy shows boldness. Amy's turn, 'You just start the, dip the (xxx) in there – yeah?' (stave 1–2), is a declarative acting as a directive; Amy is telling Lan what to do, and how. In ethnographic observations, I noted that Amy is referring to painting cut-outs of horse-chestnut-tree leaves referred to in 'Palette'. Most important for understanding the boldness

implied in this directive is that Amy appears to have just simply decided that Lan should stop the work in which she is currently engaged and that she should begin a task Amy has decided is important based on her own whims and, unlike Group 1 and 3, without negotiation or explanation. Though Amy pays some attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity with her mitigating 'just', which shows similarities with Harness-Goodwin's (1990) girls, her interactional role as an instructor contributes to her local ethnographic position as an assertive girl and indexes an authoritative positioning. While Bella's status based on higher relative skill enabled her decisions to be actioned, Amy appears simply to decide she has the right to issue instructions based on her own ideas using her self-awarded 'quality-controller' status, seeming to bank on Lan's acquiescence. However, as noted, this status may be based on others' positive comments about Amy always ensuring the work gets done. Like Bella, who does not say 'I'm the best artist', Amy never says 'You have to do what I say', but her self-positioning as a leader is clear; she feels she can decide what Lan should or should not be doing, and how, apparently based on her whims without justification. This makes the status she relies upon slightly more complex than Bella's, as I discuss below.

The lack of explanation further indexes Amy's assumed authority as she does not feel compelled to provide justification. This is in contrast with Harness-Goodwin's boys who, though they show similar boldness when engaged in making catapults, I notice provide reasons when issuing directives, such as weapon usability or completion speed (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 100). Though Harness-Goodwin (ibid: 98) notes that the boys' reasons are often their 'arbitrary whims', she acknowledges that the objective of the task may account for their use. What is particularly interesting in Group 2 is that Amy appears to have individually decided what is important for their design, with quality as the main motivator, but she bases her definition of quality on her own understanding. She therefore proscribes the needs of the task based on her personal opinions of

how their design should look as she wants it to look the best it can, contributing to her actively

pro-school local ethnographic position. However, offering no explanation for why her instructions

should be followed, she expects her teammates to action them without question. Her directness

indexes authority, and in her issuing of instructions without explanation she again adopts a

teacher positioning as teachers also often do this (although this does not mean we

have not considered reasons!).

Although discourse markers are 'pragmatically variant or multifunctional' (Farahani and Ghane

2021: 50, see Schleef 2005, Lee 2017), Amy's teacher positioning is demonstrated further in her

use of the clause-final discourse marker, 'Yeah?', 'Dip the (xxx) in there, yeah?' (stave 2). In her

study of the functional distribution of tag, 'you know?' in naturally occurring spontaneous speech,

Holmes (1986) differentiates between 'modal' and 'facilitative' tags. She outlines that modal tags

are used to express uncertainty or signal the speaker's desire for confirmation about the validity of

a proposition, and facilitative are addressee-oriented and used to facilitate others' contributions.

Thus, 'yeah?' can be used as a tag-question, as if to say, 'Is that OK?', however, considering Amy's

style, repeated stance-taking and local ethnographic position, she appears to use 'yeah?' to mean,

'Do you understand?'. The use of clause-final 'yeah?' in this way is a strategy frequently observed

in teacher-to-pupil talk (Chen and He 2001; Schleef 2005; Michalovic and Netz 2008; Othman

2010). In their study of Israel-based teachers' use of Hebrew, 'Naxon?' (equivalent to 'yeah?'),

Amir Michalovic and Hadar Netz (2008) argue that, when, like Amy's, it occurs after an instruction

sequence, it 'blocks opportunities' for response (Michalovic and Netz 2008: 57). As she also leaves

no pre-tag gap which invites speaker response (Östman 1981; see 'Duck Names' in 4.2.3). Amy

appears to be preventing Lan from responding, particularly from objecting, to her set of

instructions. She also appears patronising, as she positions herself as a knowledgeable teacher and

Lan as a novice pupil despite Lan's higher relative skill.

However, Lan boldly interrupts Amy, saying, 'How come you're only doing one – please? I don't wanna die' (stave 2–4). In-keeping with her style, Lan shows here both assertiveness and humour. Her assertiveness is clear from her use of interruption with direct request for justification, 'How come you're only doing one?' and humour through hyperbole, 'I don't wanna die'. Lan's interruption 'actively disputes' Amy's claim of superiority, as lower-status Chopper does with group leader Malcolm in Harness-Goodwin's study of boys' task talk (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 100). From my ethnographic observations, it seems Lan's refusal to unquestioningly follow Amy's instructions is because she interprets her tone as patronising, particularly as Amy is positioning herself as a 'teacher', an adult, talking to 'pupils', which positions Lan and Seyda as children. However, possibly motivated by her apprehension regarding Amy's reaction to her refusal or because she does not want to be too assertive, Lan follows with 'please' after a small pause, 'How come you're only doing one – please?' (stave 3). Lan is arguably bolder than Harness-Goodwin's boys and Baxter's (2015) all-male group when they object to others' ideas. She uses 'you' to oppose Amy directly ('How come you're only doing one – please?'), whereas Harness-Goodwin's boys talk about themselves ('I know how to') and Baxter's men use 'we' ('we need to think of the height') when challenging instructions. Lan's use of 'please' may therefore be a mitigating afterthought, paying attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity. Considering the relationships elucidated in my analysis in this section, it would appear that Lan wishes to avoid Amy's criticisms and takes steps to prevent this.

Unlike Amy, who does not provide reasons for her instruction in stave 1–2, Lan provides a justification for her objection, 'I don't wanna die' (stave 3–4). Though humorously hyperbolic, in-keeping with her style, it hints at her apprehension. She has been instructed to paint multiple leaves, whereas Amy has assigned herself only one. It appears Lan does not wish to paint so many,

predicting her efforts will not meet Amy's standards. Amy's self-granted 'quality controller' status, where she determines the standard, appears to be leaving Lan in slight limbo wondering if her efforts will suffice. Lan shows her dislike of the unpredictability of Amy's reaction, particularly what could happen should she make an error; though she would not 'die', in reality, she may get 'told off' by Amy. Perhaps remembering Amy's confrontational style and personal insults in 'Glitter Paint' and 'River Island', this is probably something she would rather avoid.

Amy's response to Lan's apprehension, 'No you're gonna go like this, you're gonna do… rainbow' (stave 4–5), completely ignores the apprehension Lan shared about 'not wanting to die' (stave 3–4). Instead, Amy focuses on the interruption to the action rather than Lan's objection to the terms of her instruction, that Lan will paint several leaves, and she will paint only one. Amy uses the same strategy as stave 1–2, where a declarative acts as a directive as she tells Lan exactly what she will be doing. This again shows Amy positioning herself as a teacher and Lan as a pupil. Lan, however, does not appreciate Amy's actions, and interrupts her again to outline an error that she has noticed in their work, 'Wait this doesn't have a star… Sacha got a star, we can put that on the star' (stave 5–6). During ethnographic observations, I noted that they were writing names in stars to display on the leaves, and Lan is referring to a star that Sacha, in another group, has spare. Here, Lan uses interruptions and topic-change to question Amy's positioning of herself as someone entitled to issue instructions, and takes the focus away from the quality of the leaves. Interestingly, she is also concerned with the quality of their output, but Amy does not appear to deem the stars important and interrupts her back saying, 'Wait, no Lan… Lan' (stave 5–6). Lan, refusing to be interrupted, continues talking, and her use of 'we' and modal 'can', 'We can put that on the star', suggests attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity.

In this extract, Amy's self-granted role as 'quality-controller' contributing to her actively pro-school stance alongside her assumption of a teacher positioning is authority-affording; she makes decisions based on her own whims which she does not justify. However, while she has authority, she does not have the local status of popularity constituted through likeability like Tilda (Chapter 6) to temper her directness. As I have shown, Lan is also bold, but her bold strategies are often aimed at instating fairness, considering the impact on everyone, not just herself. Unlike Amy, Lan shows some commonality with Harness-Goodwin's girls and indexes a preference for egalitarianism commonly associated with women's talk (Coates 2004). The continuation of this extract demonstrates something extremely rare in single-sex girls' talk – Amy further invokes her teacher positioning, holding the floor for several staves to issue bold instructions, based on her whims. I reproduce stave 6 from 'I Don't Wanna Die' so that the continuation is clear:

"Properly"
```
1
Amy:        [no [Lan              [Lan                          we need
Lan:        [Sac[ha  got a star [we can put that on the star

2
Amy:        a (xxxxxx) (-) OK\ (3) you're gonna do this (.) you're

3
Amy:        gonna paint it properly (.) properly (-) OK/ (1) properly

4
Amy:        (.) look like that (-) do like that (-) around the circle

5
Amy:        like that see/ (-) so it'll be one like that and one like

6
Amy:        that one like that one like that one like that and that

7
Amy:        yeah/ (2) and then I'll do the door (2) and this th:ing

8
Amy:             just go one (1) two three four five OK/ and then
Seyda:      yeah\

9
Amy:         (-) if [there       yeah (.) I mean (.) five maximum
Lan:               [one just one
```

```
10
Amy:            yeah\ (.) cause they'll go outside there\ <one two>
Seyda:      now/

11
Amy:        >three four five< (1) but make don't make them too clo:se

12
Amy:                        yeah (–) look (.) they go there (1) the:re
Lan:                (xxxx)
Seyda:      (xxxxxx)

13
Amy:        (–) the:re {PATRONISING}
Lan:                    what if we mess up (–) you're gonna be

14
Amy:                yeah                              we'll
Lan:        annoyed      am I gonna get in trouble (–) or (xxxx)

15
Amy:        see (–) OK so (.) and then if (.) if this (.) if this
```

I note in Part II that, while studies of middle-class girls show their preference for indirect directives, girls from working-class backgrounds are willing to show directness in their language and choice of directives (Harness-Goodwin 1994, 1998; Eder 1995). Amy's sequence of instructions, again filled with declaratives acting as directives, e.g., 'You're gonna do this' (stave 2), bald imperatives, e.g., 'Don't make them too close' (stave 11), and modal tags which again replicate a teacher positioning rather than mitigate, e.g., 'OK?' (stave 3), 'see?' (stave 5), and 'yeah?' (stave 7), exceeds 14 staves with infrequent interruptions. Amy therefore challenges the difference paradigm (see 2.2.1), showing middle-class girls can also be direct, but this is not necessarily appreciated by others. Holding the floor for such a period bears a strong similarity to Coates's (2013[1997]) observations of the one-at-a-time floor in men's friendship talk, however it is not aimed at doing friendship. Coates suggests that a goal of these men's conversations is the exchange of information, which, she argues, they use to maintain good social relations. However, they do not use their monologues to issue instructions, but to share 'playing the expert', each taking turns to assume the role (ibid: 138–139). Here, only Amy issues instructions, again presenting herself similarly to a teacher. Her self-granted 'quality-controller' status positions her

as the judge of requisite quality and she appears to feel she is therefore licensed to direct others and determine the acceptability of their efforts. Amy's instruction sequence bears most similarity with Harness-Goodwin's (1990: 122) observations of boys' task talk, where instructing others without using voice or a play frame to mitigate provides a way of 'interactively establish[ing]' claims about higher expertise and standing. Although the higher-ranked boys on Maple Street issue instructions to lower-ranked boys, Amy has not been appointed a leader, and her sequence is longer and more candid than any boys' on Maple Street. Amy therefore uses her 'quality-controller' status to allocate jobs for Lan and Seyda while detailing the standard she expects.

As Harness-Goodwin (1990) notes, superiority of speakers is not established in a vacuum, but with the acceptance, or challenge, of others. Lan and Seyda each respond differently to Amy's instruction sequence. Seyda complies and Lan challenges, but neither refuses. As noted, this appears to be because they would rather avoid enraging Amy and have an 'easy life', and attempt to maintain good social relations. Seyda's, 'Yeah' (stave 8), and, 'Now?' (stave 10), ratify Amy's self-positioning as the decision-maker and instructor. She agrees to her ideas, and then confirms when Amy wants them to commence. This demonstrates her acquiescence to Amy's control, positioning herself as a follower and Amy as the ultimate authority. Lan, however, challenges Amy. In stave 8, Amy specifies the order in which to complete the leaves discussed in 'Palette' and 'I Don't Wanna Die'. Seemingly disliking being told what to do and having her skills overused, Lan requests that she do 'one, just one' leaf (stave 9). Though Amy appears to agree, saying, 'Yeah' (stave 9), she has misunderstood. She says, 'Five maximum' (stave 9), so, while Lan was attempting to reduce her workload, Amy interprets it as her concern about the possibility of completing too many. This lack of attention to others' contributions positions her in a similar way to Malcolm (Harness-Goodwin 1990), who was absorbed with his own wants and did not accept others' views.

Lan communicates her understanding of Amy's 'quality-controller' status, saying, 'What if we mess up, you're gonna be annoyed' (stave 13–14). Intriguingly, Amy concurs, admitting 'Yeah' (stave 14), she will be annoyed. This confirms her perception of herself as the authority on quality. When Lan asks, 'Am I gonna get in trouble or (xxx)?' and Amy replies, 'We'll see' (stave 14–15), Lan ratifies Amy's powerful position as she enables Amy to decide whether she will be 'in trouble', positioning herself in a childly way, as someone whose fate is determined by another. This also ratifies Amy's teacher positioning. Amy's 'we'll see' demonstrates her power even further; she uses her 'quality-controller' status to put Lan in limbo, indicating that she will decide whether it meets her standards, but only once Lan has completed the work.

Lan and Seyda's responses to Amy show the power of Amy's self-appointed, but unstated, quality-controller status. Similar to Malcolm in the catapult battle (Harness-Goodwin 1990), Amy not only issues all instructions in Group 2, but also makes the decisions about their doorframe's appearance based on her own opinions rather than group consensus. While in Group 1 higher relative skills-based status empowered Bella to see her design decisions actioned, Lan's superior skill does not serve her comparably. In fact, Amy recognises Lan's higher relative skill, and directs her on how to use it in pursuit of Amy's agenda. While it is not realistic to argue that Amy is constructing herself as a 'particular *kind*' of boy (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original) in her preference for linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity in her language, the strategies she uses have been most commonly observed in men and boys' talk where authority is afforded to one individual, or in teacher-to-pupil talk where authority is granted by job role. Rather, her instructions and directives are issued because she is so concerned with quality, using her self-granted 'quality-control' status. This contributes to her local ethnographic position as a domineeringly assertive, serious girl. As noted, Lan's higher relative skills-based status does not

allow her to make decisions, but it does allow her to challenge Amy. Seyda is quiet and compliant

throughout, but she supports Lan, especially in their pre-task talk. The relationships established in

'Glitter Paint' and 'River Island' also impact on their conduct in the task. Experiencing some of

Amy's unkindness perhaps makes Lan and Seyda wary of taking the lead or presenting too many

challenges, and allowed them to understand when to comply to save an altercation or insults.

In the next section, I explore how Group 3 makes decisions, where their preference for

egalitarianism is clear.

4.2.3 Group 3: Fliss, Grace and Alice – Friendship, Egalitarianism and a List

Fliss, Grace and Alice are close friends and have similar achievement levels across the curriculum,

including art. Thus, while Bella's status as a highly-skilled artist encourages her teammates to

support her ideas for design decisions in Group 1, Group 3's similar achievement levels mean no

one has the skills-based status to see their decisions actioned. However, unlike Group 2, no-one

decides they will define if the work meets an indeterminate standard based on personal

perceptions. Instead, after choosing to work together immediately, Group 3 appears to be

invested in friendship management and maintenance as they make their decisions, and their

statuses as friends stand as proxy for decisions being actioned which are understood as being for

the group's interest. Group 3 uses many relational strategies associated with indexing normative

femininity to issue directives, and leadership positions are assumed only fleetingly as the girls

place high value on egalitarianism and all parties feeling valued. This collaborative, egalitarian

approach is associated with women's talk and suggests the girls are constructing growing-up

femininities as, like Coates's (2013[1999]) pre-adolescents, they are beginning to talk more like

women. Contributing to this is their use of a co-created handwritten list as a neutral resource in

their decision-making. This demonstrates and facilitates their egalitarian approach as they all

contributed to its creation, removing the possibility of one member's ideas or whims being actioned above others. They all adopt similar pro-school stances towards the project, though none are actively pro-school.

In the extract I analyse, Fliss, Grace and Alice work on their design, writing every child's 'duck' name on their doorframe. The 'ducks' were a trend started by Tilda in the form-group, contributing to her local ethnographic position as a funny, popular girl. 'Ducks' were formed by children making their non-dominant hands into a beak by pinching together the thumb as the lower beak and fingers as the upper beak to resemble a duck. Tilda named her duck Jimmy, and others followed with ducks whose names rhymed (e.g., my duck was Timmy, Frankie's was Slimmie, Bella's was Limmy[6]). Ethnographic observations show children often sat with their non-dominant hand formed as their duck while focusing on their schoolwork, and their duck would sometimes 'whisper answers' if they were stuck.

Showing the ducks' importance in the CofP by including them on their doorframe, Group 3 had spent some of the previous session collaboratively writing a list of everyone's name alongside their duck's name to ensure all would be included. Adopting an interactional role as a diplomat and contributing to her local ethnographic position as a diplomatic girl, Fliss had suggested they split the list equally so that each group member was responsible for writing 10 ducks' names on their doorframe. This list alongside their wish to maintain good social relations allows the girls to make decisions.

As well as their egalitarian approach with the list, Group 3's topic change was less frenetic than

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[6] Bella naming her duck after unconventional comedian, Limmy, further contributes to her local ethnographic position as a cool girl. Limmy is something of a niche cult comedian, unknown by the other child in Penguin Class.

Group 1's, again suggesting, like Coates's (2013[1999]) girls, that they are beginning to grow up

and talk more like women. Their willingness to stay 'on topic' also shows the positive stance they

take towards the project, confirming their pro-school stances. However, unlike Amy, they are not

actively pro-school as quality does not become justification for action or direction.

Prior to this extract, Alice had stated she had nothing to do. Here, the group decides on some

activities she could undertake:

Duck names
```
1
Fliss:
Grace:     ALIC:Eᵉ{SMILING; SARCASTIC} right Slim Jim then\ (.) yes/
Alice:            %I've% ^got i:t^{SMILING; HOLDING ON TO WATER POT}


2
Fliss:     %I know\% {TALKING TO HERSELF, LOOKING AT DESIGN}
Grace:            "oh I/ (.) oh I was doing oh cause I was doing


3
Fliss:                          [thanks{SMILING}
Grace:     Slim Jim for you: [(-) Slim Jim is gone/ (.) erm (-) what


4
Fliss:            =L: Lily/ (.) Lily (.) L I L Y/
Grace:     abou:t= {LOOKING AT LIST}                Lily/ (.) that's


5
Fliss:                 cause I think (.) the (.) when [they're all
Grace:     (.) gone{LOOKING AT LIST}                      [Limmy/
Alice:            L I L


6
Fliss:     there they'll look pardon/=     Mama Grape/{POINTING TO
Grace:                                =yeah
Alice:                                            do Mama


7
Fliss:     SELF} Mama Gra:pe/                   =OK (-) otherwise
Grace:                 no Limmy do Limmy:=
Alice:     Grape\


8
Fliss:     we might have done Limmy             there\{POINTS}
Alice:                          where is Limmy/
```

As this extract opens, Alice has just almost knocked over a pot of water. Grace adopts an

interactional role of a critic and appears to reprimand Alice for this, but, typical of her style, she

also invokes a humorous tone when she says 'Aliceᵊ' with a deliberately exaggerated word-final schwa (stave 1). This contributes to her local ethnographic position as an assertive, dry-humoured girl; her schwa is a contextualisation cue to Alice that, though she is reprimanding her, she is not being serious. When Alice reassures her that the pot of water is steady, 'I've got it!' (stave 1), her smiling shows her 'interpersonal alignment' (Kiesling 2009: 172) with Grace's humour, and maintains good social relations, showing their friendship. Like Maybin's (2009: 49) girls who shift 'rapidly' and 'effortlessly' between discursive positionings, Grace is then able to shift almost immediately from being (mock-)annoyed with Alice to focus on the task, responding to Alice's request for something she can do to contribute. Grace's willingness to find Alice a job implies she is taking a stance which indexes authority, but it is much less forceful than Amy who simply decides to direct Lan (see 4.2.2). In fact, Grace has stopped the task in which she was engaged to help Alice, at her request, showing her prioritisation of others' needs. This contributes to her local ethnographic position as a principled girl as she does what is 'right'. Thus, Grace's local ethnographic position as an assertive but principled, dry-humoured girl allows her to be positioned, fleetingly, as a leader. The status she holds as a friend also means Alice does not feel inferior.

Grace shows leadership by suggesting that Alice write duck name, Slim Jim[7], saying 'Right, Slim Jim then – yes?' (stave 1). Here, Grace uses a declarative as a directive. Though this might appear similar to Amy's strategies in Group 2 (e.g., 'Dip the (xxxx) in there, yeah?'; see 4.2.2), Grace's use of discourse marker, 'yes?', functions differently. As noted in 4.2.2, Holmes (1986) differentiates between 'modal' and 'facilitative' tags. Whereas Amy's 'yeah?' is 'modal', as if to say, 'Do you understand?', here, Grace's is 'facilitative', as if to say, 'Is this OK with you?'. Additionally, Grace's

---

[7] Slim Jim is Sam's duck. Choosing the name, 'Slim Jim' contributes to his local ethnographic position as 'rebellious' as it does not rhyme like the others, while also showing his admiration of Frankie, whose duck, 'Slimmie', was named first.

'yeah?' follows a pause, which, Östman (1981) finds, encourages addressees' verbal and nonverbal feedback. Grace therefore uses 'relationally-oriented' strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, as approved by the CofP, when suggesting a task for Alice (Holmes 2009: 189). As Grace does not require Alice to undertake any action in a proscribed manner and it is the result of Alice requesting, it also displays Group 3's more egalitarian approach towards the task.

Egalitarianism is also evident in their use of a co-created list. In a previous lesson, they collaboratively catalogued everyone in the class's name beside their 'duck' name. Grace consults their list to find Slim Jim has been completed but not ticked, 'Oh I, oh I was doing, oh 'cause I was doing Slim Jim for **you**… Slim Jim is gone' (stave 3–4). Even though it was allocated to Fliss, indicated by her contrastive stress on 'you' (Ladd 1978), this, like Tilda procuring the orange paint in Group 1 despite her dislike of the colour, displays clearly Grace's relational concerns as she shows willingness to complete work on someone else's behalf for the good of the team. While if occurring in Group 2, this action might appear controlling, ethnographic fieldnotes showed that she and Fliss had previously agreed that Grace would finish some of Fliss's allocated duck names while Fliss completed a more time-consuming task. Fliss's grateful, 'Thank you' (stave 4) shows that she appreciates Grace's support, emphasising the attention they pay to social relationships and friendship while working through the task. This is achieved in their social practices, as they invested much time in and placed high value upon their friendships, as well as their use of relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity approved by the CofP. Both Fliss and Grace therefore show a positive stance towards the project and align with each other.

Grace then says, 'What about…' (stave 4) as she searches for a different duck name for Alice to write. This again shows their preference for egalitarianism, as it is a suggestion for future action rather than an order directed to a specific addressee. Fliss then latches to suggest, 'Lily?' (stave 4).

As Cameron (2011[1997]) notes, this latching may be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it could be Fliss attempting to usurp Grace's current more authoritative position and claim it for herself, or it could indicate that Fliss is paying close attention to Grace and wishes to support her by sharing a suggestion to help with the task of finding something for Alice to do. Considering their close friendship and Fliss's orientation to diplomacy in her style, the latter appears the most likely, especially as Fliss's intonation is questioning rather than instructional. Fliss's suggestion of 'Lily?' is therefore an utterance completion, which, as Coates (1996) demonstrates, is typical of a collaborative floor, further reinforcing their egalitarianism. Grace accepts the suggestion, 'Lily? That's gone…' (stave 4–5), confirming she does not see this as a violation of turn-taking rights (Edelsky 1981). This preference for co-operation, seen throughout Group 3's decision-making talk, is commonly associated with women's friendly talk (Holmes 1995; Coates 1996, 1998) and, unlike Group 2, implies ideas are group property rather than the property of a single speaker. This shows the importance they place on maintaining good social relations and friendships when making decisions.

Although they show a preference for egalitarianism, in stave 6, their local social order is very subtly detectable. Fliss suggests that she complete a duck, saying 'Mama Grape?' while pointing to herself, as if to say, 'Shall I do Mama Grape?' or, 'Is Mama Grape allocated to me?'. As Fliss directs her question to Grace, it positions Grace as the leader. Alice, however, interprets this as a suggestion directed to her, and accepts, saying 'Mama Grape' with falling intonation (stave 6–7), as if to say 'OK, I'll do Mama Grape', which positions Fliss as someone whose instructions she will follow. Surprised, Fliss repeats 'Mama **Gra**pe?' (stave 7), as if to say, 'You're doing Mama Grape? I thought it was me', this time directing her question to Alice. This is an indirect way of dealing with their miscommunication as Fliss does not use a polarity marker or reprimand Alice, and again suggests the importance of egalitarian social relations for the group. Grace, again consulting the

list, tells Alice to do Limmy, 'No Limmy, do Limmy' (stave 7). The use of polarity marker, 'no', and imperative, 'do', could appear bold, though, as Harness-Goodwin (1990: 78) notes, a direct imperative may be the most appropriate way to accomplish certain actions; it may be that, because they have spent some time deliberating which duck Alice should work on, Grace is spurred by urgency in finding her a task. Alice's silence and willingness to unquestioningly comply with Grace's plans 'ratifies' Grace's leadership (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 101) and shows Alice positioning herself as below both Grace and Fliss; she assumes Fliss is instructing her, again positioning Fliss as a leader, and presents no challenge to Grace.

Fliss shows relational awareness when she responds to Grace's suggestion that Alice do Limmy. She says, 'OK, otherwise, we might have done Limmy' (stave 7–8), and utters her next turn, 'There' (stave 8), while swiftly locating Limmy on their doorframe by pointing. This indicates she knew Limmy had been completed, but her use of inclusive pronoun, 'we', and modal, 'might', are strategies used by Harness-Goodwin's (1990) girls, and maintain the social relations of the group using relational strategies associated with indexing normative femininity by presenting its completion as a possibility. Presenting a direct challenge to Grace would be bold, and their friendship appears to mean more to Fliss than correcting her friend, so she prioritises relational practices to point out Limmy has already been written.

These extracts show that, in Group 3, maintaining egalitarian friendships plays a significant part in decision-making facilitated by the girls' use of relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity. Decisions are not made because of one group member's whims or fixation with 'quality' like in Group 2, rather, their friendships and unstated preference for egalitarianism stand as proxy, and a 'neutral', co-created document, a list, provides them with direction. Though Grace and Fliss are positioned as leaders, it is the list which dictates the action taken. This is similar

to the way in which Tessa helps to manage her group's project in Baxter's (2015) study of three hexads' task-management by keeping a record of the time left to complete the project, using a clock rather than her own whims, where, like Amy, Tessa could insist that things be completed more quickly as motivation.

The girls' local ethnographic position as pro-school girls are shown in their positive stances towards the project, also revealing their positive alignments with each other as they all care about their work. Grace's construction as a dry-humoured, assertive and principled girl is shown in her style, and this, alongside her status as a close friend of both Fliss and Alice allows her to, fleetingly, adopt a leadership position. Fliss is also fleetingly positioned as a leader. Her local ethnographic position and style as a diplomatic girl facilitate this as she makes sure the work is divided equally, ensuring her latch to suggest a name for Alice to write is interpreted not as bold, but supportive. Their decisions are therefore actioned because of their local identity constructions and friendships alongside their attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity, and the use of a neutral resource.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has explored leadership in the talk of three self-selected triads of girls as they make decisions related to their design for a doorframe to be displayed at the entrance to the classroom. My analysis shows that none of the groups approach the task in the same way, while also emphasising the importance of understanding speakers as 'whole' subjects so that connections can be made between identity construction and leadership attempts and success.

Demonstrating the different strategies utilised by each group shows that, unlike Davies's (2011[2003]) findings, girls in single-sex groups working towards achieving the same LO approach

the task in different ways. However, most of my girls show a preference for issuing, and receiving, directives using relational strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. Also striking is the consideration and power of different statuses; in these groups, higher relative skill, quality-control, and friendship. These statuses are closely related to individuals' social practices, local ethnographic positions and identity constructions. While in her study of workplace meeting outcomes, McRae (2009) finds that those with higher occupational status afforded by their job titles are more likely to see their ideas actioned almost regardless of linguistic strategy (see 2.1.7), my girls use local identity constructions elucidated in local ethnographic positions rather than 'official' job titles to support leadership. This is particularly visible in the statuses the girls use in decision-making. The statuses are not invoked or acknowledged, but all group members understand their power and presence.

Furthermore, it may also be the case that the girls use their local ethnographic positions to temper any positions which might be regarded as being too authoritative and therefore going against the CofP preference for strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. For example, in 4.2.3, Fliss's contribution, 'Lily', is intelligible as supportive rather than domineering because of her local ethnographic position as a diplomatic girl, and the status of her friendship with Grace (the speaker she supports). Without this understanding of her local ethnographic position, her actions might be misinterpreted. Amy's leadership attempts are bolder than any other speaker's in Part I. Her local ethnographic position as a domineeringly assertive, serious, actively pro-school girl is constituted in her conduct in this chapter. She uses her self-appointed status as 'quality controller' to instruct others, though I have noted this may be because of the form-group's shared history and her knowledge of her reputation as someone 'who gets things done and to a high standard'. She may therefore be living up to this label in her leadership decisions.

In general, then, the girls' identity constructions facilitate leadership. This is as 'particular *kinds*' of girl (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original), as well as particular kinds of learner. The girls all show a pro-school stance towards their project, and all show investment in its completion. However, some girls take what I have labelled an 'actively' pro-school stance towards the project, where they appear more invested or dedicated than others. Exploring curriculum-oriented talk therefore illuminates the relationship between both social and learner identity constructions and leadership. It also shows that we should not expect all girls to approach a task in the same way based on their gender, but consider how local and nuanced identities, ethnographic positions and CofP-approved strategies support and influence the girls' choices surrounding leadership.

In the next chapter, I explore how two boys' groups approach the same task.

Chapter 5: Leadership in Boys' Curriculum-oriented Talk

5.1 Introduction

As detailed in I.i, this chapter explores boys' leadership in a curriculum-oriented context. I examine the talk of two triads of boys simultaneously engaged in a curriculum activity, the same as the girls in Chapter 4, creating a doorframe as part of a cross-curricular RE and art project (see I.iii).

Particularly interesting about the talk I explore in this chapter is not just the unique data it offers documenting how pre-adolescent boys make decisions in self-selected groups in a creative learning context, but the way their talk departs from many previous findings about boys' talk in both in-school and out-of-school contexts. Unlike Davies's (2011[2003]) boys, they are able to show investment in schoolwork without fear of homophobia and ridicule, and, in contrast with Harness-Goodwin's (1990) observations of Malcolm and the boys, toughness does not guarantee leadership (see I.ii). Also particularly noteworthy is, in line with Penguin Class's co-constructed CofP (see 2.1.8), the boys' success in using linguistic strategies that pay attention to relational practices traditionally associated with indexing normative femininity when attempting leadership. My analysis in this chapter therefore presents an intriguing insight into the relationship between pre-adolescent boys' identity constructions and leadership in single-sex groups, as they work towards the achievement of a curriculum objective in a school-based, learning context. Like the girls, I find that the boys' identity constructions, built through interactional roles, local ethnographic positions, social practices and stance-taking, support or limit leadership, especially their constructions as 'particular *kinds*' of boy (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original). Table 5.1 offers further ethnographic information about each of the boys. Additionally, like the girls, they also construct themselves as particular kinds of learner: actively pro-school, pro-school, or rebellious.

Name	Close friends	Ethnographic information	Local ethnographic position/style and *local status*
Marcelo	Leon Tilda	• Well-liked but maintains a few close friendships • High-achieving across all subjects • Talented artist • Talented across the performing arts. In choir; lead roles in assemblies • Selected for athletics and tag-rugby teams • Class Captain • Wears fashionable clothing, e.g., dark-coloured joggers and Vans jumper	Friendly, consultative, thoughtful, grown-up, actively pro-school boy *Highly skilled artist*
Adam	Frankie Aiden	• Enjoys spending time with his friends • Well-liked in Penguin Class; not as popular as Frankie. However, they are each other's closest friend • Wears fashionable clothing, similar to Marcelo and Frankie	Laidback boy
Leon	Marcelo	• Slapstick humour • Full of energy • Loves maths and science • Wears fashionable clothing with bright colours and patterns	Enthusiastic, supportive, young, pro-school boy
Frankie	Adam Cenk Sam	• Well-liked, popular member of Penguin Class • Enjoys football • Class Captain • Selected for cricket team • Regarded 'cool' • Sometimes rebellious; not as much as Sam • Wears fashionable, often sporty, clothing, such as tapered sports trousers, football shirts	Popular, cool boy *Popularity*
Sam	Frankie Cenk	• Enjoys sport, particularly rugby • Selected for football, tag-rugby, athletics and cricket teams. Plays for a professional rugby union youth team • High-achieving across all subjects, particularly maths • Honest and strives to do the 'right' thing • Wears fashionable, sporty clothing	Tough, rebellious, competitive boy
Jordan	Matty	• Historically close with Matty; recently grew closer with Frankie • Can appear a bit immature • Enthusiastic and compliant • Wears fashionable sporty clothing, similar to Frankie/Sam	Enthusiastic, innocent, young boy

Table 5.1: Ethnographic information about the boys

My findings depart from dominant 'poor boys' discourses frequently promoted by research on boys in schools and the media (this criticism is raised by Francis 2000; Skelton 2000b; Swain 2004; Francis and Skelton 2005a, b; Arnot and Mac an Ghaill 2006; Reay 2006; Archer et al. 2007; Mendick 2013). The 'poor boys' discourse is rife in education, and it is often used to explain the alleged 'significant problem' that 'too many boys are struggling at school'. Indeed, Matt Pinkett and Mark Roberts's (2019) book acts as a manual for teachers to 'ensure male students enjoy the same success as girls', offering 'solutions' for boys' lower achievement levels, lack of interest, sexist attitudes and higher exclusion rates (ibid: iii). I do acknowledge that, as these studies exemplify, this discourse is prevalent and for many it feels easy to rationalise. Because this chapter argues that boys' local identity constructions as 'particular *kinds*' of boy (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original) enhance understanding of how leadership is done and achieved, in the next section, I outline current thinking around masculinities in schools. Like Jackson (2006: 45) argues, this is not because I view school as a 'feminine' entity against which they are constructing themselves. Rather, the current 'poor boys' discourse is so dominant that constructions of masculinities must be addressed. In the next section, I summarise this research with reference to Skipwith Primary.

5.2 Masculinities in Schools

As noted, I do not align with research that promotes a 'poor boys' discourse when discussing boys in school. However, considering all messages about gender in society to which children are exposed (see Thorne 1993 and Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013 who discuss the constant and often discreet messaging children and young people absorb), it is important to acknowledge the wider societal expectations and constraints of masculinities to which my boys will also have been exposed as the boys in Davies's (2011[2003]) study clearly were. For Davies's boys, this is

illuminated by their use of homophobic insults and sexist humour to oppose engagement with any schoolwork. Such features suggest exposure to global discourses of hegemonic masculinity.

Robert Lawson (2020: 410) outlines in his annual review of the field of language and masculinities that men both experience and maintain a 'privileged and hegemonic position in society'. The concept of hegemonic masculinity, developed by Raewyn Connell, is defined as 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (Connell 2005: 77). It must also be noted that the construct of hegemonic masculinity is neither static nor permanent; hegemonic masculinities visibly change over time (for example, the 'beefcake' in the 1980s to the 'metrosexual' in the 2000s – see Lawson 2009: 35-36; Tuncay 2005), and differing local hegemonic masculinities are observable in particular contexts.

Swain (2004) observes precisely this in his ethnography of three London-area primary schools. Exploring the construction of context-specific hegemonic forms, he notes the boys' overwhelming concern with peer group hierarchy. He makes links with the role of local hegemonies in boys' rankings in this hierarchy. Making connections between the 'resources', the 'types of capital, or 'stock'' used to acquire prestige, and the boys' 'strategies', 'the processes that [they] use to apply them', he considers how the boys construct and maintain particular 'exalted', or hegemonic, masculinities (Swain 2004: 168). He demonstrates, therefore, that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is flexible because each setting has its own hegemonic form, which has been at least partially determined by the institution. Swain argues that the boys are limited by 'open and available', 'restricted' and 'closed' options for using specific resources and strategies to perform masculinities. These resources and strategies are determined by the school. For example, at

Westmoor Abbey School, a non-selective state school in central London, pupils are permitted to wear trainers, and therefore certain brands and styles accrue prestige, whereas at Highwoods, a selective entry, fee-paying private school in a London suburb, a strict uniform policy forbids trainers, so pupils utilise other resources, such as sporting achievements, to build prestige. Each setting, therefore, has a unique local hegemony to which many of the boys Swain studies aspire, even if this local hegemony is never wholly or permanently achievable by any one individual. There may also be variation between groups within one setting. For example, in Eckert's (1989) study of Belten High, a mixed-sex high school in Detroit, USA, two CofPs emerge as significant, the 'jocks' and the 'burnouts'. Though Eckert does not use the terminology of a school-based hegemony, she demonstrates the power of attempted embodiment of each CofP's values; for the jocks, athleticism and high investment in school values, and for the burnouts, rebellious and anti-establishment values. No single individual is able to demonstrate all attributes of their idealised CofP, but constantly strives for it in their social practices. This creates a hegemonic ideal, and shows it can vary even within one setting. However, Belten High accommodated around 1,000 students, whereas my study has 29 pupils, and, unlike Eckert's, my study cannot capture trends beyond the form-group throughout the school.

Despite the distinctiveness of a setting's local hegemony, Swain (2004), Lawson (2009, 2013) and Connell (1995, 1996, 2000, 2005) acknowledge there are often commonalities between settings, particularly the role of embodied physicality, specifically its associated sporting ability and threat of violence (see also Mac an Ghaill 1994; Renold 1997; Martino 1999; Skelton 2000a; Swain 2000). This is not to say that masculinity lies latent in the body waiting to be expressed by sporting or physical practices, but that, following Butler (1990), masculinity is brought into being through these, and other, physical practices (see Swain 2004: 173). Swain notes that being able to run fast is particularly coveted by the boys in his study, commenting that all could tell him the fastest child

(a boy) in their form-groups. Interestingly, in Penguin Class, the fastest runner was Lilah. However, this was respected by the boys, who, rather than expressing resentment, showed admiration and celebrated her triumphs on sports day and in athletics competitions. This again shows my study's important contribution to the literature.

Although admiring Lilah's running speed, my boys also often placed high value on their own sporting ability. Swain (2004) notes that while boys in general appear invested in many sports, perhaps because skill in sport could be argued to provide an individual a resource with which to perform masculinity in line with wider hegemonic ideals because of its associations with strength and speed, in most schools, football is the most valorised (see also Renold 1997; Skelton 1997, 2000a; Connolly 1998; Swain 2000). The children in Penguin Class enjoyed football, though the class's relationship with it was interesting and not completely straightforward. The most popular boy in the class, Frankie (Group 5), was very invested in football, playing it at break-times, actively supporting a men's Premier League football team, and coming into school on Monday mornings analysing the weekend's matches. However, though enthusiastic, he was not deemed skilled enough to be selected for the school football team. Sam (Group 5), however, was so skilled that he had been playing for the Year 6 football team since he was in Year 5 (the previous school year), and he was also selected for the school athletics, tag-rugby and cricket teams. Intriguingly, and perhaps in line with his rebellious style, he frequently expressed his boredom with football; he only distantly supported a men's football team, preferring to follow rugby or cricket. In-keeping with his local ethnographic position as a tough, rebellious boy, this may be due to the 'toughness' associated with rugby because of the 'ideal' male rugby player's body. He would, however, join his friends playing football at break and lunchtimes as he did not want to be left out and, ultimately, enjoyed running around with his classmates. Marcelo (Group 4) did not enjoy football, nor was he particularly invested in it. He was, however, selected for the school tag-rugby and athletics teams,

where the school's PE teacher commented that he appreciated his skills in strategy and determination.

While the local hegemonic masculine form at Skipwith Primary School was to some extent concerned with sport and physicality, it also went beyond this. For my boys, academic achievement was also important. This may be partly because the PE teacher had a clear and strict policy that, no matter their sporting skill-level, individuals would be selected for teams only if their teachers reported they were working hard in class. Furthermore, if after being selected they ceased putting in effort with their schoolwork, they would be dropped from the team (this happened to a boy in another form-group on the day of a significant football match). Fortunately, all children in Penguin Class were invested in their education and actively encouraged and celebrated each other, though, like Jackson (2006: 34) finds in her study of boys in secondary school, some boys aspired to appear 'effortlessly achieving' in their learning (see also Thompson 1999; Jackson 2002; Jackson and Dempster 2009; Pinkett and Roberts 2019). Though Jackson reports some girls striving for the same apparent effortlessness, she finds it was much more challenging for the boys in her study to present themselves as trying their best in class, especially if academic failure was likely regardless of their effort level. For them, 'not trying and failing' was better than 'trying and failing', so that if they performed badly, for example, in a test, it could be attributed it to their lack of effort rather than their lack of ability or perceived 'intelligence'. In Penguin Class, however, all children were high-achieving, some across all subjects and others in specific subjects, so they did not need to contend much with mitigating academic failure. Someone who was high-achieving but always visibly gave maximum effort across all subjects was Marcelo. In my analysis of the boys' task talk in this chapter, I show that, like Bella in Group 1, Marcelo is able to use his status accrued from higher relative skill in art alongside high academic ability as proxy towards having his ideas actioned in his group's project.

Perhaps most interestingly, involvement in music and performing arts also contributed to the local hegemonic form at Skipwith Primary. Marcelo and Aiden accrued prestige by being the only two boys in Penguin Class who passed the audition for the choir, a choir led by the school music teacher which won many awards across London. Many of the other boys in Penguin Class still showed investment in music by instead joining a non-auditioning boys-only choir called Forte!, led by two male teaching assistants with career experience in music. Forte! provided an opportunity for those boys who feared the choir audition, or who preferred more modern songs, to sing. Members attended rehearsal on Monday mornings, missing the weekly Headteacher's assembly. However, Forte! accrued less prestige as it was open to all rather than selective. Instead, prestige was accrued by being chosen for a lead role in the whole-school assemblies performed by each form-group to an audience consisting of their parents and carers, 650 pupils, and 40 staff. All children in Penguin Class were keen to secure a lead acting part, which Aiden, Marcelo and Sam, as well as Tilda and Naomi, often did. Doing so accrued prestige in the form-group.

The ideal hegemonic masculine form in Penguin Class, then, is particularly interesting in the way it departs from many preceding studies. Sport and physicality were important, but so were academic achievement and ability in performing arts. All are used to acquire prestige within Penguin Class. However, also important are kindness and sociability. Although Sam has access to sporting physicality, acting ability and academic achievement, and Marcelo has access to ability in performing arts and academic achievement as well as high relative skill in art, the most popular boy in the form-group is Frankie. Frankie is sociable and outgoing, but also outwardly expresses his feelings and emotions, such as happiness by hugging his friends, and empathy, such as crying at a book. As the most popular boy, his construction of masculinity might be viewed as valorised, and,

like Tilda in Chapter 6, his popularity is the result of his likeability and sociability. Marcelo makes similar efforts, but Sam does not.

Thus, the ideal masculine form for Penguin Class was composed from sporting ability, academic achievement, performing arts, and, most importantly, sociability and likeability. In the next section, I explain the dynamics of the boys' groups, and how they were composed.

5.3 The Boys' Groups

Figure 5.1 shows a diagram of the boys' friendships within and between Groups. Like the girls in Chapter 4, the two triads were self-selected by the pupils: Marcelo, Adam and Leon (Group 4), and Frankie, Sam and Jordan (Group 5). The boys explained in their interviews that, like the girls, their selections were motivated by friendship rather than attempting to work with individuals who were known to be particularly skilled in art. As I show in my analysis that higher relative skill in art appeared relevant, this is also indicated in the diagram.

Observing their selection process was intriguing, as they did not all follow my expectations. Immediately, and as I expected, Sam and Frankie, as well as, simultaneously, Marcelo and Leon, gravitated towards each other. I anticipated that Frankie and Sam would join up with either Cenk or Adam as their third team-member: Cenk because he was close with both of them, and Adam because he and Frankie regarded each other best friends due to being neighbours and their shared pride in having been friends since before Nursery. Cenk, however, opted to work in a different group with two other boys with whom he is not particularly close, and Adam chose to work with Marcelo and Leon. This appeared to surprise Frankie. Instead, Frankie and Sam ended up with Jordan, who they liked, but was not their first choice.
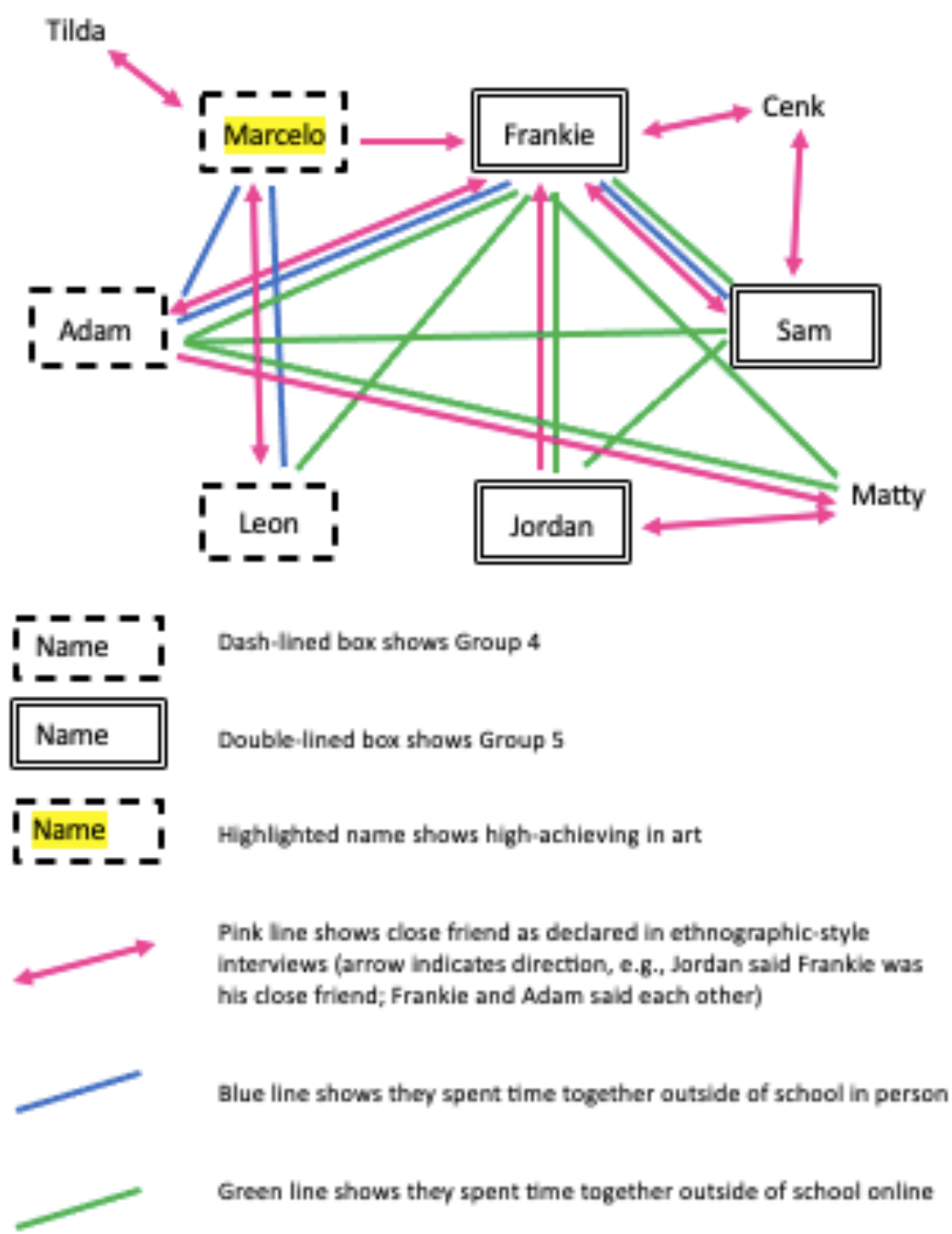
Figure 5.1: Boys' friendships within and across triads

Adam joining Marcelo and Leon was not much of a surprise for me – all three are friends, their parents are good friends, and they spend time together both in and out of school. Marcelo and Leon both attend Scouts (a weekly club for young people with a focus on outdoor activities and teamwork), and their families holiday together. Marcelo and Adam spend time together at each other's homes, and, during the lesson analysed, discuss a play-date they are having later that week. While a lot of the other boys in the form-group bonded over a shared interest and engagement in video games and football, Marcelo was not particularly interested in either. He would sometimes play football with others at breaktimes; however, he would also choose to spend time with the girls talking or playing a different game.

Marcelo is high-achieving across all subjects, and, like Bella in Group 1, he is regarded a talented artist by his peers and teachers. Marcelo's local ethnographic position as a friendly, consultative, thoughtful growing-up boy alongside his higher relative skill in art enables him to lead. He frequently shows his actively pro-school stance in his privileging of the project, and his high relative skill alongside his reputation for producing work of excellent quality causes others to trust his judgement and allows him to lead. Marcelo's conduct in the decision-making talk I analyse in this chapter is interesting; he appears aware of his higher relative-skill level (Adam is upper-middle-achieving in art, and Leon is mid-achieving), but pays much attention to using linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. As detailed in Table 5.1, Adam's local ethnographic position is a laidback boy. In my analysis, I show that this is demonstrated by his passivity towards the task, where he is happy to go along with others' ideas. While Marcelo might then appear to have freedom to make the decisions he wants, such authority is at odds with his style and Adam's passivity may therefore be challenging for him. More valuable is Leon's construction as a supportive, enthusiastic boy. This means he willingly accepts Marcelo's ideas, and takes steps to actively support him.

In Group 5, Sam and Frankie had been close since they met, aged four, on their first day at school. They often spend time together and with other friends both in and outside of school, playing football, going to the park, or playing video games together online. Frankie was very popular in the year group and cohort, which, like Tilda, he achieved through his social practices which prioritised sociability and kindness. Thus, his local ethnographic position as a popular, cool boy is achieved through his own efforts, and he uses his popular status to support his leadership attempts. Sam's rugby-player physique and favouring of direct strategies contribute to his local ethnographic position as a 'tough' and rebellious boy. As I show in my analysis, he does not attempt leadership much, but this construction makes him more challenging for others to lead. Jordan was closer with Frankie than Sam, and this was a relatively new friendship as they had been brought closer by common life events which had led to shared emotional experiences. Prior to this, Jordan had been very close with Matty, but appeared willing to abandon him in favour of Frankie's greater popularity. This capriciousness is in line with his local ethnographic position as an innocent, young boy, which is also shown in the talk I analyse, where he adopts a more childly positioning. This is ratified by Frankie and Sam, who sometimes appear to treat him as something of an 'annoying little brother' rather than a friend. Unlike all the other Groups, none of these three boys showed particular skill in or enjoyment of art. In the next section, I analyse how Group 4 and Group 5 make decisions related to their design.

5.4 The Boys' Decision-Making Talk

In this section, I examine the boys' linguistic strategies, and make connections with statuses they hold, their interactional roles and local ethnographic positions when making decisions related to their designs. I consider how their social practices position them as particular kinds of boy, and how this relates to leadership. As noted in I.i, the different Groups do and achieve leadership differently.

5.4.1 Group 4: Marcelo, Leon, Adam – Higher Relative Skills-based Status

Like Harness-Goodwin (2001, 2006), who finds in games of jump-rope that certain children's higher relative skill grants rights to make decisions about play (see I.ii), in Group 4, Marcelo's higher relative skill in art and high achievement across all subjects stand as proxy for his decisions being actioned. Dissimilar from McRae's (2009) managers, whose allocated job titles afford them status to see their ideas enacted (see 2.1.7), Marcelo's higher relative skills-based status has been accrued, like Bella in Group 1, through local social practices such as high investment in art at school and out-of-school personal interests. It is therefore known through the form-group's shared history without being explicitly invoked (2.1.7). This status, as well as Marcelo's local ethnographic position as a 'consultative, friendly and growing-up boy', enables his leadership, evidenced by his decisions being actioned. Most intriguingly, where Harness-Goodwin's (2001) highest-skilled jump-ropers favour bold strategies when making decisions and McRae's (2009) managers can use any strategy, Marcelo's leadership is supported by his attention to linguistic strategies using relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity, as approved by the form-group's co-constructed CofP (2.1.8). His leadership is therefore enabled through a combination of status and attention to relationships.

Harness-Goodwin (1990: 75) observes that the boys in her study in Philadelphia, USA, are unable to focus for very long on one activity, claiming they 'become engrossed' in something for a brief period, but interest then 'wanes'. When transcribing Group 4's talk, I was surprised by how readily they stayed task-focused; even though this project spanned several lessons, their talk was often related to the project or school. Like Group 3, this suggests they are beginning to talk like growing-up adolescents by maintaining a topic for increasingly extended periods (see 4.2.3; Coates 2013[1997], 2013[1999]). In this extract, Group 4 makes decisions about the layout of their doorframe design:

Confetti

```
   (12s silence)

1
Marcelo:   they can go here/ (.) (xxx) (8) {CUTS TISSUE PAPER INTO
Leon:                                    {NODS}  is there a purple one
Adam:                                              {DOODLING}

2
Marcelo:   SMALL SQUARES; CONCENTRATING}
Leon:      of the:se/ (.) is there a purple one/ (1) plea::se (.)

3
Leon:      please {WHINING TONE}  Adam you/ could come\ and help me/
Adam:             %I don't know\% {DOODLING}

4
Marcelo:   confetti{THROWING PAPER IN THE AIR}
Leon:                                              {GATHERS THE
Adam:                                      hh{SMILES}

5
Marcelo:                                        [Leon will you
Leon:      PAPER SQUARES TO THROW AGAIN} Adam you [can help me:

6
Marcelo:   stop fiddling with them (.) please
Leon:                                      Adam you can help me

7
Marcelo:                   [the thing is
Leon:      OK/ (.) we're [gonna need to do erm (-) so I've got the

8
Leon:      names here
```

This extract opens with Marcelo saying, 'They can go here?' (stave 1). In ethnographic

observations, I noted that Marcelo was referring to a pencil-drawn sketch of their proposed design

layout. Marcelo's 'they' specifically refers to as-yet unmade small rectangles of paper on which

they planned to handwrite the name of each form-group member using a silver pen Leon has, like

Lan's glitter paint (4.2.2), brought from home. On the sketch, these rectangles were split into two

groups of 16, each located at the lower corners of the crescent.

Marcelo's reference to a sketch he has created might suggest he is using his skills-based status to

impose his own ideas; whereas Fliss, Grace and Alice use a co-created list to govern their actions

(see 4.2.3), this is a sketch Marcelo decided to make of the doorframe layout. However, in-keeping with his style, he has been consultative, as his sketch does not document only his ideas but brings together all Group members' contributions. Therefore, unlike Amy in Group 2, he has not made decisions based on his whims, and he has instead used his higher relative skill in art for everyone's benefit to plan their work in a way similar to Group 3. This suggests from the outset that Marcelo is keen to pay attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity when working with his Group.

This attention is further evidenced in the way he chooses to express his idea about the layout for the two clusters of names by saying, 'They can go here?'. Marcelo uses a modal, 'can', and a questioning intonation. Both strategies are used by Harness-Goodwin's (1990) girls to suggest, rather than enforce, action, constituting an egalitarian approach to ensure all feel included and respected. This is in contrast with Harness-Goodwin's (1990) boys where leaders' bald imperatives oblige addressees to comply. In-keeping with his style, therefore, Marcelo's strategies alongside his interactional role as consultative constructs him, and contributes to his local ethnographic position, as a friendly, consultative, thoughtful boy.

Though it might appear to share some syntactic elements with Ervin-Tripp's (1976) 'question' directive (see 2.1.3), Marcelo is not using a directive strategy for he is not actually directing Leon and Adam to do anything. Rather, he seems to be seeking their agreement for his proposal, as if to say, 'I think they should go here – what do you think?'. This has the syntax of a declarative, but Marcelo's intonation is a contextualisation cue that it acts as a question. This mitigates boldness and positions Leon and Adam as equals included in the decision-making, establishing an egalitarian approach to the task. This is one example of many where, in-keeping with his style, Marcelo's choice of linguistic strategy implies he is paying attention to relational practices associated with

indexing normative femininity when making suggestions for the group's design, showing that, while he might be aware of the power of his higher relative skill, he is not willing to use it to enforce a hierarchy.

Marcelo's questioning intonation therefore appears to be inviting a response from his teammates, and Leon gesturally 'replies' using the gesture of nodding his head to show approval (Goodwin 2014). This shows his agreement, suggesting he appreciates Marcelo's choice of strategy as he adopts the interactional role of a supporter. It also positions Marcelo highly in their local social order; Marcelo has explained his reasons, but secures quick agreement from Leon. This contributes to Leon's local ethnographic position as an enthusiastic, supportive boy and suggests his awareness of Marcelo's higher relative-skill. Like Group 1 with Bella, if one of the best artists in the form-group is suggesting something, it is likely to yield high-quality results, and because Group 4 frequently discussed their desire to win the competition, being the 'best' most likely motivates Leon's support. Adam, however, does not respond, and chooses to doodle on a piece of paper. This shows him removing himself from the decision-making, adopting an interactional role as a passive accommodator. This contributes to his local ethnographic position as a laidback boy, and it is quite typical of his style as I also show my analysis, particularly clear in 'Stormzy', below.

Leon then asks, 'Is there a purple one of these?' (stave 1), referring to sheets of crepe paper they plan to hang in strips from their doorframe. Although Leon's request runs over three staves, 'Is there a purple one of these? Is there a purple one? Please. Please' (stave 1–3), Marcelo and Adam ignore him. This can be contextualised with ethnographic observations. Group 4 had decided to, like Group 3, include all form-group members' duck names in their doorframe design (see 4.2.3). Leon volunteered to compile a list of names, and was supposed to spend the start of the lesson (the 15 minutes prior to this extract) doing so. However, Leon ended up chatting and socialising

with the other groups rather than completing much work, and has just returned with an incomplete list. Choosing to ignore Leon appears to be motivated by him having not completed the work, implying Marcelo's actively pro-school and pro-teamwork and Adam's pro-teamwork stances towards the project (Adam's doodling and later conduct reveal his stance cannot be described as actively pro-school, which I explain below). Their stances also show their interpersonal alignment with each other. This unites them in a slight insider versus Leon's outsider positioning, similar to Frankie and Sam with Jordan (5.4.2), positioning Leon as lower in the local social order.

Leon's 'Pleaaase. Please' (stave 2–3) suggests frustration at the others' lack of response. This and his whining tone positions him in a childly way, which contributes to his local ethnographic position as a 'young' boy. Leon therefore challenges Eckert's (1996) findings that pre-adolescent children are concerned to resist appearing babyish to their peers. Marcelo and Adam's silence, however, confirms Eckert's findings as, by refusing to engage with Leon's babyish behaviour, they construct themselves as growing-up boys. Although Adam eventually replies saying 'I don't know' with reduced volume (stave 3), it appears dismissive, and Leon does not make any further requests. Leon, therefore, appears to accept he has not acted desirably in this lesson when he failed to collect everyone's duck names. In ethnographic observations, Leon continued searching for the crepe paper without their help, showing his alignment with Marcelo as he, too, adopts a pro-school stance towards the project by making efforts to contribute to it.

Leon addresses Adam in attempt to get him to contribute by working together, 'Adam you can help me, OK? We're gonna need to do, erm, so I've got the names here' (stave 6–8). Leon uses modal, 'can', inclusive pronoun, 'we', and a questioning intonation similar to Marcelo in stave 1. Harness-Goodwin (1990: 112) finds her girls use 'we' to group speaker and hearer(s) together as

equal agents and recipients of the proposed directive. Leon therefore positions himself and Adam equally, showing, like Marcelo, an egalitarian approach and attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity. However, Leon opts for more authority with his use of discourse marker, 'OK?'. As noted in 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, in her study of the functional distribution of tag, 'you know?', Holmes (1986) differentiates between 'modal' and 'facilitative' tags, where modal tags express uncertainty or signal the speaker's desire for confirmation about the validity of a proposition, and facilitative show addressee-orientation as they facilitate others' contributions. Thus, 'OK?' can be used as a tag-question, as if to say, 'Is that OK with you?', however, considering Leon's pro-school stance, he appears to use 'OK?' to mean, 'Do you understand?'. When Amy uses, 'Yeah?', in 4.2.2 it functions similarly, but it follows an instruction sequence using imperatives and based on her whims. Leon presents the task rather than his whims as the reason for it being completed. This, as well as his local ethnographic position as a supportive boy, show his attention to relational practices indexing normative femininity, supporting his identity construction. However, Adam takes no action. This suggests that, when such strategies associated work for Marcelo, it is because of his local ethnographic position as a friendly, thoughtful and consultative boy alongside his higher relative skills-based status, showing the relationship between local identity construction, status and leadership success.

Adam's continued silence is noteworthy. Leon attempts to engage him three times (staves 3, 5–6, 6–7), and only Leon responds to Marcelo's suggestion, 'They can go here?' (stave 1), showing neither is able to secure a response. Although Fishman (1978) studies heterosexual couples' talk, some of her observations seem applicable to Adam's conduct. Like the men in Fishman's study, he appears to 'hav[e] control over […] whether there will be a conversation at all and under what terms it will occur' (ibid: 400), while, like the women, Leon does a lot of the interactional work trying to involve him (ibid: 404). However, considering his local ethnographic position as a laidback

boy who is not overtly pro-school, it is most likely that his lack of interest in putting effort into the

project explains his silence, especially as Leon appears determined to engage him in the project. In

the next extract I analyse, this is again clear.

Taking place immediately after 'Confetti', in 'Stormzy', the boys continue their decision-making

about the layout. I have reproduced stave 7–8 from 'Confetti' for continuity:

```
Stormzy
1
Marcelo:                                      [the thing is
Leon:       you can help me OK/ (.) we're [gonna need to do erm (-)

2
Marcelo:                            =wait no wait no no (.) I
Leon:       so I've got the names here=

3
Marcelo:   think (.) wait I think I'm just gonna write them all on

4
Marcelo:   one thing                    {BEGINS WRITING NAMES}
Adam:             "oh Lord I've been broken"{SINGING STORMZY} (4)

5
Marcelo:   sorry that you can't really see that (.) can I just use

6
Marcelo:   that pen please/            ["bli[nded      [by your
Leon:                       {PASSES PEN}      ["blinded [by your
Adam:                       "you fix me [I'm [bli[nded  [by your

7
Marcelo:   grace you came and saved me:"{SINGING STORMZY}
Leon:      grace you came and saved me:: when the"{SINGING STORMZY}
Adam:      grace you came and saved me:"{SINGING STORMZY}
```

While Leon is attempting to engage Adam in writing their classmates' names on the small

rectangles of paper discussed in 'Confetti', Marcelo says, 'The thing is…' (stave 1). It might appear

that Marcelo is interrupting, a strategy which Baxter (2006a: 168) observes the girls in her study of

a secondary school English speaking and listening using to disagree with teammates, but which

does not occur in her boys' team (ibid: 171, see I.ii). However, Marcelo is arguably not

interrupting, which would be at odds with his style, but appears to be 'thinking aloud' to himself,

perhaps because a change-of-heart has just occurred to him. As the talk in staves 2–4 proceeds to show, Marcelo is objecting to his own previous idea for their design layout rather than Leon's actions.

However, unlike the girls in Group 3, and contrary to his usual style, there is no consultation on this last-minute design change. To action it, Marcelo stops Leon and Adam by saying, 'Wait no, wait, no no – I think… wait, I think I'm just gonna write them all on one thing' (staves 2–4). This positions Marcelo as an authoritative decision-maker, as, similar to Malcolm on Maple Street (Harness-Goodwin 1990), he appears to be making a last-minute decision based on his own whims. However, considering his style, I argue that, in line with his local ethnographic position, Marcelo is actually also constructing himself as thoughtful. Admittedly, he is changing the task to be in line with his wants, where, rather than having each form-group member's name on an individual rectangle of paper written by Adam or Leon as they planned, he, himself, is now 'gonna write them all' (stave 3) on one larger paper rectangle. Completely departing from Malcolm, he presents his turn as a stream-of-consciousness, with false starts, 'wait, no, wait, no no', and hedges, 'I think' and 'just', to mitigate his proposal (Holmes 1984). This again shows his attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity, as he resists the use of bald imperatives, e.g., 'Stop, now, I'm gonna do it!', and, like Harness-Goodwin's (1990) girls, he places all imposition on himself, saying he will complete the work rather than telling Leon and Adam what to do.

Taking responsibility for the work might, however, be seen as controlling. Speaking to Marcelo in the subsequent ethnographic interviews, it seems attention to quality was at play. As mentioned, this was a competition, and Group 4 was keenly invested in winning. Marcelo was a gifted artist with handwriting revered among his teachers. Thus, rather than wanting to be in control per se, he

believed his work would be the highest quality; therefore, using his handwriting for the children's and ducks' names might increase their chances of winning first place. Although his higher relative skill is not directly mentioned in the moment, their shared history means everyone knows of Marcelo's higher relative skills-based status, and gives the others faith in his art- and presentation-related suggestions and decisions. Adam and Leon do not question or reject Marcelo's ideas because they accept his decisions are the most likely to win them first place, and they can all see their clearest path to victory is through excellent presentation. In stave 4, he begins writing the names. Thus, Marcelo's status acquired through higher relative skill, attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity and local ethnographic position as a friendly, thoughtful boy combine to enable his leadership success.

In Baxter's (2006a) study of secondary school pupils' group leadership, when one girl, Gina, challenges the group consensus as Marcelo does here, she is met by opposition from her peers. However, Adam and Leon show acceptance of Marcelo's U-turn through their gestural response of willingly stopping, which ratifies Marcelo's leadership attempt. Adam then sings, 'Oh Lord I've, been broken' (stave 4) from song, 'Blinded by Your Grace, Part 2' by British grime music artist, Stormzy. This, like Rampton's (2006) inner-city London secondary school pupils, is a sign that he is comfortable and suggests to me he has no issues with Marcelo's leadership. That Adam had been singing the song episodically throughout the recording, often instead of doing any work, again shows his non-actively pro-school stance. This repeated stance-taking thus also contributes to his local ethnographic position as a laid-back boy. Though his frequent adoption of a passive follower interactional role might suggest he is 'easy' to lead because he will go along with anything, as these extracts show, getting him to do any project-related work is something of a challenge. This perhaps explains why Leon had to apply so much effort in his attempt to get Adam to help, and why Marcelo volunteers to do the work himself.

Now mitigating yet further, Marcelo apologises for his (self-assessed) inadequacy of quality, saying, 'Sorry that you can't really see that' (stave 5). From ethnographic observations, I noticed he had started writing his classmates' names on the larger rectangle of paper discussed in stave 3–4 in pencil, but it was not showing up on the cream-coloured paper. Apologising, as well as his use of modal, 'can', and politeness marker, 'please', to request a different pen which belongs to Leon, 'Can I just use that pen, please?' (stave 5–6), again shows Marcelo's attention to using relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity. Leon again contributes to his local ethnographic position as supportive by willingly handing Marcelo his special silver pen which he has, like Lan's glitter paint (see 4.2.2), brought in from home (stave 6). This suggests he appreciates Marcelo's efforts, as someone he respects and whose requests he will honour, thus ratifying Marcelo's leadership (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 75-108).

Despite his reluctance to work, this time, when Adam again sings, 'You fix me, I'm blinded, by your grace – you came and saved me' (stave 6–7), Marcelo, and then Leon, join in. As Rampton (2006) observes in the inner-London secondary school classes he studies, popular song was used by young people for sociability and friendship. As Rampton suggests, this shows the closeness between the three boys as well as their solidarity, and for the rest of the lesson they continue working together in similar roles, often unable to resist breaking out in the same song.

In Group 4, Marcelo's leadership has been clear. He is the main decision-maker for the group, and this appears to have been established through a combination of his local ethnographic position as a friendly, consultative, thoughtful boy, constituted through his interactional role as a consultor and his efforts to use linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity as well as his higher relative skills-based status. This status works alongside his actively pro-school stance

towards the project to help him have his decisions actioned. Arguably, Marcelo could not have achieved this without Leon or Adam, who have seemed happy to cede to his judgement, thus ratifying his leadership. Leon's frequent assumption of the interactional role of supporter has contributed to his local ethnographic position as an enthusiastic, supportive boy, and his actively pro-school stance shows his alignment with Marcelo. Though Marcelo and Adam position Leon as something of an outsider in 'Confetti', that they are all able to sing together at the end of 'Stormzy' shows that his efforts to contribute 'right' his 'wrongs'. Adam's local ethnographic position as a laid-back boy allowed him to passively, compared with Leon's actively, support Marcelo by presenting no resistance and adopting an easy-going attitude. This shows the importance of understanding the boys' local social practices to construct local identities which support leadership attempts.

Group 5's conduct and leadership attempts are quite different to Group 4's. This may be because none of the members are particularly invested in art and therefore cannot use this status. However, as I argue below, Frankie appears able to use his popularity-based status to attempt some decision-making. Like Marcelo's skills-based status, this status is not invoked but nevertheless influences the group's conduct.

5.4.2 Group 5: Frankie, Sam and Jordan – Popularity-based Status

Unlike the other groups, Group 5, Frankie, Sam and Jordan, did not spend much of this lesson doing any work. Thus, they resemble Harness-Goodwin's (1990: 75) boys in her study in Philadelphia, USA, who are unable to focus for very long on one activity, as they 'become engrossed' in something for a brief period, but interest then 'wanes'. This positions them as slightly less mature than the boys in Group 4, whose topic-change is much less frequent. The decision-making talk I proceed to explore occurs at the end of the lesson, just after the class had

been given a five-minute time warning. Perhaps spurred by urgency or the fear of getting into trouble, it is the first attempt they make to do any work towards their project.

As I discuss below, Frankie's popularity in the form-group seems to have the greatest influence on actioning decisions in Group 5. His popularity-based status has been accrued through his local social practices such as, like Tilda, an orientation to humour, his active support of others shown in his celebrations and cheers about their achievements, sociability by creating opportunities for spending time with his friends such as organising trips to the park, and his willingness to overtly show emotions such as empathy and sorrow (see 5.3). His popularity has arguably been supported by the form-group's co-constructed normatively 'feminine' CofP, where many of these qualities are encouraged and celebrated (2.1.8). Frankie's popularity may also arguably stem from his lack of 'extremes' meaning he is relatable rather than intimidating. Considering his constructions related to the local hegemonic form, for example, he shows investment in music by participating in Forte!, but choosing not to audition for the choir; he plays football every break-time, but he is not on the school team; he has a pro-school stance and puts effort into art lessons, although he is not high-achieving in it; and he gets medium, not main, parts in assemblies and shows. He is also regarded as cool, as he wears the latest fashions and has an easy-going attitude, but does not position himself passively like Adam in Group 4. His popularity, as well as his local ethnographic position as a popular, cool boy, contributes to his ability to lead, evidenced by some of his decisions being actioned. His attempts are also supported by his attention to linguistic strategies using relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity.

Like the girls in Group 2 (4.2.2) and the game in Chapter 6, I find that considering the identities, stances, styles and alignments constructed in, particularly, Sam and Frankie's early interactions enhances understanding of the design-related decision-making for Group 5 (Bucholtz and Hall

2005: 588, see 2.1.4). To contextualise Group 5's decision-making talk, I therefore begin with an

extract from earlier in the lesson. The talk here between Sam and Frankie begins to construct their

local ethnographic positions, and the (dis)alignments established influence their conduct when

they attempt to work on their project. Here, Frankie and Sam are talking with their close friend

from another Group, Cenk, about a petty theft:

Pick n Mix
```
1
Sam:       oh you know (.) oi (-) Frankie (.) >Frankie Frankie<

2
Sam:       (.) you kn you know you know (.) Martyn (.) stole

3
Sam:       food from Sainsbury's/ (.) he stole the pick n mix=

4
Frankie:   =yeah he sto[le                                  =yes
Sam:                   [he stole like loads of pick n mix=

5
Frankie:   he %shoved his pockets% with them and then ran out of

6
Frankie:   the shop
Sam:                                        alright Cenk/
Cenk:            {WALKS TO SAM AND FRANKIE}                 mm

7
Frankie:       well Cenk's [(xxx)
Sam:                       [did you hear about/ [%↓did you hear
Cenk:      {SMILING QUALITY}

8
Frankie:                                    yeah Cenk was the[re
Sam:       about Martyn↓% (.) stealing (.)                  [what/

9
Frankie:                                   [and you saw him [and
Sam:                                       [you were there/
Cenk:      yeah I was there I was there (.)                 [I

10
Frankie:              [Cenk didn't do it tho[u:gh
Sam:           I know ^no [(.) I know^ (1)      [no %what%
Cenk:      saw him

11
Sam:       (.) no like (.) you were just (.) getting there like
```

```
12
Frankie:                              [Fanta/=
Sam:         to get some was it en[ergy                    =Doctor
Cenk:                                      =Doctor Pepper=

13
Sam:         Pepper (.) like you saw ↓Martyn/ just (.) ran out\↓

14
Frankie:                          like steal the sweets and [then
Cenk:        %then I saw Martyn%                             [then

15
Frankie:     ran out
Cenk:        he just (.) %ran% out then I was just walking behind him
```

In this extract, Sam is keen to share some gossip with Frankie about their friend, Martyn, who allegedly stole some pick n mix sweets from a supermarket, Sainsbury's, a few days prior. He says to Frankie, 'You know Martyn stole food from Sainsbury's? He stole the pick n mix, he stole like **loads** of pick n mix' (stave 2–4). Sam appears to assume that Frankie is not privy to this information from the way he presents it, however, Frankie confirms he knows not just what happened but also how, 'Yeah, he shoved his pockets with them and then ran out of the shop' (stave 5–6). Their close friend from another Group, Cenk, then approaches (stave 6), and Sam attempts to relay the same gossip to him, 'Did you hear about… did you hear about Martyn stealing?' (stave 7–8). Frankie then informs Sam, 'Yeah, Cenk was there', to which he responds, 'What?' (stave 8). Frankie's statement is quickly corroborated by Cenk, 'Yeah, I was there, I was there', to which Sam responds similarly to before, 'You were **there**?' (both stave 9). Sam's responses index uncertainty through lexical items and his use of contrastive stress on 'there' (Ladd 1978), as though verifying information of which he is not aware. This shows that he does not know the full story about the incident, whereas Frankie knows exactly how Martyn executed the theft as well as the fact that Cenk had been present. Frankie later confirmed to me that Cenk had told him about it on the day. This suggests closeness between Cenk and Frankie and positions Frankie highly in the local social order, as Cenk chose to confide in Frankie and not Sam, and Frankie

declined to share the gossip with Sam. This, as well as him being one of the last to learn of the gossip, positions Sam as lower in the local social order.

Clearly feeling embarrassed, Sam changes tack. After Frankie says, 'You [Cenk] saw him and' (stave 9), with which Cenk shows metrical alignment with Frankie (Kiesling 2023), emphasising, 'I **saw** him' (stave 10), Sam now claims that, in fact, he already knows, 'I know, no, I know' (stave 10). He presents himself as though he had been aware of Cenk's presence all along. However, his previous turns, above, show that this is not the case. He attempts to evidence his 'knowledge', and says, 'You were just getting there, like, to get some, was it energy [drink]?' (stave 11–12), claiming he 'knows' Cenk had gone to Sainsbury's separately from Martyn to buy something for himself. Considering Sam's style, this may be designed to compete with Frankie about who is closest with Cenk; like Bella with Tilda's opinion on orange (see 4.2.1), from being close friends with Cenk, he knows he frequently buys and consumes energy drinks and refers to this in a more public context. Perhaps matching Sam's competitiveness, Frankie interrupts Sam with 'Fanta?' (stave 12), Cenk's other preferred drink. However, this is at odds with his style, and his use of a questioning intonation shows this is a question, as if to say 'Were you buying Fanta?', rather than a confident correction. Cenk ends up defying them both, saying he was actually buying 'Dr Pepper' (stave 12); as Frankie and Sam are both incorrect, it positions them more as equals.

In this extract, Sam's efforts to evidence the 'truth' of his claim that he 'knows' Cenk was present during the petty theft position him as eager to come across as knowledgeable and signal belonging to the group. Like Amy in 6.3.3 where her closest friend, Naomi, did not share about *Wild Child*, being excluded from hearing this gossip by those he regards his closest friends must sting. Frankie and Cenk's constant 'duetting' (Maybin 2006) as they collaborate to relay the gossip also shows

their closeness, which may also contribute to Sam feeling excluded. This positions Frankie and Cenk high in their local social order, and Sam lower because they did not share it with him.

This interaction also contributes to Frankie's local ethnographic position as a popular boy for he is someone who knows the 'gossip'. That Frankie has not shared it with Sam, as well as his duetting with Cenk, implies some distance between himself and Sam. In their decision-making talk I analyse below, it is clear that Sam feels slighted by this interaction. As they work on their project, and in-keeping with his competitive style, he takes steps to position himself as powerful and Frankie as below him in the local social order during their talk including, but also beyond, decision-making.

As noted above, the following extracts are the only examples of any attempt to do the work in Group 5's 50-minute recording. This is similar to the boys Davies (2011[2003]) studies, who completed little work. For them, this was because anyone who showed investment or effort was ostracised, however, for Group 5, it is because they spent a lot of the lesson returning to the topic in 'Pick n Mix' rather than ostracising anyone who was trying to work.

In this extract, Frankie attempts to action some design decisions:

Breadcrumbs
```
1
Frankie:  "look at these breadcrumbs I've been trying to get more"

2
Frankie:   {HALF-SINGING 'KEEP YOUR HEAD UP' by ANDY GRAMMER} (xxxx)

3
Frankie:   (1)                                      thank you
Sam:          it's I've been trying to survive {SCRIBBLES PENS ON
Jordan:              {PASSES SCISSORS TO FRANKIE}

4
Frankie:   (8)                               %like those% (.) if we
Sam:        SOME SCRAP PAPER} o/h\ what/ (7)

5
Frankie:   want them to be like bread/crumbs\ (.) shall I do like
```

```
6
Frankie:   do (-) [hands/
Sam:              [oh my God (.) I want a a a lanyard/ in the hand\

7
Frankie:   (xxxxxxx)
```

This extract opens with Frankie singing, 'Look at all these breadcrumbs I've been trying to get more' (stave 1). Rampton (2006: 106, drawing on Frith 1996b: 273) notes that singing provides an opportunity for individuals to be sociable, as, like the boys in Group 4, others often join in and share a bonding experience. Considering Frankie's local ethnographic position as a popular boy, this may be interpreted as a social practice designed to provide an opportunity for sociable bonding. Unlike Stormzy in 5.4.1, Andy Grammer is not one of Frankie's preferred artists; rather, this song, 'Keep Your Head up', was being learnt with Forte!, the all-boys' choir discussed in 5.2. Frankie, Sam and Jordan are all members of Forte!, so they (should) all know the song, making this inclusive.

Unlike Group 4, however, no-one joins in with Frankie. Jordan is talking to Cenk, and Sam instead decides to correct him, saying (not singing), 'It's, 'I've been trying to survive'' (stave 3). In the interviews, Frankie, Jordan and others claimed they attended Forte! because of musical interests showing their pro-school stance by suggesting they are invested in the institution, however, in-keeping with his local ethnographic position as a tough, rebellious boy, Sam declared the reason he had joined was to be able to miss the 'boring' weekly Monday morning assembly over any interest in music. Sam adopts the interactional role of a critic, and, like Malcolm in Harness-Goodwin's (1990) study of boys' task-oriented talk, positions himself powerfully, as one who has the right to issue corrections to others. While not appearing particularly pro-school in these extracts, Sam's stance towards school is better described as pro-knowledge, rather than pro-learning or pro-institution. In line with much research on boys in schools, he enjoyed being

correct, being the first to answer questions, and having knowledge and facts that others did not (see Swann and Graddol 1988, 1995; Jackson 2006, 2010; Pinkett and Roberts 2019). For example, he once memorised and recited to the form-group the first ten digits of Pi, going beyond the requirements of even the Key Stage 3 UK maths National Curriculum where Pi is first encountered. He therefore placed high value on 'being right'. As such, correcting others is quite typical of his style. However, I argue that his decision to 'correct' Frankie, is a result of his exclusion in 'Pick n Mix'. Frankie is his close friend, and he corrects him over a song in which he claims to have no interest. This therefore seems to be an attempt to put Frankie down to pay him back for 'Pick n Mix'.

Frankie's 'thank you' (stave 3) is directed to Jordan. During Sam's turn, ethnographic observations show that Frankie was searching the immediate area for something, and although he is talking to Cenk, Jordan passes Frankie a pair of scissors in case they are what he seeks. Frankie's 'thank you' shows his attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity. He ensures that Jordan feels appreciated, contributing to his form-group popularity through showing kindness through his interactional role as a relationship manager. In apparently ignoring Sam, and in line with their co-constructed CofP, he also ensures Sam's use of a bold strategy and attempt at a powerful positioning in the local social order are not ratified.

Pointing to some scrunched-up pieces of pale brown paper they had prepared to glue on their design to look like breadcrumbs, presumably inspired by the Forte! song he was singing in stave 1, Frankie says, 'Like those – if we want them to be like breadcrumbs, shall I do, like, do hands?' (staves 4–6). The strategies Frankie uses to attempt to incite action bear a strong resemblance with those used by Harness-Goodwin's (1990) girls. He uses proposals about future courses of action rather than orders (1990: 114), and pronoun, 'we', to 'group speaker and hearer(s) together

as equal agents/recipients of the proposed directive'. He treats the task as the reason for his suggestion, that adding hands will contextualise the breadcrumbs, rather than his own whims (ibid: 112). Furthermore, like Lilah in Group 1 and Marcelo in Group 4, Frankie places all imposition on himself using a modal with pronoun I, 'shall I', when he says, 'Shall I do, like, hands?'. His use of 'like' functions as a hedge (Holmes 1990; Tagliamonte 2005), mitigating this suggestion so it does not appear too direct. Like Marcelo in Group 4, Frankie uses multiple strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, approved by their co-constructed CofP, to suggest an idea. This, like Tilda in 6.3.3, demonstrates his care for others and contributes to his popularity. Although it appears to indicate a pro-school stance towards the project, I do not think this could be argued when considering how little work is completed by Group 5 during this lesson. Though, he does not at this stage show the same resistance as Sam or Jordan so his stance towards the project appears slightly more pro-school than the others.

Sam again shows boldness in-keeping with his style by interrupting Frankie's turn using an expletive and proposing an idea based only on his own whims, 'Oh my God, I want a a a lanyard in the hand' (stave 6). This contributes to Sam's local ethnographic position as a tough boy. Some of his strategies are similar to those observed by Lawson (2013) in his exploration of how secondary-school-aged boys in Glasgow, Scotland, construct toughness. One speaker regarded a 'prototypical 'hard man', Danny, is concerned to present himself as someone engaging with a 'form of extreme tough masculinity' (ibid: 387), and peppers his interview talk with expletives to show toughness (Lawson 2013: 385). Danny also constructs toughness through his social practices, which include outright rebellion against teachers, (claims of) gang involvement, and fighting. Sam engages in some similar practices, but does not go to such extremes. He presents himself as rebellious against the institution, for example, his reason for joining Forte!; he pushes boundaries with some teachers he feels he can outsmart academically and therefore does not respect; and he has the

physicality to enable engagement in a physical fight, a physicality of which he never makes use, but could serve as a 'patriarchal dividend' to ward off any potential fights (see Connell 1997: 64; Messner 1998: 260). Their different constructions index similar tough positions, but Sam does not appear to feel the need to go to Danny's lengths. This might be related to their age as Sam is younger than Lawson's Danny, but, using ethnographic knowledge, I would be more inclined to suggest Sam does not feel the need to 'prove' his toughness. Again, the form-group's shared history may allow this confidence (see 2.1.7; I.i).

Sam's use of 'I want' is a strategy similar to Harness-Goodwin's (1990) boys, who form directives by stating wants using first-person, 'I', based on their own whims. The use of 'I want' rather than, for example, 'we could', suggests Sam's contribution is self-serving; while Marcelo appears to be contemplating whole-group goals when he makes his proposals based on his relative-skill using a vaguely similar strategy (see 5.4.1), this is not a status on which Sam can rely. It might appear that Sam's contribution is an attempt to contribute to Frankie's turn: he seems to acknowledge that including hands is a good idea, and his interruption could be to show support. As Davies (2011[2003]: 123) notes about her girls' curriculum-oriented talk, overlaps occur when speakers are enthusiastic to build on other group-members' ideas often reusing their vocabulary, which Sam appears to be doing here with his use of 'hand'. However, considering his style, it seems that, while he may be showing enthusiasm, he is assuming a dominant interactional role, deliberately usurping Frankie's turn. Considering the relationships illuminated and constituted in 'Pick n Mix' and Sam's style, it seems this is another attempt to position Frankie as lower in the local social order than enthusiastically supporting a friend.

At this stage of the recording, Frankie has made some attempts to steer the Group, using linguistic strategies which pay attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative

femininity. This contributes to his local ethnographic position as a popular boy, as he shows he

considers others. Sam has shown competitiveness, in-keeping with his style, through his use of

bold strategies such as prioritising his own wants, an expletive, and interrupting. This contributes

to his local ethnographic position as a competitive, tough boy. Jordan is talking to a different

classmate and showing complete disengagement rather than attempting to do any work towards

the project. In the next extract, Jordan returns to the group, and, intriguingly, Sam and Frankie

appear to unite and position him as below them in the local social order. This departs from the

relationships established in 'Pick n Mix', showing the fleeting nature of such constructions:

Bikes
```
1
Frankie:    do (-) [hands\%
Sam:              [oh my God (.) I want a a a lanyard/ in the hand\

2
Frankie:    (xxxxxxx) we just need it to be like\= {TIRED; RESIGNED}
Sam:                                   =NO {TO JORDAN;
Jordan:               {TRIES TO TAKE SAM'S PEN}    and cy/cling\

3
Frankie:                                    we can't draw one though
Sam:        PATRONISING AS IF TELLING OFF A DISOBEDIENT TODDLER}
Jordan:     (1) we need to draw\ a bike\

4
Frankie:                                good luck %to% Jordan{TO SAM;
Jordan:     I'll try and draw a bike

5
Frankie:    SARCASTIC}
Sam:        Frankie/ I've drawn the word phone\{SMILING/LAUGHING}
Jordan:                                %Sam (.) I I spelt

6
Frankie:                             (xxxxxxx)
Sam:          [hey {TO FRANKIE}         oh/ I know but then (-)
Jordan:     (.) I [spelt it wrong%

7
Frankie:                            yeah I-
Sam:        we've got a good (xxxx)
Jordan:                               hello:: voice recorder

8
Jordan:     {HOLDING VR NEXT TO HIS MOUTH}
Ms C:       RIGHT PEEPS WE NEED TO TIDY UP/ (1) IF you've got a voice
```

```
9
Sam:                                                    [%oh %%that's%%
Ms C:      recorder can it come back to me plea[se/{TO WHOLE CLASS}

10
Sam:       sad%
```

<center>–END–</center>

As this extract continues from 'Breadcrumbs', I have reproduced stave 6–7 as stave 1 for

contextualisation. Frankie says, 'We just need it to be like…'. (stave 2). Contributing to his local

ethnographic position as a popular boy, Frankie again uses pronoun, 'we', to level the three

teammates (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 112), and appears to use 'just' as a hedge to make his

utterance less forceful (Lakoff 1973; Holmes 1990). In-keeping with his style, Frankie again pays

attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity as he tries to call

the group into action, however, his tired, resigned tone is a contextualisation cue for Sam and

Jordan that he is beginning to feel despondent about the task. Unfortunately, the others appear to

miss inferring this completely. In-keeping with his style, Sam instead appears to ignore Frankie to

half-shout, 'No!' at Jordan (stave 2) as a mock-telling off motivated by him attempting to

exaggeratedly sneak one of Sam's pens. Jordan's deliberately slapstick approach contributes to his

local ethnographic position as a young, innocent boy, ratified by Sam 'telling him off', positioning

Jordan as childly or a little brother who must be tolerated. This shows Sam's boldness, and

contributes to his local ethnographic position as a tough boy.

Jordan now tries to make a contribution to the project, saying, 'And cycling – we need to draw a

 bike' (stave 2–3). Because many of the children enjoy going out with their bikes at the weekend

and the doorframe is meant to be showing the form-group's identity (see I.iii), Jordan seems to

feel they should include a drawing of a bike. Jordan's late adoption of a mediated pro-school

stance shows his alignment with Frankie, strengthened metrically by his repetition of Frankie's 'we

need' to make his suggestion (Kiesling 2023). This positions Frankie more powerfully, and ratifies his leadership attempt: his efforts to steer the group are being acknowledged and responded to by Jordan, if not Sam.

Although Frankie objects to Jordan's idea on grounds of skill rather than anything personal, claiming, 'We can't **draw** one [a bike] though' (stave 3), he shows attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity and assumes the interactional role of mediator, again showing kindness which contributes to his local ethnographic position as a popular boy. His contrastive stress on 'draw' suggests he is not rejecting the bike because it is a bad idea, but because he feels none of them are highly skilled enough artists to produce something of requisite quality. His use of pronoun, 'we', also maintains the equal positionings he introduced and Jordan upholds in stave 2–3, and his use of 'though' acts as a hedge to soften his objection. Perhaps buoyed by Frankie's mitigated response indexing kindness, Jordan volunteers to attempt it, saying, 'I'll try and draw a bike' (stave 4). Jordan is also paying attention to relational practices here as, despite his earlier resistance, he appears now to have the group's interest at heart: their doorframe was looking bare at this point, and Jordan is willing to attempt a task he finds difficult to help. His (late) enthusiasm to help contributes to his local ethnographic position in the form-group as an enthusiastic boy.

Surprisingly, however, Frankie chooses to display an alignment with Sam, saying, out of Jordan's earshot, 'Good luck to Jordan' (stave 4). Frankie's sarcasm and reduced volume is a contextualisation cue to Sam that he does not believe Jordan is able to achieve his proposal and he finds it amusing, suggesting a play frame. Sam responds immediately, saying, 'Frankie, I've drawn the word **phone**!' (stave 5), and his laughter as he speaks strengthens their alignment as, although he does not join in with discussing Jordan, he shows willing to maintain Frankie's play

frame. Sam appears keen to show Frankie something he has completed for their doorframe which positions Frankie powerfully in the local social order as, like Tokay with Malcolm in Harness-Goodwin's (1990) study of boys' task talk, it implies Frankie is someone Sam wishes to impress. However, it seems to me that Sam is actually self-teasing and using this for 'bonding' with Frankie (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997); his laughter while he is showing his contribution to Frankie implies that he thinks the quality is insufficient, and he is inviting Frankie to see the humour in this too. The value he places on their friendship is further evidenced in Sam's choice to directly address only Frankie and not Jordan.

Interestingly, Jordan then positions Sam in a way similar to Sam's positioning of Frankie. He says, 'Sam I, I spelt, I spelt it wrong' (stave 5–6). Even though Sam did not issue him with any instructions, and it was Frankie who engaged with his idea about the bike, Jordan directs this to Sam, positioning him powerfully in the local social order. Jordan appears to be showing similar behaviours towards Sam as lower-ranked Ossie does towards leader, Malcolm, in Harness-Goodwin's (1990) study, whereby addressing requests to Malcolm confirms he is in control regarding the craft of slingshot-making. However, from ethnographic observations, I saw that Jordan heard Sam's self-tease in stave 5. This seems to be an attempt to forge an alignment with Sam by also trying to self-tease by presenting himself as 'not altogether competent' (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997: 284). Unfortunately, he does not get the contextualisation cues quite right, contributing to his local ethnographic position as an enthusiastic but young and innocent boy, causing Sam to not even acknowledge him. Instead, Sam says, 'Hey!' to Frankie (stave 6), showing he does not reciprocate Jordan's attempted alignment. Frankie and Sam then engage in an exchange from stave 6–7, in which Jordan is not a vocal participant. Though it is mostly inaudible, they appear to be finally discussing the layout of their design. That they exclude Jordan positions him low in the local social order while simultaneously cementing their alignment.

Perhaps noticing his marginalisation, Jordan then picks up the voice recorder and holds it close to his mouth like a microphone rather than trying to engage in Sam and Frankie's talk, saying 'Hello, voice recorder' (stave 7). This is in-keeping with Jordan's style and local ethnographic position as an enthusiastic, young and innocent boy, implying he is 'leaving the decision-making to the big boys' and thus positioning Sam and Frankie as more powerful and therefore above him in the local social order. As the teacher, I then notify the whole form-group that it is the end of the lesson, leaving no more opportunities for decision-making talk.

Group 5's talk does not result in much work being done. Bearing some resemblance to Baxter's (2015) all-female group, the ideas which have been accepted are not clear, resulting in minimal work-related progress. Frankie made the most leadership attempts, appearing to draw on his local ethnographic position as a popular boy. His popularity was also constituted through his use of linguistic strategies paying attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity. However, whereas Leon and Adam were happy to cede to Marcelo's judgement in Group 4, Frankie does not receive the same support from Sam and Jordan. This could be because the status of popularity is not as powerful as higher relative skill when working towards a project which requires an artistic response. However, it could also be because, in contrast with all other Groups, none of the boys in Group 5 adopt an actively pro-school stance, or the pro-school stances they adopt are not pro-school 'enough'. It may also be because of the boys' constructions of masculinity, contributing to their local ethnographic positions; as noted, Frankie's local ethnographic position as a popular, cool boy is achieved by his local social practices, and his construction of masculinity is endorsed by the form-group's co-constructed 'feminine' CofP. However, while Frankie's construction of masculinity bears some resemblance with the local hegemonic form, Sam's construction and local ethnographic position as a tough, rebellious boy

shows more in common with global discursive expectations about hegemonic masculinity. It therefore seems to be the case that Sam is not willing to be led, as this would be at odds with his identity construction and style, particularly as authority is associated with indexing normative masculinity (Cameron and Shaw 2016). Though he might therefore be expected to assume an authoritative position himself, his rebelliousness may mean he refuses to adopt a pro-school stance towards the project and does not wish to lead.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored leadership in the talk of two self-selected triads of boys as they make decisions related to their design for a doorframe to be displayed at the entrance to the classroom. In this chapter, my analysis shows how boys 'do' decision-making in groupwork differs between groups. I have argued that this is related to their local ethnographic positions as 'particular *kinds*' of boy (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original), local statuses, and their choice of linguistic strategies to make, suggest and action decisions.

Considering findings from the wider literature, my boys' decision-making talk presents a compelling case. The statuses upon which they draw contrast with other studies, which outline boys' preoccupations with using sex and sexuality in their single-sex curriculum talk to gain status (for example, Cameron 2011[1997]; Davies 2011[2003]; Maybin 2006, 2009). The boys in my study do not do this. This suggests that boys can acquire powerful, leadership positions without resorting to the degradation of women or non-hetero sexualities. However, my boys are much younger than Davies's (2011[2003]) boys and Cameron's (2011[1997]) men. Thus, the strategies they use are related to their age as well as their gender, as they construct themselves as growing-up boys.

In Group 4, Marcelo adopts a leadership position. This is enabled through his local ethnographic position as a friendly, consultative, thoughtful boy alongside his higher relative skills-based status. However, he also pays attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity in his choice of linguistic strategy. These combine to allow his successful leadership. Leon and Adam, his teammates but also his friends, are happy to follow his ideas; Leon enthusiastically and Adam more passively. This contributes to each of their local ethnographic positions.

As no-one in Group 5 has the same higher relative-skills based status in art as Marcelo, leadership attempts are different and less successful. Frankie's strategies bear some similarities with Marcelo's: he also favours linguistic strategies which pay attention to relational practices indexing normative femininity, and this, alongside his other social practices which are geared towards sociability, constitute his local ethnographic position as a popular, cool boy. However, unlike Marcelo, his suggestions are not accepted unquestioningly by his teammates. I have shown in my analysis that this exemplifies the power of skills-based status when present alongside relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity. I have also shown that Frankie's challenges with leadership may be related not to his construction of masculinity, which shows more similarity with the local hegemonic form influenced by the form-group's co-constructed 'feminine' CofP, but, Sam's resistance, possibly affected by his construction which is more in line with global discursive expectations about hegemonic masculinity. The importance of others' ratification has thus been demonstrated.

In the next Part, I explore the children's leadership in two play-oriented contexts.

Part II: Play-oriented talk

II.i Introduction to Part II

The chapters in this Part explore leadership in two play-oriented contexts. I explain the children's chosen games, *Who's Most Likely To?* in 6.2 and *Rocket League* in 7.3. These chapters offer a comparison between the children's leadership in a more formal, curriculum-oriented context (Part I) and this less formal, play-oriented context.

In my analysis, I again focus on episodes of decision-making talk as 'rich points' (Jewitt 2008, see 3.6) for observing leadership. I consider how the children make decisions before and during their games in order to maintain play, where whichever child's decisions are agreed to or actioned often shows successful leadership. I explore how this is achieved by contemplating their choice of linguistic strategy and others' responses. These chapters therefore pay close attention to speakers' directives, 'utterance[s] designed to get another to do something' (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 65, see 2.1.3), considering which are selected, accepted, or rejected. The success or otherwise of directives also illuminates the children's 'local social order', 'a form of rank[ing]' where individuals position themselves in relation to each other (Harness-Goodwin 2006: 3, see 2.1.7). Thus, leadership is also evidenced by establishing who is positioned above or below others.

As noted in 2.1.3 and 2.1.8, Penguin Class had co-constructed a normatively 'feminine' CofP (Fletcher 1999; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Holmes and Marra 2004; Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]), where directives formed using linguistic strategies traditionally associated with indexing normative femininity are preferred. The children mostly share this preference in this Part (though see 6.6, 7.6 for exceptions). However, as I use linguistic ethnography to view each child as a 'whole' speaker (Hymes 1972, see 3.2), I go beyond examining only their use of particular

strategies. Like Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) study of nerd girls in Part I, I consider how their identity

constructions, built through interactional roles, local ethnographic positions, local social practices

and stance-taking, support or limit leadership, especially their constructions as 'particular *kinds*' of

girls and boys (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original). This ethnographic information is detailed in

Tables 6.1 and 7.1. Many of my findings in these Chapters are in-line with the children's

constructions in Part I; for example, Tilda frequently invokes a play frame in her talk before and

during *Who's Most Likely To*? (*WMLT*), making visible how her stance and style contribute to her

local ethnographic position as a popular, easy-going and funny girl. Because I maintain throughout

this thesis that leadership and identity are interrelated, I also explore the 'stances', 'relationships'

to objects and persons speakers indicate in talk (Kiesling 2022: 410, see 2.1.5), they adopt towards

their games, discourses and each other, and how this reveals their 'alignments' and

'disalignments', how speakers relate to each other's stances (Du Bois 2007). I also detail how the

stances the children adopt relate to their style, where the use of many linguistic resources

'combine' (Kiesling 2009: 174). In these chapters, I therefore explore how the children's local

social practices and statuses, as well as how their stances towards the games and each other,

contribute to their identity constructions. I explore how these constructions facilitate leadership.

I find that for understanding how the groups make decisions in this Part, it is also important to

consider speakers' statuses, built through local social practices (see 2.1.4, 2.1.7). In Chapter 6, this

is mostly related to popularity and sociability, and in Chapter 7, higher relative skill alongside

popularity and sociability. This slight difference is because of the difference in game. *WMLT* is a

verbal game devised by the girls themselves and requires little game-based skill because of the

absence of physical resources, whereas *Rocket League* is played on a video gaming console

necessitating skill in dexterity.

In the next section, I summarise prior studies of children's play before first analysing a girls' game (Chapter 6) then a boys' game (Chapter 7). *WMLT* and *Rocket League* are outlined in their chapters (6.2, 7.3).

II.ii Studies of Children's Play and Games

I argue in Part I that leadership is visible when someone's design decision is actioned, and attention to a learning objective and success criteria might influence children's decisions. Understanding leadership in a game is slightly more nuanced. Early-child education theorist, Julie Fisher's (2020: 90), outline of some universal characteristics of play as an 'enjoyable activity' done for 'its own sake' is helpful for identifying game-based leadership. Success in game-management, therefore, may be recognised by participants' enjoyment, perhaps shown in willingness to engage with it for an extended period, laughter, and loose acceptance of some rules. Successful play-based leadership is therefore visible if a game continues to progress, and participants appear to be enjoying themselves.

Harness-Goodwin's studies of school playground-based games makes connections between children's language and gameplay, particularly their use of directives. In her (2001) study of leadership in jump-rope at Hanley Elementary school in LA, USA, the participants are a similar age to my speakers. Harness-Goodwin finds all leaders, male and female, use both bald imperatives, e.g., 'Faster!', which I would label strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity, and mitigated requests, e.g., 'Can you guys just turn?', which I would label strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, when managing a competitive game of jump-rope. This is regardless of the speaker's gender because most important for making decisions is context-specific higher relative skills-based status. For Harness-Goodwin's children, this supersedes popularity-based status. For my speakers, gender is relevant as, in line with their co-constructed

'feminine' CofP, strategies associated with indexing normative femininity are usually more successful. Additionally, the children construct local ethnographic positions as 'particular *kinds*' of girl or boy (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original) which I argue facilitate their leadership. As Harness-Goodwin does not explore whether the groups operate as 'masculine' or 'feminine' CofPs, she is not able to offer more detailed ethnographic information about whether this may have influenced speakers' strategies like I am able to. However, like her jump-ropers, I also find local statuses to be influential in leadership.

In her (1990) study of boys aged 9–14 in Philadelphia, USA, Harness-Goodwin shows statuses other than higher relative skill may support leadership attempts. She details how a boys' group decides upon, starts, and plays a competitive slingshot battle game. Taking place one afternoon when a boy, Chopper, produces a bag of wire hangers hoping they will play at his home, another boy, Malcolm, argues the activity should take place in his yard. Although possessions usually provide some warrants for leadership, Chopper yields, for Malcolm and his brother, Tony, are acknowledged to be the leaders by the other boys. This is because, as Harness-Goodwin notes, they are able to draw on the statuses of age (they are older) and, it seems to me, in line with the ideals of traditional hegemonic masculinity (see 5.2; 7.6), physicality (they are taller and stronger). They can draw on these statuses to be decision-makers determining how play will commence, without, like my children, explicitly invoking them. Malcolm then decides the game will proceed as a slingshot battle, apparently on his own whims. Malcolm and Tony's statuses allow their use of bald imperatives and insults towards lower-ranked boys while making decisions based on their whims. This is in contrast with a similar task-oriented game played by the girls on Maple Street. When activities are settled upon for the girls, it is usually the result of suggestions, often phrased as, 'Let's play...', using reasons that benefit the whole group. This, Harness-Goodwin argues, shows

the girls' egalitarian approach to play, suggesting that, unlike her boys, rankings are unimportant because they make decisions together.

My children frequently use strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, suggesting a preference for egalitarianism and, as noted, the influence of their co-constructed 'feminine' CofP as they play. I show local statuses are also important. It therefore seems to me that, as shown acutely by Harness-Goodwin's Maple Street boys, children can rely upon certain locally-accrued statuses to garner support for their decisions. Unlike McRae's (2009) male managers, whose statuses were granted through official, managerial job titles, my children's statuses are not explicitly awarded, but locally accrued through their local social practices and understood by all participants through shared history and friendship (see 2.1.7). For example, Matty's interest in video-gaming means he plays frequently, almost inevitably leading to higher relative skill; Tilda's humour and playful approach make others feel at ease, leading to her increased likeability and constituting her popularity. I argue these statuses therefore often stand as proxy for some children's ideas being accepted.

I now turn to Chapter 6, where I explore the girls' leadership in *WMLT*.

Chapter 6: Girls' Leadership in a Play Context: Playing a Verbal Game

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore leadership in a play context where 10 of the girls, Tilda, Bella, Fliss, Grace, Alice, Lilah, Lan, Yasmin, Naomi and Amy, play a verbal game they name, *Who's Most Likely To?*. While previous studies explore leadership in single-sex adult women's talk (Baxter 2015, see 2.1.9), adolescents' curriculum-oriented talk in school contexts (Baxter 2006a; Davies 2011[2003], see 2.1.9), or pre-adolescents' games using physical resources such as jump-rope or hopscotch (Harness-Goodwin 1990, 1994, 2001, 2006, see II.ii, 2.1.10), my data in this chapter present a unique insight into pre-adolescent girls' leadership in a verbal game played in a single-sex group. My girls are younger than those in other studies, their focus is play- rather than curriculum-oriented, and there are no physical resources to shape play (this is in contrast with the boys in Chapter 7, who are constrained by the gaming equipment and game-controlled resources such as timers as they play). The lack of physical resources means the girls' language is a particularly rich site for observing how they are able to show leadership by initiating play, maintaining it, and choosing and monitoring rules.

To explore leadership in this context, my analysis is divided into four main sections: the girls' talk before deciding to play a game, how they decide upon playing a game, how they choose the game, and how they manage the game during play. Through my linguistic ethnographic approach, I was drawn to the latter three areas, finding them to be 'rich points' (Jewitt 2008, see also Agar 2008; 3.6), presenting clear opportunities for leadership; decisions must be made, and it is necessary for someone's idea or suggestion to be actioned for play to proceed.

I therefore consider how this is done, and explore directives, 'utterance[s] designed to get another

to do something' (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 63, see 2.1.3). Because I view the girls as 'whole' speaking subjects (Hymes 1972; see 3.2), in my analysis I consider not only the linguistic forms themselves, but the social relationships and identities surrounding both their use and outcomes. I explore the 'relational practices' in which the girls engage (Fletcher 1999; Holmes 2009: 189, see 2.1.3), and their other social practices that contribute to their local ethnographic positions, which also contribute to statuses (McRae 2009, see 2.1.7). For example, Tilda's in-class popularity is both built and used in the game as she supports her own or her friends' ideas, and challenges others. I therefore make connections between directives and other linguistic and social practices and the 'local social order', how the girls build and show 'a form of rank[ing]' (Harness-Goodwin 2006: 3), by exploring choice of strategy, and how they are responded to (Harness-Goodwin 1990; see 2.1.10). I argue this evidences leadership, as one speaker is placed above or below others.

While the girls do leadership and identity work throughout the game, like Group 2 and Group 5 in Part I (see 4.2.2 and 5.4.2), I also present some key findings from interactions in the girls' pre-game talk. This is because, as Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 588; see 2.1.4) outline in their overview of identity in sociolinguistics, identities, stances, styles and alignments are constructed in 'earlier interactions'. This includes during talk before the game commences as well as my months-long ethnographic observations, both of which impact play during the game. Considering my research question, I therefore examine how the girls interactively construct their identities before the game begins and during its play by, like Part I and Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) study of nerd girls, examining interactional roles and discursive positionings, and how these contribute to local ethnographic positions. I therefore consider how their identity constructions impact, support or prevent the girls' leadership.

When listening to the recordings, I remained open to exploring how leadership is achieved by any of the girls through a consideration of their identity constructions and linguistic strategies. However, as Amy and Tilda were frequently named as leaders in the interviews, I began my initial analysis of transcripts with them in mind but opened it up as I spent more time with the data. I agreed with the children that Tilda and Amy frequently show leadership, but I demonstrate in my analysis that they attempt and achieve it differently. Amy shows a preference for linguistic strategies traditionally associated with indexing normative masculinity, such as bald imperatives, her whims as justifications and an unwillingness to share leadership with others or allow them to disrupt her favoured structure, all found in Harness-Goodwin's (1990) observation of boys' play. For example, instead of partaking in the game, she stops others to remind them that she is 'asking the questions' (see 6.4; 6.6) which disrupts the game's flow. Tilda's use (mostly, but not always) of strategies traditionally associated with indexing normative femininity is usually more successful. She often uses inclusive pronouns, e.g., 'we', and modals, e.g., 'shall', to level everyone, as Harness-Goodwin (1990) observes in girls' play. I also acknowledge that they are not the only girls who are important in this game; for example, Bella and Lilah refocus the group after disputes, allowing game-play to be sustained, and Fliss's enthusiasm for new questions and justifications for differences maintain good social relations. Bella, Lilah and Fliss, like Tilda, often pay attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity in their language, practices shown in linguistic strategies which 'concentrate on fostering relationships' (Holmes 2009: 189) and 'creating team' (Fletcher 1999; see 2.1.3; though this is not always the case; see 6.4). These strategies are those endorsed by their co-constructed CofP.

As discussed in 2.1.3 and 2.1.8, Penguin Class appeared to have co-constructed a 'feminine' CofP (Fletcher 1999; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Holmes and Marra 2004; Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]), which rewarded strategies such as Tilda's, Bella's, Lilah's and Fliss's, and sanctioned

the strategies Amy often favours. I show, overall, girls successful in leadership tend to pay attention to, and expect others also to consider, 'relational' practices, practices which 'concentrate on fostering relationships' (Holmes 2009: 189) and 'creating team' (Fletcher 1999), when making decisions by using strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, such as questioning intonation and modals. Girls who use 'bold' strategies focusing on transactional practices, practices privileging 'the task to be achieved, the problem to be solved or the purpose' (Dwyer 1993: 572), such as Amy's declarative 'I'm asking the questions' (rather than, 'Can I please be the question-asker?'), are often rebuffed. Those who are able to 'get away with' using more bold strategies are girls who have constructed likeable or popular femininities. Thus, as noted in 2.1.4 and 2.1.5, the children's identity constructions and styles influence how leadership is done and which strategies they draw upon to lead. Table 6.1 provides further ethnographic information about each of the girls, drawn from interviews and ethnographic observations in this context.

Thus, I argue it is not the strategies alone but how each girl's social practices, specifically, stances and alignments, combine to form their styles, and how styles facilitate leadership. Despite her use of some bold strategies, therefore, Tilda is responded to differently from Amy, as any boldness is offset by her other practices; particularly present in this chapter is humour. Tilda was often described by her peers as popular, a description I also found to be true in my ethnographic observations. Amy had friends, but was sometimes described as 'a bit bossy', an evaluation she had also, regrettably, begun to internalise. Although it might be argued it is perhaps the limitations of normative femininity which prevent others from accepting Amy's use of more normatively masculine strategies, they are also not inclined to accept them from male classmates (see 5.4.2). Furthermore, when she attempts to utter directives with attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity (6.4), they are unsuccessful.

Name	Close friends	Ethnographic information	Local ethnographic position/ Style
Tilda	Bella Lilah Fliss	- Popular member of Penguin Class. Lots of children keen to be her friend. - Talented across all performing arts. In choir; often selected to sing solos. Lead roles in assemblies - Witty sense of humour; often self-deprecating - Wears fashionable clothing: denim dungaree dresses or t-shirts with denim shorts over leggings	Funny, easy-going, popular girl
Bella	Tilda Lilah Grace	- Well-liked in Penguin Class; not as popular as Tilda - Talented artist - Loves 1980s music, fashion, TV shows - Regarded 'cool' - Wears fashionable clothing, makes some herself. She sometimes wears vintage/vintage-inspired items	Cool, supportive, fair girl
Lilah	Tilda Bella Lan	- Sporty; fastest runner in Penguin Class. On school netball and athletics teams - Well-liked; not as popular as Tilda - In choir - Historically close with Amy, but grew apart a few years earlier. In Year 6, she grew closer to Lan as they both like K-Pop - Regarded 'cool' - Wears fashionable, sporty, clothing	Cool girl
Fliss	Grace Tilda Yasmin	- Zest for life; enjoys being with friends - High-achieving across all subjects - In athletics team - Interest in political issues, e.g., gender - Class Captain - She and Tilda started to spend more time together and grew closer with Yasmin in Year 6 Wears fashionable clothing, similar to Tilda	Diplomatic girl
Grace	Fliss Alice Bella	- Dry sense of humour - Enjoys being her friends - In choir - Interested in political issues; can be outspoken, e.g., 'Donald Trump is so stupid' - Class Captain - Enjoys fashion - Close with Alice, though now closer to Fliss - Wears fashionable clothing – a mixture of Tilda's 'modern' and Bella's 'vintage twist'	Assertive, dry-humoured girl

Alice	Grace	• Dry sense of humour; sometimes draws on grotesqueness • Reserved • Good at drama – a recent realisation	
Yasmin	Fliss	• Fairly new addition to the friendship group • Keen to invest in new friendships • Zest for life (like Fliss) • Cares about the news and 'real world' issues • Great at maths • Class Captain • In choir	Fun-seeking, tamely rebellious girl
Lan	Seyda Lilah	• Dry sense of humour • Recently close with Lilah – mutual love of K-Pop • Loves art • Clothing is emblazoned with names of her favourite K-Pop bands • Caring	
Naomi	Amy	• Enjoys all performing arts • Fun, slapstick sense of humour; often tells jokes • Can also be very serious, and wants to do the 'right' thing • In choir • She and Amy were beginning to grow apart in Year 6	
Amy	Naomi	• High-achieving across all subjects • Member of athletics and netball teams and gymnastics squad • Also starting to enjoy K-Pop • In choir • Describes herself as 'a bit bossy'. Some other children also (reluctantly) described her this way, but others said she was 'assertive but nice about it' • Wears fashionable clothing, similar to Tilda and Lilah's styles	Assertive, serious girl

Table 6.1: Ethnographic information about the girls

Before examining the girls' leadership in interaction, it is useful to understand the context and

rules of the game, which I explain in the next section.

6.2 Context and Rules of *Who's Most Likely To*

Studies of play in primary school settings often consider its use as a resource for children's learning, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (see Piaget 1965, 1971; Vygotsky 1978, 1986, 1998; Fisher 2002, 2020). Though I agree on the importance of play for children's learning in primary school settings (Mardell et al. 2019; Fisher 2020), the game explored in this chapter was not related to any curriculum learning. It did, however, take place during a Topic lesson in which all pupils were engaged in an independent, relatively unsupervised activity. This lesson took place in March 2018, just before the end of the spring term.

During this time, the children were spending their mornings preparing for their Key Stage Two Standards Assessment Tests (SATS) in maths and English, learning some of the most complex concepts encountered at primary school. For the pupils' mental health, the other two teachers and I decided to give them more freedom in their afternoon learning and had set up a textiles project based on their cross-curricular World War II unit of work. Each child was sewing a cushion which they had designed to a level of complexity they deemed achievable. This was curriculum-linked as they were recycling old materials to create their designs inspired by 'make-do-and-mend'. Children were sitting at desks or in the carpet area with friends, talking and sewing. Tilda and her friends decided to sit in the annexe area at the back of the classroom. The annexe had a door frame, but no door, and was clearly separated from the rest of the main classroom, offering some privacy (see 3.3.3.1). The children were allowed freedom of the space as much as any other part of the classroom.

It was while sitting in the annexe engaged in their sewing that the girls decided to play *WMLT*. *WMLT* begins with someone using the motif construction, 'Who's most likely to…' to propose an idea to the group, for example, 'Who's most likely to be famous?'. Players then decide

who is the most likely to achieve or become the proposed idea, selecting from those participating. The game is usually played in a circle, where different speakers take turns to ask the questions. Ideally, all players will agree on the most likely candidate before proceeding to the next question. The topics for questions are unlimited, though my girls usually favour subjects regarding careers ('be a singer'), romantic love ('marry a celebrity'), or slapstick comedy ('get drunk on a plane'). It also appears to be a collaborative game, but it offers opportunities for the girls to compete for category selection and turns, as well as chances to support someone else's wish to be selected. As Cameron (2011[1997]) outlines in her argument against the reliance on oppositions in analysing gender performativity, it may therefore be best described as a game which shows speakers both supporting and competing while engaged a collaborative enterprise. With no opportunity to 'win', *WMLT* contrasts with many of the games examined in previous studies, such as hopscotch and jump-rope (see II.ii), giving the girls the opportunity to self-manage using the agreed structure as an organisational linguistic resource.

In the following section, I analyse the stances, styles and local ethnographic positions revealed in the girls' pre-game talk, as well as their relationships and local social order.

6.3 Talk Before Deciding to Play a Game

From the beginning of this recording, the girls set an expectation that they should 'try to talk about one thing'. I was surprised to hear them suggest this, as, like Coates (2013[1999]: 90) finds in the talk of her girls when they are in pre-adolescence, I had predicted topic-change would be 'rapid' and 'ludic'. I wondered if I might have a different interpretation of 'talking about one thing' – did 'one' relate to time spent on a topic, or the involvement of participants? In the interviews, I therefore clarified what it meant, and the girls explained it was about both participation and topic. They felt everyone should be talking together about one topic, rather than small groups talking

about different topics, and the time spent on their one topic should be sustained over an extended period. When I questioned them about their motivations for this, they said, with smiles, they 'didn't really know'. I asked if it could have been an attempt to ensure everyone felt included as talking about one thing appears to invite everyone to take part, with which they agreed. Their overall preference for egalitarianism and discussing one topic over an extended number of turns was clear. This illustrated immediately the relevance of gender and age; the girls seem to be attempting to talk like grown-up women, which Coates (2013[1999]: 93) also observes as her girls get older; her girls all contribute to one topic, and this is sustained over several minutes.

In this section, I discuss three 'rich points' (Jewitt 2008; see 3.6) which present pre-game moments of interest as the girls try to obey their self-enforced 'one topic' rule. I show they appear relevant to the girls' later conduct in the game. I consider which discourses the girls invoke, how their stances and repeated stance-taking contribute to their local ethnographic positions, styles and gender identity constructions, and discuss how these constructions are related to leadership both here and later in the game. As shown in my analysis, relationships and relative social positionings in the group are also revealed. I argue that what we learn here is relevant throughout their game, and the identities and local social order established in these moments in interaction supplement the girls' negotiation of leadership in *WMLT* (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 288; see 2.1.4). As this is the first time seeing the girls in this context, 6.3.1 gives more detail, so it is slightly longer than 6.3.2 and 6.3.3.

6.3.1 Boys: Heterosexual Femininity

Within the first twenty seconds of the recording, Tilda suggests the subject of 'boys' to satisfy their self-imposed 'one topic' rule:

Boys

```
1
Tilda:                                         shall we talk about boys
Yasmin:    what shall we talk about/ (1)

2
Tilda:       {SMILING} %I'm joking% {lau[ghter}
Bella:                               [no[::{SMILING}
Fliss:                               [no[:{laughter} and also
Grace:                                 [no[::
Alice:                                 [no[:::
Lilah:
Lan:                                         [no::::
Yasmin:                                      ["YA:::SS"{AMERICAN ACCENT}
Naomi:                                       [no::::
Amy:                                         [no::::

3
Tilda:                                                           so
Fliss:     it would get it on the voice recorder just some random/

4
Tilda:     (.) <who does everyone like> {SMILING; MOCK CONCILIATORY

5
Tilda:     TONE} >%I'm joking I'm joking%<
Bella:                                     yes::%:%
Amy:                                   I wanna know who

6
Tilda:               this/{PASSING COTTON THREAD TO FLISS}
Fliss:               thank you Tilda
Naomi:                                 Tilda likes Romelu
Amy:       Tilda likes

7
Tilda:                                 =Tilda likes no one\
Yasmin:    yeah (-) Tilda (.) Tilda likes=
```

That Tilda is the first to attempt finding a common topic for the girls to discuss positions her

powerfully; she is willing to 'take the lead', and she suggests a topic almost as soon as the group

has decided to 'talk about one thing'. Her use of modal, 'shall', inclusive pronoun, 'we', and a

questioning format, 'Shall we talk about boys?' (stave 1) resembles the directive forms used by

Harness-Goodwin's (1990) girls when engaged in task-oriented play (see 2.1.10). Harness-

Goodwin's girls use modals to avoid appearing imposing, and inclusive pronouns for

egalitarianism, ensuring no one girl is positioned above the others. Using similar strategies

suggests Tilda is paying attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative

femininity as supported by the CofP, and, as I discuss below, her high response rate suggests the others appreciate this.

Her topic choice of 'boys' (stave 1), however, is slightly risky. Penguin Class had never hosted a 'public relationship', in contrast with the children in Maybin's (2006) form-group who frequently and openly 'dated'. While this does not necessarily mean relationships were non-existent, it may position them as slightly taboo, suggesting the children viewed themselves as too young for boyfriends or girlfriends. This was further confirmed in my ethnographic observation notes; when the children were watching the animated Disney movie, *Aladdin*, one afternoon, I noted lots of them chorusing, 'Ugh!' when the lead characters share a romantic kiss at the end. The invocation of 'boys' therefore constructs Tilda's growing-up femininity. She positions herself as more of an adolescent than a pre-adolescent girl, seeming to imitate the talk popular media often represents teenage girls engaging in. This is similar to Bucholtz's (2011: 162) findings that Mexican American teenage boys' use of 'güey' to index a stance of cool solidarity is supported by media representations which make it semiotically intelligible.

However, Tilda's construction is fleeting, as, in her next turn, she takes a playful stance by smiling while uttering an immediate declaration she is 'joking' (stave 2). This invokes a play frame (Goffman 1974), suggesting she is making a humorous suggestion, not a serious one. She frequently takes similar playful stances and pays attention to relational practices making them typical of her style. They might be viewed as resources she uses to construct her likeability and popularity. Although 'popularity' is a 'complex and slippery concept' (Francis 2010: 480) because sometimes the most popular are not automatically the most liked, Tilda is regarded as popular through being well-liked, but she actively pays attention her relationships by making the effort to include everyone and find the humour in situations. It also implies her interpersonal awareness;

while she seems ready to grow up, she appears to understand this topic may be taboo for others. Framing it as a 'joke' means others, as well as she, herself, are not compelled to discuss it and everyone can instead justifiably laugh as a 'neutral' response. However, that she says this quietly then repeats the sentiment of her initial question in her next turn, 'So, who does everyone like?' (stave 4) suggests she isn't completely committed to her 'joke' and this growing-up femininity is an identity she wishes to explore.

In stave 2, all the girls except Lilah and Yasmin reject Tilda's proposal to talk about boys. This positions the majority of the girls as younger or less mature and outside the heterosexual relationship discourse. Fliss is the only girl who accounts for her refusal. In stave 2–3, she explains, 'It would get it on the voice recorder, just some random...'. Though she does not specify what she regards 'random', Fliss feels the need to justify to Tilda, and everyone present, why she is not willing to speak about this subject in this moment. She outlines it is because she is aware the VR is recording them, implying it is not necessarily because she has nothing to say about boys. Fliss therefore shows she is conscious of 'protecting' her friends, adopting a mindful, observant stance towards the stance object of 'boys' by evaluating it as not necessarily inappropriate for them to discuss, but as a subject unsuitable for this context specifically. This is supplemented by my ethnographic knowledge that Fliss enjoyed discussing crushes with her friends in home-based contexts. She displays what I name a modified positive alignment towards Tilda; she is not rejecting her suggestion, but the suitability of the context. Fliss frequently justifies her opinion during *WMLT* (see 6.6), and this repeated stance-taking contributes to her diplomatic style as well as signalling her maturity.

Yasmin is the only immediate supporter of Tilda's proposal, overtly displaying her affective positive alignment (Kiesling 2022) by saying, 'Yaasss' (stave 2) to talking about boys. Yasmin uses a

west-coast USA accent with vocal fry, and this deliberate change in accent and voice quality discursively displays her alignment with Tilda beyond word-choice. Like Maybin's (2006) 10–12-year-old pupils who use voice stylisations to invoke or maintain play frames, Yasmin also uses a shift in accent and prosody to sustain Tilda's play frame. Her deliberately stylised voice also suggests she is 'playing' with growing-up heterosexual femininity; whereas Tilda overtly says, 'I'm joking' (stave 2), Yasmin uses voice as a contextualisation cue. Yasmin frequently takes the interactional role exemplified here as someone who is responsive to others, and the stance she adopts here contributes to her fun-seeking, tamely rebellious style; she is willing to play with boundaries but not push too far – she does not actually offer any utterances about boys. Yasmin's enthusiasm to align with Tilda suggested in this short interaction is also present throughout the recording, contributing to Tilda's leadership by positioning her highly in the local social order.

Despite her initial rejection (stave 2), Bella appears also to show overtly a positive alignment (Kiesling 2022) with Tilda. After Tilda's second attempt to unite everyone by talking about boys, 'So, who does everyone like?' (stave 4), Bella utters a decrescendoing 'yes::' (stave 5). Lexically, this supports Tilda, but her diminuendo may be a contextualisation cue to signify her lack of investment in discussing boys. Using ethnographic information from the interviews in which Tilda and Bella keenly highlighted their years-long best friendship, it appears Bella expresses agreement because of her investment in her friendship with Tilda rather than the subject. Her alignment is therefore a display of friendship both to Tilda and the other speakers. This is slightly different from Yasmin's alignment with Tilda. Based on my ethnographic observations that she was a fairly new addition to the group and that Tilda did not name her as a 'close friend', it seems Yasmin's enthusiasm displays her desire for Tilda's approval. Bella is therefore 'doing friendship' here by changing her mind and publicly supporting Tilda's proposal despite being part of the group that caused it to be rejected initially. Bella and Tilda frequently align in the game as, like Sophie and

Charlotte in Baxter's (2006a) study of girls in a speaking and listening assessment, they actively support each other's ideas. Like Fliss, therefore, Bella adopts a modified positive alignment towards Tilda; she supports her suggestion but does not seem wholly committed. This shows Bella's ethnographic position as a 'good friend', especially to Tilda, contributing to her supportive style.

Although also close with both Tilda and Bella, Lilah adopts a different stance towards 'boys'; she removes herself completely by not responding to either of Tilda's attempts (stave 1; 4). From the interviews and my ethnographic observations, Lilah was regarded as 'cool' by others in the class. Thus, it appears that Lilah may be constructing an ethnographic position similar to Shannon in Francis et al.'s (2010) study of high achieving and popular secondary school pupils, who constructs a cool, mature femininity by disengaging while her female classmates make raucous attempts at heterosexual flirting. Tilda's suggestion of talking about boys symbolises her aim to construct a growing-up femininity, but Lilah's stance of refusing to engage suggests an already-grown-up, mature femininity is being achieved. As she frequently takes this stance, it shows her style is 'cool' and mature. Later in the recording, it seems that while most of the group views Tilda's femininity as aspirational, Tilda regards Lilah's femininity as such. For example, in the staves below from talk during game-play (see 6.6), this is demonstrated linguistically through voice (stave 3; stave 4–5):

You said my name?
```
  1
  Fliss:                        or Lilah actually::
  Yasmin:            aye ay::e
  Naomi:  slash Lan                                  to become a


  2
  Tilda:                  [Lilah
  Naomi:  model (-) model                       Lilah
  Amy:                  [I ask the questions      no you s- (-)

  3
→ Lilah:            [you said my name/{NONCHALANT; CASUAL}
  Amy:        I'm [not
```

```
   ...

   4
→ Tilda:                                                [I heard
   Bella:       me (1) I'll be like Dua Lipa
   Fliss:                                    yeah Bella (1) ["one ki-"

   5
→ Tilda:     my na:me/{NONCHALANT; CASUAL}
   Fliss:    {SINGING} Bella it's your song
```

As shown in stave 3, when she has disengaged from the game but hears her name mentioned, Lilah responds with the nonchalant utterance, 'You said my name?'. This invokes coolness, as it suggests she has deliberately chosen not to pay attention to the main activity and she does not care to ask anyone directly. Tilda later invokes Lilah's coolness using free direct speech (Leech and Short 1981) to present herself as also 'disengaged'; around 10 minutes later, shown here in stave 4–5, she responds to a nomination as most likely to win a Brit award with an almost identical construction to Lilah, 'I heard my name?'. This metrical alignment (Kiesling 2022) suggests she is also invoking Lilah's cool, mature style. Later in the recording, after Tilda has used this form, I observed Amy and Yasmin proceeding to use similar ones, confirming their admiration of Tilda, and positioning her highly in the local social order.

However, it must be acknowledged that not everyone wishes to align with Tilda in 'Boys'. Immediately after Tilda's second bid to talk about boys, Amy says, 'I wanna know who **Tilda** likes' (stave 5). Though it suggests an alignment as she is willing to maintain the topic, her explicit naming and emphasis as a contextualisation cue narrows the focus from all speakers to just Tilda. Thus, rather than honouring her 'joke', Amy transforms Tilda's attempt at appearing inclusive and playful ('who does **everyone** like?' (stave 4); my emphasis) into a personal evaluation of Tilda's crush(es), perhaps feeling that, if Tilda is asking others, she should be the first to make a disclosure. Like Malcolm in the boys' game (Harness-Goodwin 1990), Amy uses the first person, 'I', imperative, 'wanna', and offers no reason for requesting this information which suggests to the

others it is for her own whims rather than the whole group's benefit. Amy therefore shows no attention to the relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity encouraged by the CofP. Using ethnographic knowledge, however, it can be argued that Amy is, in fact, motivated by inclusion. In her interview, Amy said she had (unconfirmed) suspicions about Tilda's crushes, knowing she had shared information with some people, but not all. Amy said this meant Tilda could not be described as 'inclusive', as she had excluded some girls. Like the boys' attention to morality regarding fairness in Chapter 7, Amy may therefore be motivated by a morality of what she regards 'true' inclusiveness in which secrets do not fit, as they inevitably cause some people to be left out. Amy is therefore willing to talk about boys and romantic crushes, but her willingness is different from the support offered by Yasmin and Bella. Amy is prepared to talk about boys, but in a new, serious frame, on her terms, where Tilda is to be the object of focus. Her interactional role here as a 'provocateur' contributes to her defiant stance. Her defiance, seen here and frequently throughout the game, supports her local ethnographic position and style as an assertive and serious girl.

In stave 6–7, Naomi and Yasmin both take Amy's declarative, 'I want to know who Tilda likes' (stave 5–6) as an opportunity to align with Tilda, not Amy. They overtly refer to a boy named Romelu, saying, 'Tilda likes Romelu' (Naomi, stave 6) and, 'Yeah – Tilda, Tilda likes…' (Yasmin, stave 7). I became aware of Romelu when Bella and Tilda occasionally referred to him on the recordings. This was often in front of others to index their close friendship, making offhand comments such as, 'I wonder if you'll see Romelu at the park tomorrow'. Tilda later told me Romelu was a boy from out-of-school, who, confirming Amy's suspicions, she had discussed directly with only Bella and Fliss. This means Yasmin and Naomi may know Romelu's name but not much more. However, Naomi and Yasmin clearly wish to interpersonally align with Tilda and imply closeness with her in their attempts to display knowledge of Tilda's alleged 'secrets'. In *WMLT*, they also frequently try

to align with her through listening and responding to her and agreeing with her opinions. This again positions Tilda highly in the local social order, further confirming her leadership. They also directly defy Amy's attempt, a disalignment which is repeated throughout *WMLT*.

Rather than challenging Amy directly, Tilda opts for a more general response to dismiss Amy's declarative, saying, 'Tilda likes no-one' (stave 7). Use of the third person here suggests she wishes to distance herself from this version of the subject and shift back to a play frame, where she is one of the players who can avoid personal self-disclosure. Although she invited others to make personal disclosures when asking, 'Shall we talk about boys?' (stave 1) and, 'So, who does everyone like?' (stave 4–5), she does not name any speakers, and her style with attention to relational practices such as modal, 'shall', inclusive pronouns, 'we' and 'everyone', and a questioning format means no-one is targeted. This is unlike Amy's turn, 'I wanna know who Tilda likes' (stave 6), which uses declarative, 'wanna', first-person, 'I', and the explicit naming of Tilda to force her response.

Although many of the girls reject the topic of 'boys', as noted above, the high response to Tilda's question shows her popularity and leadership in the group. This is in contrast with Amy, who is willing to discuss the topic but gets no support for the way she frames it. Tilda is able to secure everyone's attention instantly without uttering an imperative, a feat not managed by any others in the whole hour-long recording. Because of Tilda's popularity in Penguin Class, the identity construction of growing-up, heterosexual femininity is made aspirational, later evident in *WMLT* from the volume of topics which index similar stances that are proposed or claimed by many of those unwilling to discuss boys here (for example, when Bella asks, 'Who's most likely to have 10 boyfriends before they marry?', Grace, Tilda and Yasmin nominate themselves; when she asks, 'Who's most likely to marry a rapper?', Lilah, Naomi and Tilda nominate themselves). This may be

because in the obvious play frame of a game they feel more at ease with making the types of personal disclosures Coates (2013[1999]) observes in her girls' talk only when they reach their teenage years. This positions many of my girls as growing-up as they begin to play with this discourse without fully committing to it.

In 'Boys', the interaction between the girls shows how their interactional roles and stances contribute to their local ethnographic positions and styles. I show in the next sections that the stances, alignments, styles and interactional roles discussed in this section are also visible and relevant throughout *WMLT*, which further contribute to their local ethnographic positions and enable or limit leadership in game-play. The only hint of tension is between Amy and Tilda. As this tension appears to feed into gameplay, I discuss it in the next section.

6.3.2 Jetlagged: Tension

A few minutes later, the tension in 'Boys' between Amy and Tilda is again implied. The group is now discussing holidays, when Amy explains how tired she will be on her first day of Year 7 at New Road School, her new secondary school, due to the plans her parents have made for their summer holiday:

Jetlagged
```
1
Amy:        >I'm going to Norfolk for one week/ and Argentina for

2
Amy:        three weeks/ and I'm going to be so jatlegged cause

3
Tilda:                          [jatlegged/ (-) jetlagged{SMILING;
Amy:        on the day we get [back< (.)    on    (-)     on the

4
Tilda:      FRIENDLY AMUSED TONE}
Yasmin:                                  [erm I'm (.) I'm going to
Amy:        day we get back I'm going to [New Road\
```

Here, Amy speaks slightly faster than anyone previously (staves 1–3). This may indicate discomfort in holding the floor for an extended period, perhaps because, as Coates (2013[1997]) notes, prolonged floor-holding is often observed in single-sex men's friendship talk when they are playing the expert. However, it also suggests a fear that she will be interrupted, so she rushes to fit everything in before someone talks over her.

Rushing therefore probably causes Amy's mispronunciation of 'jetlagged' as 'jatlegged' (stave 2), which, while ignored by all the others, Tilda interrupts her to correct, 'Jatlegged? Jetlagged' (stave 3). Tilda's smiling quality as she speaks may mean she is enjoying the fact that she can correct Amy, which suggests boldness. However, Tilda's smile has a friendly, amused tone, which indicates she does not necessarily mean to be offensive (this is in contrast with Amy's correction of Lan, see 4.2.2). From ethnographic observations, Tilda's popularity was based on likeability, built through the playful stances she often adopts and close friendships she invested in. It therefore seems to me that it would be at odds with her style if this was intended to be unkind rather than something Tilda simply finds humorous. Nonetheless, interrupting is a bold strategy, and Amy appears to interpret it negatively.

Amy appears to miss the 'contextualisation cues' (Gumperz 1982: 131, see 3.6) of smiling and Tilda's friendly, amused tone in her turn, for she ignores Tilda and continues talking at a slower pace after a stilted recovery in stave 3, 'On the day we get back, **on… on the day we get back, I'm going to New Road**' (my emphasis). This suggests she does not appreciate the correction. In my analysis of the game, I show that it seems Amy may have interpreted Tilda's interruption and correction as personal, rather than an offhand humorous observation Tilda might have made for anyone. This resembles the girls in Baxter's (2006a) study of secondary school pupils' speaking and

listening assessments, who allowed relationships and tension established in prior interactions to affect performance in an assessed curriculum activity.

Tilda's interactional role of 'humorous expert' in relation to Amy's mispronunciation of 'jetlagged' contributes to her local ethnographic position and style as a 'funny girl'. Amy's continuation of her turn signals a disalignment with Tilda. She does not acknowledge her interruption, either by repeating her turn using 'jetlagged', or by responding with a response in the play frame, such as a sarcastic, 'Thank you, Tilda'. This shows Amy's serious stance, which contributes to her style and local ethnographic position as a 'serious girl'. Each girl's stances here are frequently adopted, contributing to their overall styles.

The final moment of pre-game interest is the girls' discussion of a film named *Wild Child* (Moore 2008). The talk about this film shows a divide between Amy and the other girls, and, again, seems to contribute to their conduct in *WMLT*.

6.3.3 Wild Child: In-Group Marking

Introduced by Fliss, the girls discuss *Wild Child*. In their interviews, they told me Tilda, Bella, Fliss, Grace, Alice and Lilah had watched the film together at a sleepover. Thus, the film represents an in-group marker; being able to quote the film indexes popularity as it shows they were present at the event, and coolness from knowledge of films in this tongue-in-cheek, coming-of-age genre, on which they placed high value.

Wild Child

```
1
Tilda:                               yeah
Bella:                                 oh YEAH
Fliss:     it's like in Wild Chil:d
Grace:                                            [yeah
Alice:                                                 yeah
Lilah:                                            [yeah


2
Tilda:     oh but the Head Girl was so bad
Fliss:                                     I know she was (.)


3
Fliss:     [Harriet
Alice:     [my mum was Head [Girl
Lilah:                      [and then she was jus- she was like


4
Fliss:                                          oh yeah and the
Grace:                              [{laughter}
Lilah:     remember that burger they [spat in


5
Tilda:                                 "who/ (-) are we"{WEST-COAST
Bella:           "who ar:e we"{WEST-COAST AMERICAN ACCENT}
Fliss:     turkey{LAUGHING}          "are we::"{WEST-COAST
Grace:                                "are we::"{WEST-COAST
Alice:                                "are we::"{WEST-COAST
Lilah:                                "are we::"{WEST-COAST
Yasmin:                               "are we::"{WEST-COAST


6
Tilda:     AMERICAN ACCENT} {laugh[ter}
Bella:                      {laugh[ter}
Fliss:     AMERICAN ACCENT} {laugh[ter}
Grace:     AMERICAN ACCENT> {laugh[ter}
Alice:     AMERICAN ACCENT> {laugh[ter}
Lilah:     AMERICAN ACCENT> {laugh[ter}
Yasmin:    AMERICAN ACCENT> {laugh[ter}
Naomi:                       [what's that/
```

…

Wild Child continued

```
7
Fliss:                         they're like oh she's English
Yasmin:    I know (-) it's good


8
Bella:                               I kno:w
Fliss:                                         remember her
Naomi:     you get to see Ruby's boyfriend


9
Fliss:     dancing{laug[hter}                    {laughter}
Amy:                  [what are you talking about
```

```
10
Fliss:                                  [no listen so when she does
Lilah:                       cal[led Wild Child
Naomi:     it's a really good film
```

Quoting the film, 'Who **are** we?!' (stave 5), reveals that Tilda, Bella, Fliss, Grace, Alice and Lilah

were present at the sleepover (although Yasmin joins in, she was not present, which I discuss

below). It also demonstrates both Tilda's leadership and her friendship with Bella. Similar to Tom

in Baxter's (2006a) study of secondary school pupils' speaking and listening assessments who used

his popularity-based status to enable his best friend, Charlie's, leadership (by, for example,

clearing the speech channel for him), Tilda also appears to use her popularity-based status to

support her best friend's attempt at leadership without having to explicitly direct anyone. The line,

'Who are we?', is used in the film by the five main characters as a slogan which they chant

together to express solidarity. When Bella says, 'Who **are** we?' (stave 5) in the characters'

Southern Californian accent, no-one responds. However, when Tilda says, 'Who' with a pause in

stave 5, she is inviting others to join her in quoting the line, and therefore supports Bella through

her incitement of the group's chorus. As she is reciprocating the alignment Bella showed her in

'Boys' (stave 5, 'Boys'; see 6.3.1), it displays their mutual close friendship and differentiates their

best friendship from the generally unidirectional alignment of Yasmin and Tilda visible in 'Boys'

(stave 2, 7, 'Boys'; 6.3.1). All the girls also maintain Tilda's play frame, showing their alignment

with her. This positions her highly in the local social order and supports her local ethnographic

position as a funny, popular girl.

In stave 6, Naomi asks, 'What's that?'. Interestingly, however, Naomi had made the effort to

watch *Wild Child* separately, clearly recognising the coolness associated with knowledge of it. This

enabled her, usually, to join in with quotes and plot summaries. Additionally, despite confessing a

few days later that she had not actually seen the film, Yasmin also participates, joining in with the

quote (stave 5), and making a generic evaluation, 'I know, it's [the film] good' (stave 7). She had

managed to learn quotes and references by spending time with her friends. This film was

therefore a clear marker of coolness, to the extent that it provoked action in others; something

which, in her study of Hanley School, Harness-Goodwin (2006) reports occurring with girls'

clothing.

Amy's question, 'What are you talking about?' (stave 9), exposes she has not seen *Wild Child*. Like

Sam in 5.4.2, this must sting as it displays clearly that she was both left out of the sleepover, and

Naomi, someone she counts as a good friend, has not shared it with her. Though Lilah and Naomi

update her on the subject, saying, 'It's a really good film', 'called Wild Child' (Naomi; Lilah, stave

10) taking stances of kindness and inclusion, someone who frequently adopts these stances, Fliss,

ignores Amy completely, saying 'No, listen, so when she does…' (stave 10). This is at odds with

Fliss's usual style, positioning her as inattentive to relational needs in pursuit of her own agenda.

To credit Amy, she does not lie to be accepted by the group, but attempts to rise above it by

disengaging and continuing with her sewing. This implies a 'mature, cool' stance, though she may

be 'seething' inside (Baxter 2006a: 166) as she has now been positioned as an outsider; firstly by

not being invited to the sleepover, and secondly by not being guided to watch the film by her close

friend, Naomi. It would appear that Tilda is aware of Amy's dejection, and consciously makes

efforts to include her as the talk about *Wild Child* continues, shown in the extract below:

Matron and Shoes
```
1
Tilda:                                  Yaz
Bella:      [I know (–) and they're like
Naomi:      [the Scottish matron             Lah (.) Lah you know


2
Bella:                                     Fliss/
Yasmin:              [what's a matron/
Lilah:                                       I know I've ordered
Naomi:      you've [got holes in your shoes
```

```
3
Tilda:                                    me and Amy are just like {SHRUGS;
Grace:          they're so old
Lilah:     new ones
Amy:                                                  {SMILES}

4
Tilda:     SMILES}                                          oh God
Yasmin:    does anyone know what a matron is
Naomi:                                      err it's really

5
Tilda:     erm like err
Grace:               like [like family or something/
Naomi:                    [Harriet
```

Sitting opposite her and able to see the soles of her trainers (shoes which were allowed to be worn at Skipwith Primary), Naomi notifies Lilah she has 'got holes in her shoes' (stave 1–2). Lilah confirms she is aware, and 'has ordered new ones' (stave 2–3). At this moment, Tilda attempts an alignment with Amy, saying, 'Me and Amy are just like…' (stave 3–4), and Amy mirrors her smile (stave 4). Tilda and Amy both had holes appearing in the soles of their trainers, possibly from the amount of dancing and sport they both did, but neither appeared yet to have ordered new trainers.

Tilda's efforts here show her interactional role as a joker and position her as someone who holds the group together; she adopts a self-deprecating stance to show her amusement that, though she and Amy both have the same problem as Lilah, they have taken no steps to address it. She is therefore adopting a playful stance, but also an inclusive one towards Amy; the talk the others engage in about a 'Matron' (stave 1–2; 4–5) is a continuation of the discussion about *Wild Child*, where Amy has just been positioned as an outsider, and Tilda makes the effort to find a commonality to which she and Amy can relate. Amy's smile shows her as accepting of this alignment, and she is able to show humour towards their situation. Making these efforts

contributes to Tilda's local ethnographic position and style as a popular and funny, easy-going girl, showing her kindness that she does not wish for Amy to feel left out.

As I show in the next section, however, it seems the pain Amy feels may contribute to her more direct attempts at leadership in *WMLT*. I show that Amy is adamant she will take the role of 'question-asker', the speaker who will compose and ask all the 'Who's most likely to…' questions for everyone else to answer. Taking this role secures her participation and involvement, which she has not been able to achieve in *'Wild Child'*.

In the next section, I discuss these initial stages of the game. I first show how the girls decide upon playing a game to satisfy their 'talking about one thing' rule (see 6.3.1), and how they then settle on *WMLT*.

6.4 Deciding to Play a Game

It is shortly after 'Wild Child' that Amy twice suggests the group play a game, 'Truth or Dare', which would fulfil the 'Talking about one thing' expectation they set for themselves in 6.3.1:

Pompoms and Dares
```
1
Naomi:     right guys let's just talk about life
Amy:                                     let's do dares

2
Yasmin:                              [OH (–)        oh (.) oh
Naomi:     let's talk about [secondary [school
Amy:                        [let's do  [truth or dare

3
Tilda:                                  [SHU:::SH: (–)
Yasmin:    I've got POMPOMS (.) IN MY BA:G and [I
Amy:                                                 come

4
Naomi:                                          [let's
Amy:       on guys let's talk about one thing we're talking [about
```

```
5
Bella:                                                    [no that's
Naomi:      talk about secondary school: or life (-)[which one/
Amy:        separate things and that's

6
Bella:      boring{SMILING}
```

Amy's suggestions, 'Let's do dares' (stave 1), and, 'Let's do truth or dare' (stave 2), are the first time a game is suggested. Interestingly, this is one of few examples showing Amy using linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity to make a suggestion, twice using inclusive pronoun, 'Let's' (see also 'Palette', 4.2.2). Harness-Goodwin (1990: 110) notes the girls on Maple Street use 'let's' during task-oriented play to 'lump speaker and addressee together […] with the effect that neither party is depicted as having control over the other', constituting an egalitarian approach also observed by Baxter (2015) in women's work-oriented talk. Despite attempting to incite action using linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity approved by the CofP, on this occasion, Amy is ignored. This is also the case for Naomi, whose attempts, 'Let's just talk about life' (stave 1) and, 'Let's talk about secondary school' (stave 2), also receive no ratification. Her third attempt, 'Let's talk about life or secondary school – which one?' (stave 4–5) is rejected by Bella on the grounds that it is 'boring' (stave 5–6). Amy and Naomi see, therefore, that using strategies which pay attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity do not work for them to be able to instigate action. This perhaps explains why, during the game, Amy opts for more direct strategies traditionally associated with indexing normative masculinity to attempt a leadership position in-keeping with her style; she usually gets at least some response. However, in the game, Naomi does not adopt these strategies, implying Amy may have taken being ignored personally whereas Naomi has not.

While Amy and Naomi's attempts using strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, strategies which usually work for instigating action in this CofP, are ignored, Yasmin's bold

interruption about pompoms, 'Oh, oh, I've got pompoms – in my bag!' (stave 2–3) is rebuffed by Tilda, who says, 'SHUSH!' at raised volume (stave 3). From ethnographic observations, I discovered Yasmin's mum had taught her how to make pompoms, and, as the only form-group member who had learned this skill, she often spent time after-school making pompoms for her friends to include on their cushions. Despite using an interruption, Yasmin's turn shows her relational-orientation; in-keeping with her style, she has made pompoms, and she is happy to share her creations. This suggests a stance of kindness, though it may also be a more selfish attempt to create stronger bonds between herself and the others as the newest addition to the group wishing to cement her place. Her attempts to create alignments with others are persistent throughout the game, evidenced in the conversational work she undertakes, work which Pamela Fishman (1978) also reports in her study detailing women's 'interactional shitwork' in mixed-sex couples' talk: asking questions, providing supportive minimal responses, and being responsive to all participants. However, the others do not always reciprocate this support for her.

Despite Yasmin's seemingly good intentions, Tilda nonetheless interrupts her using imperative, 'SHUSH!' (stave 3). Imperatives and interruptions are strategies noted by Harness-Goodwin (1990) in her observations of boys' task-oriented play, and they are commonly associated with indexing normative masculinity. Although Tilda uses a bold strategy, Yasmin ratifies her by immediately ceasing talking. Tilda's 'SHUSH!' is also powerful because it silences not only Yasmin but everyone for just under one second. This positions Tilda as a leader high in the local social order, whose directives others will observe without challenge, even if she opts for a strategy outside of her usual style which does not appear to index kindness (a way in which she has accrued popularity) or pay attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity preferred by the CofP. The playful and inclusive stances and style Tilda has adopted in prior interactions (see 6.3.1; 6.3.2) may count as interactional work to offset her boldness indexed here.

Amy uses the quiet Tilda has created as an opportunity to issue a reminder, 'Come on guys let's

talk about one thing' (stave 3–4). Again using strategies associated with indexing normative

femininity, solidarity marker, 'guys', and inclusive pronoun, 'let's', they fail her, as Naomi

interrupts her to offer a choice of two subjects, 'life' or 'secondary school' (stave 4–5). However,

Bella rejects both, wryly declaring them 'boring' (stave 5).

Possibly taking Bella's assessment on board, around 10 minutes later, Amy makes another

suggestion to unite their conversation; that they play *WMLT*:

Who's Most Likely To?
```
1
Tilda:                                            yeah
Fliss:                                                   oh yay
Amy:        guys shall we say who's most likely to/

2
Bella:      [yeah
Grace:      [yeah
Lilah:      [yeah
Yasmin:     [yeah (1) who's [most
Naomi:      [yeah
Amy:                        [but I'm asking (.) I'm asking the

3
Bella:                      [OK
Fliss:              ssh yeah OK
Naomi:                                                  OK Amy:
            questions              [I'm asking all the questions
```

Amy says, 'Guys, shall we say who's most likely to?' (stave 1). She uses more relational strategies

commonly associated with indexing normative femininity than in previous interactions: solidarity

marker, 'guys', modal, 'shall', inclusive pronoun, 'we', and questioning intonation to suggest action

rather than demand it. Tilda appears to appreciate Amy's attention to relational practices, and,

after disengaging during Amy's attempts to introduce 'truth or dare' (see 'Pompoms and Dares'

above), she agrees by uttering an affirmative, 'Yeah' (stave 1). The stance object in this example is

the game, *WMLT*, and Tilda evaluates the suggestion of this game positively. This shows Tilda's relational style, as she again shows willingness to align with Amy.

Although the group may also appreciate Amy's new approach for introducing this game, it would appear it is Tilda's endorsement which guarantees her success. Tilda is the first to respond to Amy, and, after nineteen unsuccessful attempts by various speakers to unite the group in their self-imposed 'one topic' rule, the group arguably consents because Tilda has approved the suggestion. This shows Tilda's leadership. As shown in 6.3.1, 6.3.2 and 6.3.3, I argue this is because of her local ethnographic position as a popular, funny and easy-going girl, which she has built through her playful approach, indexed by her style and the stance-taking.

Despite her efforts in paying attention to relational practices, however, Amy resumes her usual style with a serious and assertive stance just seconds later. As Yasmin attempts to initiate play, starting a turn with the motif construction, 'Who's most…' (stave 2), Amy interrupts her with the declarative, 'But I'm asking – I'm asking the questions' (stave 2–3). This declarative acting as a directive is one of the most aggravated in this recording, and bolder than the leaders in Harness-Goodwin's (1990) study of boys' task-oriented play who always include a verb, even if it is in an imperative format (e.g., 'Go downstairs'; 'Gimme the thing'). When an imperative verb is used, addressees and hearers have the option to decline, even if they do, or would, not. Amy's choice to use declarative, 'I'm', leaves no room for speakers to express choice. If she had said, for example, 'Let me ask this question', this would have been less bold. Compounded by Amy's use of an interruption, this is a strategy traditionally associated with indexing normative masculinity, showing her assertiveness and departing from her immediately previous formats and the CofP's preference for strategies associated with indexing normative femininity.

In stave 3, Fliss and Bella both agree with her demand, saying, 'Ssh yeah OK' (Fliss) and 'OK' (Bella). However, neither has an enthusiastic tone, so Amy still feels she must repeat her initial declarative, and now specifies she is asking '**all** the questions' (stave 3; my emphasis). Naomi now also agrees, saying 'OK' (stave 3). Amy starts asking the questions a few seconds later (see 6.5).

Amy's declarative, 'I'm asking the questions' (stave 2–3) may be contextualised by the talk already detailed. Amy has been excluded from the talk about *Wild Child* (6.3.3), ignored by usually-diplomatic Fliss (6.3.3), interpreted Tilda's pronunciation correction personally (6.3.2), and left unable to instigate a game without Tilda's support (see above). As noted in 6.3.3 and 6.4, it seems Amy is attempting to secure inclusion for herself by ensuring her participation in the game by assuming the role I label 'question-asker', where she will think of and utter all of the 'Who's most likely to…' questions for the others to discuss. The question-asker role also theoretically affords leadership to Amy. Occupying this role in the game means she can stage-manage, deciding when to ask as well as choose the questions she deems appropriate, some of which she may purposefully pick to be selected as the most likely. In the next section, I explore the first questions Amy asks.

6.5 The Opening Questions

The group has now decided they will play *WMLT*, and some aspects of how it will be played: some have agreed that Amy will ask the 'Who's most likely to?' questions, which the others will presumably discuss before making a decision. The extract below marks the beginning of the game, where Amy asks the first 'Who's most likely to…?' question. This occurs immediately after the extract 'Who's Most Likely To?' in the previous section:

Succeed in Life
```
1
Bella:                                        to what/
Amy:        who's most likely to succeed in life        out of us
```

```
2
Tilda:                         to succeed in life/ (-) ever[yone's gonna
Bella:                                               [all of us
Amy:         in the room

3
Tilda:       succeed [in life
Bella:               [all of us
Fliss:                     yeah everyone's gonna succeed in life

4
Tilda:                                                 I need
Fliss:                           that's a bad question{SMILING;
Naomi:       everyone is this room will

5
Tilda:       some (.) scissors somebo:dy{SINGSONG}
Fliss:       HESITANT QUALITY}
Alice:                                 I'm probably going to go to

6
Bella:                             {laughter}
Alice:       prison or something
```

Amy's opening question, 'Who's most likely to succeed in life?' (stave 1), suggests relational awareness similar to the morality of inclusion she suggested in 'Boys'. It appears she has designed this question in order to be more open and inclusive than many of the other questions that are asked. It does not require the girls to evaluate each other's appearance, intelligence or wealth in the same way that, for example, 'most likely to be a model' and 'most likely to go to Oxford University' might. Being 'successful' could have any number of interpretations, from being a high-powered career woman to having a happy family (both or neither). Its openness allows all of them to justifiably nominate themselves or someone else with limitless reasons.

It appears Amy is again attempting the stance I label true inclusivity hinted at in 'Boys', setting up a situation where everyone may contribute. Bella and Tilda, however, give 'dispreferred' responses (Sacks 1987). They flout the rules by refusing to nominate any specific girl because, they assert, 'Everyone's gonna succeed in life' (Tilda, stave 2–3), and it will be, 'All of us; all of us' (Bella,

stave 2–3) who are successful. Though it may seem Bella is copying Tilda's stance, it would be unfair to argue this as they speak in such immediacy of each other in stave 2 that it would have been hard for Bella to predict Tilda's answer. Fliss, however, does appear to consciously align with Tilda and Bella, saying 'Yeah everyone's gonna succeed in **life**' (stave 3), as does Naomi, who says, 'Everyone in this room will' (stave 4). All four girls take stances which evaluate negatively the suitability of Amy's question, and thereby align with each other. However, as they utter this sentiment first, Tilda and Bella are positioned highly in the local social order; Fliss and Naomi express their evaluations only once Tilda and Bella have made theirs clear.

Fliss, however, does not stop at the sentiment all four have expressed that 'everyone will succeed in life' which allows Amy to infer that this question is perhaps unsuited to the game without pointing it out directly. Instead, Fliss proceeds to overtly criticise the question itself, saying, 'That's a bad question' (stave 4). Her smiling quality is mitigating and seems to act as a contextualisation cue that she finds this humorous, and Amy should not take her comment personally. Her hesitant tone also implies she does not want to upset Amy so uses smiling as relational practice. Nonetheless, it is a bold statement which, based on my ethnographic observations, would upset Amy, positioning Fliss interactionally as something of a provocateur.

Possibly predicting Amy will indeed take Fliss's criticism, as well as the objections made by herself, Bella, Naomi and Fliss, personally, Tilda appears to use a distraction strategy to shift the attention away from the moment. She utters, 'I need some scissors, somebody!' (stave 4–5). The singsong voice she adopts again shows her playful stance, contributing to her local ethnographic position and style as a funny girl. This distraction works insofar as Fliss and Amy do not discuss Fliss's criticism, which may have led to an argument. However, as I show in my discussion of the next extract, Tilda might also be deemed a great strategist. She is the first to criticise Amy's question,

and she receives support from Bella, Naomi and Fliss; her ability to instigate a distraction might be celebrated, but it was only required because of a situation she cultivated.

As Tilda, Naomi, Fliss and Bella's responses question the question, and Fliss openly declares it 'bad', Amy's leadership position as the question-asker is unsettled. Amy may also interpret their refusals to answer as personal slights. Thus, if being the asker is a self-protection strategy as I suggested in 6.4, it is apparently not immune from criticism. This may inform Amy's actions in the next extract about post-school friendships, which follows a few minutes after 'Succeed in Life'. The girls have returned to the idea that they will all be successful in life, which, for some, means being famous:

Keeping in Touch
```
1
Yasmin:    if someone in this room or in this class becomes famous

           (-) we'll know that person (.) and we'll be a close

           friend because we're keeping in touch as friends aren't

2
Tilda:       who says I'm keeping in touch with everyone in
Yasmin:    we

3
Tilda:     this class (.) sorry           who said I like
Yasmin                          not everyone

4
Tilda:     everyone
Yasmin:         only be
Amy:                  Tilda you'll only keep in touch with

5
Tilda:                          when did you come up with that/
Amy:       Bella Lan Lilah and Fliss

6
Bella:                                         [guys guys
Yasmin:    [b      [no but they'll keep in touch with [everyone
Amy:       [(xxxxxx[xx)

7
Bella:     let's do another one (-) who's most likely to
Amy:                                              no I'm
```

```
8
Tilda:                              OK do it then
Bella:                                           yeah
Amy:          doing the questions                    who's most likely

9
Grace:                                              Lan
Yasmin:                                  erm err
Naomi:                                         Lan     Lan\
Amy:          to be a nail salonist person
```

Like 6.4, Yasmin again shows her investment in her new group of friends, proposing that if one of the group becomes famous it should not mean they lose touch as, 'We'll be a close friend because we're keeping in touch as friends, aren't we?' (stave 1). Clearly viewing the end of Year 6 as a transition point, Yasmin is keen for the girls maintain their friendships, especially as, from ethnographic knowledge, I know she was going to a secondary school with none of her peers. This shows her invested affectively positive stance towards their friendship group and again shows her relationally-oriented style.

Tilda, however, disaligns with Yasmin, saying, 'Who says I'm keeping in touch with everyone in this class, sorry – who says I like everyone?' (stave 2–4). Although her stance is affectively negative towards the whole form-group rather than the idea of maintaining relationships within the friendship group, uttering this here implies she may intend to stop being friends with at least one of the girls present. This shows her self-positioning as high in the local social order; the relationships she keeps will be her decision, not someone else's. This suggests she is both aware of her local ethnographic position as a popular girl and willing to make it clear to others. When I asked her about this, she claimed she was referring to two specific, absent pupils; however, while at odds with her usual style because it is not a stance she adopts repeatedly, it exemplifies that Tilda can show boldness.

Although Tilda indicates the form-group rather than those present, Amy appears to interpret it

personally. She accuses Tilda of maintaining only a small clique beyond Year 6, 'Tilda, you'll only keep in touch with Bella, Lan, Lilah and Fliss' (stave 4–5). Amy therefore positions herself, Naomi, Yasmin, Grace and Alice lower in the local social order. Although Tilda's 'everybody' might have included some of the girls present, Amy's specific naming is bold and serious, reconfirming her local ethnographic position as an assertive and serious girl. She may wish to create tension within the group based on her own feelings about Tilda, or to rally support from the girls who, in her opinion, as not as popular in the group.

Rather than confirming or denying, Tilda presents herself as rising above this triviality, saying, 'When did you come up with that?' (stave 5). This positions Amy's declarative as fanciful, almost verging on premeditated, which, in turn, positions Amy as calculating but powerless and lower in the local social order. However, like her actions in 'Succeed in Life', Tilda's strategism is implied; by introducing exclusivity in stave 2, she has created this situation, but she is able to present herself positively. Amy would most likely not have made this divisive statement if Tilda had not rejected Yasmin's idea that they would all stay friends. However, Bella senses friction and steps in. She uses *WMLT* as a safety-net to dissolve tension and refocus their attention to a situation where all can contribute, saying, 'Guys, guys – let's do another one, who's most likely to' (stave 6–7). This suggests Bella is disaligning with Tilda as she seeks to move the talk away from future friendships, but, using ethnographic knowledge of her style, I argue she makes this attempt to refocus the attention because of her best friendship with Tilda; she can see there might be tension between Tilda and Amy, and she wants to avoid them arguing. Her use of solidarity marker, 'Guys', and suggestion, 'let's', shows her attempt to reinstate egalitarianism.

Bella appears to be using the *WMLT* construction as an invitation, but Amy interprets it as her attempting to gain control so interrupts to assert, 'No, **I'm** doing the questions' (stave 8–9). This

shows Amy's disalignment with Bella. After her attention to egalitarianism, Bella may view Amy's use of a polarity marker, 'No', and bold declarative, "**I'm** doing', as disrespectful. Her and Tilda's next turns appear to confirm this, where Tilda's use of an imperative, 'OK **do** it then', with support from Bella, 'Yeah' (stave 8), position them as united against Amy's demands. They appear to want the game to continue, as Bella suggested, but on different terms. They both then refrain from engaging with Amy's nail-salon question, suggesting they wish to distance themselves from the ways in which she leads the game in her role as question-asker.

These extracts show Amy's attempted leadership position beginning to be destabilised. Tilda and Bella are clearly unhappy at her assertion that she is 'asking the questions', other girls' similar feelings begin to become clear as the game progresses. In the next section of the game, several attempts are made by others to challenge the structure of the game Amy has instated.

6.6 Challenging the Structure of the Game

While Amy specified and was afforded the role of permanent question-asker, this continues to be challenged. This demonstrates that, even though she insisted on taking this role, the others are either not convinced the game should be played in this way, or do not feel Amy is the right stage-manager, questioning her leadership. Generally, Tilda, Lilah, Bella and Fliss, four of the five girls who were positioned by Amy as the 'in-group' in 'Keeping in Touch', get away with challenging the pre-agreed structure of the game by contributing WMLTs, while Yasmin and Naomi are reprimanded, interrupted or cut off by Amy, as detailed in 'Models' below. This shows Amy's attempted control, but also the power of a high positioning in the local social order, gained through popularity-based or cool local ethnographic positions; she respects and understands there are some situations where she faces consequences if she attempts to stop these girls from contributing WMLTs. This exemplifies how the game's organisation reflects the girls' local social

order positionings of themselves and each other, while providing a vehicle through which their local social order is constituted.

In the extract below, occurring about 10 minutes after 'Keeping in Touch', Naomi contributes a shortened WMLT, 'to become a model' (stave 1):

Models
```
1
Tilda:                          [Lilah
Naomi:     to become a model (-) model                Lilah
Amy:                            [I ask the questions

2
Lilah:                     [you said my name/
Amy:       no you s- (-) I'm [not           who's most likely to

3
Grace:                          Lah
Yasmin:                         [Lilah
Naomi:                      Li[lah
Amy:       become a medal >model<
```

This contests Amy's rule that she be the sole question-asker. Tilda answers Naomi, responding with 'Lilah' (stave 1), constituting Naomi's question as part of the game and ratifying her contribution. Tilda may be indicating her willingness to see Amy, or at least the style of play on which she is fixated, usurped. Showing dislike for Naomi's attempt to ask a *WMLT* question, however, Amy repeats the bold declarative typical of her style seen in 'Who's Most Likely To', 'I ask the questions' (stave 1). Amy endeavours to reinstate her role, and positions Naomi lower in the local social order as she feels she can use bold forms towards her, as Malcolm does with younger boys (Harness-Goodwin 1990). Lilah now attempts to defuse tension, and interjects with, 'You said my name?' (stave 2). This makes use of a strategy similar to Tilda's 'I need some scissors, somebody!' in 'Boys' (see 6.3.1) to distract and avoid conflict. That Amy stops talking after Lilah's interruption positions Lilah as someone higher in the local social order who she respects. Amy's repetition of Naomi's 'model' question with a mispronunciation similar to 'jatlegged' (6.3.2),

'Who's most likely to be a medal, **model**' (stave 2–3), indicates she is again nervous, possibly unsettled by the challenge to her leadership.

Tilda, however, is permitted to disrupt the agreed structure by contributing a WMLT question:

Bus Driver
```
1
Alice:                                              me
Yasmin:                                       ooh
Naomi:                              [who's              Alice
Amy:        who's most likely: to be [a bus driver

2
Tilda:                       to become what/
Bella:                                    bu[s driver
Fliss:          Tilda Tilda
Alice:     me
Naomi:                                        [Alice or Tilda

3
Yasmin:    Alice or Tilda
Amy:                     do you want to tell me the questions/

4
Tilda:     my my (-) oh no (.) >no no< (-) who's most likely to have

5
Tilda:     their first kiss at thirteen
Bella:                                   me
Fliss:                                              Bella[:::
Yasmin:                                     Bella (-)   [Bella
Naomi:                                     Bella
```

In stave 3, Amy shows willing to change how the game is managed, inviting others to contribute to play asking, 'Do you want to tell me the questions?'. By this she means others may think of *WMLT* questions, but she must be the one who presents them to the whole group. However, she seeks to firmly maintain her stage-manager position by remaining the question-asker for the whole group. By this point, Amy has been voted as most likely to be both a singer and a dancer. Considering the local prestige associated with these careers, she may be feeling more accepted, and therefore considers opening up the leadership. Unlike Naomi, Tilda's offering, 'Who's most likely to have their first kiss at thirteen?' (stave 4–5) then has no interruptions from Amy, showing she either

appears willing to defer to others' leadership, or she recognises Tilda's position in the local social order is too high and contesting her would be costly.

Interestingly, Tilda uses her turn, once again, to invoke a discourse of heterosexual, growing-up femininity similar to 'Boys'. As noted in 6.3.1, despite her previous resistance, Bella immediately self-nominates, positioning herself as, like Tilda, ready to grow up. Tilda's high positioning in the local social order is again demonstrated; she has made this identity aspirational. Tilda's local ethnographic position as a popular, funny girl, achieved through stance, style and local social practices, is also evident here. She is eventually voted as the most likely to be a bus driver, which she, and the others, find humorous. Instead of resisting, she accepts it and, in-keeping with her humorous style, uses it as a running joke throughout the game even though it is completely at odds with her ambition to be a performer. Whereas others may have taken this 'personally', Tilda uses it to her advantage to increase her likeability which contributes to her ability to lead.

Although she seemed willing to open up the leadership of *WMLT* in 'Bus Driver', as the talk progresses, it is clear Amy is not so willing to forfeit her question-asker role:

Justin Bieber and Nikes
```
1
Tilda:      [then you say yes or no
Bella:                                                ooh
Yasmin:    [a femini::stᵊ                    sorry
Amy:                            guys (-) Yaz (-)  stop

2
Bella:     {SATIRICAL; SARCASTIC}      yeah
Lilah:                                                 ME
Naomi:     ssh ssh                       marry Justin Bieber
Amy:            who's most likely:    to:

3
Fliss:          he's too old
Yasmin:                           m[e:
Naomi:                          Yaz
Amy:       Naomi                 [no Naomi Naomi I'm doing
```

```
4
Tilda:                                          [marry Justin Bieber
Bella:              [who's most likely to what/
Amy:          the ques[tions                         [I'm doing the

5
Amy:          questions (-) who's most likely to own a hundred and

6
Lilah:        [err (.) Selena Gomez                       [I think
Yasmin:                                 I only have two [shoes
Amy:          [fifty pairs of Nike trainers

7
Tilda:                                              [who (-)
Lilah:        they broke up recently
Amy:                              ssh who's most likely to [earn

8
Tilda:        Amal/
Naomi:            Bessa Bella
```

This 'cacophonous' (Coates 2004) extract shows clearly the local social order as Amy attempts to maintain the solitary question-asker position while the others challenge her. Although both Yasmin and Tilda were talking at the beginning of this extract, Amy reprimands only Yasmin, saying, 'Guys, Yaz, **stop**' (stave 1), showing she views Yasmin as below her but Tilda as having a higher position. Yasmin ratifies her by immediately apologising, while Bella uses humour to defuse the tension, with a satirical, mocking, 'Ooh!' (stave 1). In stave 2, Naomi says 'Ssh, ssh', appearing to 'clear the speech channel' for Amy, as Baxter (2006a) documents best friend Tom doing for Charlie in her study of secondary school pupils' talk in an assessed speaking and listening activity. However, Naomi then interrupts with her own question, 'Marry Justin Bieber', showing she would also like to destabilise Amy's question-asker role.

Lilah (stave 2), Fliss (stave 3), Yasmin (stave 3), Bella (stave 4) and Tilda (stave 4) ratify Naomi. Lilah nominates herself; Fliss, in-keeping with her style and repeating her position in 'Boys', provides a reason for not making a nomination, 'he's too old'; Yasmin nominates herself; missing the question, Bella shows her interest by asking for it to be repeated which Tilda provides, showing

she had been listening to Naomi. Lilah then breaks the rules of the game by nominating 'Selena Gomez' (stave 6) – someone not present (at the time, Gomez and Bieber were in a relationship). All their responses indicate their readiness to move away from the structure where Amy is the sole question-asker.

While Amy appears to be nominating Naomi for most likely to marry Justin Bieber when she says 'Naomi' (stave 3), she is actually using an address-term to remind her, again showing boldness by using a declarative, that she is 'doing the questions' (stave 4–5) and therefore in control. Her question, 'Who's most likely to own 150 pairs of Nike trainers?' (stave 5–6), however, is ignored by everyone but Yasmin. Lilah continues to talk about Justin Bieber, signifying she is not willing to see Amy reinstated as leader so easily. This shows Yasmin's style and interactional work, as she responds to Amy but confirms her tamely-rebellious local ethnographic position because she is breaking the game rules in not nominating anyone. As Yasmin is often supportive throughout, this response implies that even those who have shown compliance to Amy's preferred style of game-management feel wearied by it.

Amy then utilises a bold strategy traditionally associated with indexing normative masculinity by 'ssh'-ing Lilah, 'Ssh, who's most likely to earn…' (stave 7). This positions Lilah as someone below herself in the local social order who, like Malcolm's juniors (Harness-Goodwin 1990), should obey her whims. Amy is, however, interrupted by Tilda, who says, 'Who, Amal?' (stave 7–8), clarifying a previous mis-hearing. This again shows that Tilda does not endorse Amy as the undisputed leader.

Perhaps realising that utilising strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity is causing her to lose her craved leadership position of question-asker, Amy appears to attempt humour:

I Do Them!

```
1
Tilda:                           you suit both (-) you suit both
Bella:      I think both                                    Amy

2
Bella:      another one another one
Lilah:                             most like[ly to::
Naomi:                                              ssh
Amy:                                        [yeah        oh (.)

3
Fliss:                  {laughter}
Lilah:                                       be with someone for
Amy:        I do them            I DO THEM {SMILING}

4
Tilda:                                          what's this one/
Lilah:      their [money
Yasmin:           [Tilda (-) Tilda (.) right there
```

Bella invites Amy directly to offer another WMLT, saying, 'Amy, another one, another one' (stave 1–2). Although Bella indicates here that she maintains respect for Amy's leadership, she is also possibly using the game to refocus the group as, just before, Yasmin has held the floor for an extended period talking about whether she better suits short or long hair. This shows Bella's social awareness as, like in 'Keeping in Touch'*,* she refocuses the group. This is typical of her style, and contributes to her local ethnographic position as a fair-minded girl. In stave 2, however, Lilah starts the *WMLT* motif. Amy says, 'Yeah' in response to Bella, but Naomi 'ssh'-es her (stave 2). This shows Naomi positioning Amy lower in the local social order, as she uses a bold strategy to dispute Amy's right to the question-asker position. However, Amy does not ratify Naomi, and keeps talking. She initially reminds everyone, 'I do them' (stave 3). However, her use of self-deprecation in her next turn, 'I DO THEM!' (stave 3), cued by Fliss's laughter, indicates she may have realised the futility of her constant reminders and, in contrast with her usual style, she is willing to show humour and playfulness. This suggests relational awareness, as she considers how she is perceived by others.

However, apparently unable to relinquish the question-asker leadership position, the final straw

for Amy comes moments later:

Gold Diggers and Brits

```
1
Bella:                                            another one
Fliss:     you know who's the real gold digger
Lan:                                                    no I

2
Bella:                              who's doing it Amy or: (-)
Lan:       [wouldn't want to
Naomi:     [no:: not a gold digger
Amy:                                                   ME

3
Bella:     Lilah                              OK Lilah
Amy:            I do them I do the questions      OH BUT I::

4
Bella:     OK Amy Amy
Naomi:            who's most likely
Amy:       {WHINING; CHILDLY TONE}      no Naomi I do the questions

5
Grace:     is it your favourite part/ or can we try something\{to Amy}

6
Lilah:     most likely to be nominated for a Brit award
```

Though Bella has frequently used the game to refocus the group and deferred to Amy to ask

questions, her first request this time, 'Another one' (stave 1) does not name anyone, and her

second, 'Who's doing it, Amy or Lilah?' (stave 2) names both Amy and Lilah, moving away from her

stance in 'I Do Them!' and now suggests doubt of Amy's right to the question-asker position.

Amy's enthusiasm to claim the turn, 'ME! I do them, I do the questions' (stave 2–3), shows she still

wishes to hold the question-asker position, and once again uses her well-worn declarative in her

attempt. Bella, however, picks Lilah, 'OK, Lilah' (stave 3), positioning her as the preferred leader.

Obviously hurt that the rule she was adamant to instate and that was agreed to is being

overturned, Amy invokes a childly positioning through her tone to get her way, 'Oh but I!' (stave

3), to which Bella obliges, 'OK – Amy, Amy' (stave 4). Possibly frustrated by the delay, however,

Naomi interjects and begins the WMLT construction (stave 4), which Amy interrupts using a

polarity marker, 'No, Naomi, I do the questions' (stave 4). Like Malcolm when talking to his

subordinates (Harness-Goodwin 1990), Amy's use of a polarity marker again positions Naomi as

lower than herself in the local social order, and her use of a declarative leaves no opportunity for

contest.

Possibly also frustrated and disliking how Amy is speaking to Naomi, Grace takes a confrontational

stance, 'Is it your favourite part, or can we try something' (stave 5). Her use of pronouns 'you' and

'we', positions Amy as an outsider battling against the rest of the group to see her wants fulfilled.

This is confrontational, though this was in-keeping with Grace's style. Lilah then uses the

opportunity to take the floor, and her performing arts question, 'Who's most likely to be

nominated for a Brit award?' (stave 6) sees Tilda voted as the most likely. Silenced, Amy now

forfeits all leadership attempts, and makes no more bids for the question-asker position. She then

proceeds to engage very little in the rest of the game; when Bella later invites her to 'ask another

question', she refuses. Following this, any player is permitted to contribute a question.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how 10 of the girls play a verbal game, *WMLT*, and how their identities,

constructed through interactional roles, local ethnographic positions, stance-taking, and styles,

contribute to their warrant to assume leadership positions (Bucholtz 2009[1999]). Also revealed

are their positions in the local social order (Harness-Goodwin 2006).

I have examined the linguistic strategies the girls use to form directives. As well as local identity

constructions and local ethnographic positions, a significant influence appears to be that Penguin

Class is a 'feminine' CofP (Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]). This is also

evident from the fact that for so long the girls do not openly challenge Amy. Thus, the strategies

most willingly accepted are those which pay attention to the 'relational' practices associated with indexing normative femininity, which 'foster relationships' (Holmes 2009: 189) and 'create team' (Fletcher 1999). Use of these practices promotes an egalitarian approach similar to Harness-Goodwin's (1990) observations of girls' play and Baxter's (2015) women's task talk. This is shown in the success of my girls' directives which use, for example, modals, e.g., 'shall', inclusive pronouns, e.g., 'let's', and questioning intonation.

Although some girls use strategies traditionally associated with indexing normative masculinity, they were successful only if uttered by a girl regarded 'popular' or 'nice'. This confirms the importance of identity constructions, which I evidenced through their repeated stance-taking and styles in pre- and in-game talk alongside my ethnographic observations. Unlike the girls studied by George (2007), who carefully stage-managed their groups' social relationships to maintain powerful positions, popularity does not seem to happen through craftiness. The social 'work' done by the more popular girls is clear in the transcripts I have analysed and the ethnographic information I have: they invoke play frames, build interpersonal relationships, show forgiveness and understanding, and defuse tension (although, this is sometimes of their own making; see 6.5). Locally-accrued status is also important in their use of strategies. Whereas in Chapter 4, 5 and 7 status can be linked with particular skill in, for example, art or video-gaming, in this chapter, status is accrued more through strong social relationships in which individuals have invested. Thus, more direct strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity are tolerated only when tempered by an individual's positive relationships and friendships, but cause tension when they are not.

As well as using strategies traditionally associated with indexing normative masculinity, what the group appears to object to is not Amy herself but her attempt to be the only participant

positioned immovably in the self-appointed stage-manager role of question-asker. It seems to me that in this context of a game between these friends in this form-group in this classroom, egalitarianism is preferred, and such inflexibility is not required. It is possible that, taking place in a classroom during official lesson time has influenced Amy's attempt to be 'in control', feeling there should be some semblance of order, but the others do not appear to share this view. Amy's strategies might succeed in a different game or group, and egalitarianism might not.

The stances, alignments and interactional roles contributing to local ethnographic positions and styles in their talk were relevant throughout; the identities established in their moment-by-moment interaction' (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 585) supplemented, informed and constituted the girls' leadership in *WMLT*. Tilda's interactional role is often that of a 'leader', as she introduces topics about which they might all speak (see 6.3.1), and her approval permits success for others which they are unable to achieve on their own (6.4). Her positive stance towards talking about boys (6.3.1) positions her as a growing-up girl, an identity position later shown to be aspirational (6.6). She also often assumes the interactional role of joker, and her frequent invocation of a play frame shows her playful stance, but she also uses the play frame to 'self-tease' (Boxer and Cortes-Conde 1997), adding to her likeability (6.3.3). Her high achievement in performing arts, and wearing modern, fashionable clothing also add to her popularity. These combine to support her ethnographic position and style as a 'popular, funny, easy-going girl', an ethnographic position and style which I have shown facilitates leadership.

Fliss often provides reasons if she is not able to honour others' requests, such as talking about boys (6.3.1) or answering a *WMLT* question (6.5; 6.6). Interactionally, she is a 'supporter who justifies/explains'. She is interested in the political world, and partakes in ethical family activities, such as volunteering. These contribute to her ethnographic position and style as a 'diplomatic girl'.

Her diplomacy supports others' leadership, allowing the game to proceed. This support is slightly different from Yasmin's. Yasmin's interactional role as a positive 'supporter' is an interpersonal stance she takes immediately and maintains throughout. She often aligns with Tilda, adding to Tilda's high positioning in the local social order and warrant to leadership, and makes efforts to maintain her play frame (6.3.1). As mentioned, she was new to the group, and her interactional 'work', such as providing support to others or responding to WMLTs when others ignore them, contribute to her supportiveness. Her ethnographic position and style as a 'fun-seeking, tamely rebellious girl' is shown when she immediately agrees to talking about 'boys' (6.3.1) and when she responds to questions clearly wishing for *WMLT* to continue, but refrains from obeying the structure by not nominating anyone (6.6).

Bella is also a supportive friend, but in a way slightly different from Yasmin. Firstly, her best friendship with Tilda is shown when she changes her mind to align with Tilda after first rejecting the topic of 'boys' (6.3.1). This contributes to her ethnographic position as a 'supportive' girl, a position which facilitates Tilda's leadership. As she defuses tension between others (6.6), she also contributes to her local ethnographic position as a cool, supportive, fair-minded girl. This is in addition to her vintage-inspired clothing style. Like Bella, Lilah also holds the local ethnographic position and style of a 'cool' girl. Her indifference at certain points (6.3.1) and ability to casually defuse tension (6.6), as well as her laidback acceptance of her sporting prowess in the ethnographic interviews, suggests a 'mature, cool' stance. This contributes to her local ethnographic position as a 'cool girl'.

Grace's fashions were quite similar to Bella's, however, she was more 1960s-inspired, and Bella more 1980s. Her interactional role as a provocateur, where she often takes a confrontational stance, shows her local ethnographic position as a 'dry-humoured, assertive girl'. This is similar to

Julie in Maybin's (2006: 72) study of 10–12-year-old children's voices, who combined her 'pageboy blonde hair, pastel-coloured T-shirts and neat white ankle socks with a more assertive, feisty persona' to construct her gender identity. Like Grace, Amy also frequently adopts the interactional role of 'provocateur', where she is willing to talk about topics and play *WMLT*, but on her terms. She often shows a stance of 'defiance'. Her investment in sport had fostered her ambition and drive, contributing to her ethnographic position as an 'assertive, serious girl'. This ambition and drive may inform her conduct in *WMLT* where she shows a preference for strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity in leadership attempts. She was regarded a 'good leader' by some of the children because, 'With Amy, you always know the work will get done' (Frankie's interview); however, for the reasons outlined, in this context, she was often unsuccessful. Although I have many memories and observations of Amy being nice and kind to others, in this game, she opted more for assertiveness. This may be because, as I detailed in my analysis, when she used directive forms associated with indexing normative femininity, they were unsuccessful (6.4), or because she has taken account of accumulated events where she feels left out or affronted and taken them personally (6.3). Although using linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity also did not get her anywhere, she was able to secure her wants for at least some of the time.

In this chapter, I have therefore shown the variation of local gender and age identities constructed by the girls, and how linguistic strategies, social practices, stances and styles are used to do leadership in a girls' game. In the next Chapter, I explore the boys' chosen game.

Chapter 7: Boys' Leadership in a Play Context: Playing a Video Game

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the talk of Adam, Frankie, Aiden, Isaac and Matty while they play a video game at Adam's home at a party to celebrate his 11th birthday. I give an overview of their chosen video game, *Rocket League*, in 7.3. Although other studies explore leadership in single-sex adult men's talk (Baxter 2015, see 2.1.9), adolescents' curriculum-oriented talk in school contexts (Baxter 2006a; Davies 2011[2003], see 2.1.9), or pre-adolescents' games using more 'traditional' resources such as jump-rope (Harness-Goodwin 1990, 2001; see 2.1.10), and studies of video game-play are often psychology-focused, exploring players' in-game decision-making through the analysis of 'think-alouds', my data in this chapter offer an insight into pre-adolescent boys' leadership while playing a video game in a single-sex group. This chapter offers a comparison between the boys' leadership in more formal, lesson-based contexts (Chapter 5), and this casual, play-based context, using data not replicated anywhere else.

My analysis is divided into three main sections exploring how the boys use talk to: decide which video game to play, choose teams, and determine rules. My analysis is anchored in how decisions are made, as the results of these reveal the success (or otherwise) of speakers' directives and leadership. As noted in II.i, directives are 'speech actions that try to get another to do something' (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 63) and assume many formats (see 2.1.3), but, because I view the boys as 'whole' speaking subjects (Hymes 1972; see 3.2), I consider their linguistic strategies alongside their styles and local ethnographic positions. Particularly noteworthy is the boys' use of linguistic strategies paying attention to 'relational' practices, practices that 'foster relationships' (Holmes 2009: 189, Fletcher 1999), for which they seem to be most successful when using strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. This suggests the influence of the 'feminine' CofP

they have co-constructed with the rest of Penguin Class, as the use of such strategies is often not seen in boys' decision-making talk in play-based contexts (see II.ii). Furthermore, this is an out-of-school context, making this evidence even more intriguing.

I examine the relationships between their directive strategies and local ethnographic positions as 'particular *kinds*' of boy (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original). Related to this are the local statuses they have accrued which can stand as proxy for their wishes being accepted or approved. The most influential statuses drawn on by the boys in this chapter relate either to higher relative skill or popularity, and some draw on both (see Table 7.1). Most interesting in this aspect is Aiden, who is both the highest-skilled player and regarded as popular through, like Tilda, being well-liked because of his sociability. He achieves popularity by actively paying attention to constructing a local ethnographic position as a 'nice guy'[8]; he supports his friends, resists conflict, and makes the effort to do the 'right' thing. His leadership attempts provide opportunities for him to constitute this local ethnographic position.

On listening to the data, the boys' concepts of fairness emerged as a key focus through my linguistic ethnographic approach. I show throughout that the boys are deeply concerned with fairness, but, in line with Jean Piaget's (1965[1932]) work on morality, have developed different understandings of its meaning. Evaldsson (2004) links gameplay with 'moral stances' in her study of pre-adolescents' playground games at an elementary school in Sweden. When the highest-skilled players engage in games of Foursquare with evenly-matched players, they orient to the rules, a 'morality of rights', but when playing against lower-skilled peers, they orient to a 'morality

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[8] 'Nice guy' is a term the participants used to describe Aiden, and it is one with which I agree. However, I want to make clear that Aiden's 'nice guy' is not the same as the more recently common version used in contemporary online parlance and mobilised by the incel and 'red pill' movements to refer to a man who is nice only because he expects some sort of (romantic/sexual) reward (see Martineau 2018; Heritage 2023; Lawson 2023). Aiden's 'nice guy' is genuine, sociable and personable.

Name	Close friends	Ethnographic information	Local ethnographic position/ Style and *status*
Frankie	Adam Cenk Sam	- Popular - Enjoys playing/watching football - Class Captain - On cricket team - Regarded 'cool' - Sometimes rebellious; not as much as Sam - Wears fashionable, often sporty, clothing, such as dark tapered sports trousers, football shirts	Popular, cool, self-important boy *Popularity*
Adam	Frankie Aiden	- Enjoys watching football and being with his friends - Well-liked, but not as popular as Frankie. They are each other's closest friend - Wears fashionable clothing, similar to Frankie, but less sporty	Gratiating, young boy *Skilled gamer*
Aiden	Paul Isaac	- Very talented in performing arts, particularly singing and acting - Popular, from niceness rather than influence - In choir - Member of youth drama groups - Has always been close with Paul, now close with Isaac - Wears fashionable clothing but not sporty	Easy-going, popular, 'nice guy' boy *Highly-skilled gamer* *Popular*
Isaac	Aiden Paul	- Well-liked - Enjoys playing/discussing football - Historically close with Cenk; grew closer to Paul and Aiden - Wears fashionable clothing similar to Aiden. For school discos, he wears an Oxford shirt 'to look smart' (his words)	Friendly, amicable, supportive boy
Matty	Jordan	- Lots of friends. Most boys declared Matty a 'close friend' - Selected for football and athletics teams - Plays for a semi-professional football club's youth team - Wears fashionable clothing, often sporty	Fair-minded, assertive, growing-up boy *Highly-skilled gamer* *Popular*

Table 7.1: Ethnographic information about the boys

of responsibility' (Gilligan 1982); their play moves from being governed by rule adherence to

inclusion, where lower-skilled players are forgiven for fouls or offered second chances. The

fairness debate in which my boys engage is related to deciding who will play in each 'two versus

two' match: Matty argues that the previous match's winners should stay on, feeling that being a 'true' winner – which means beating the best – is of highest importance, whereas Frankie and Aiden argue that the losers should stay on, deeming inclusion as essential. Both feel their approach is the fairest but disagree on the objective of play: winning or inclusion. Their stances contribute to their local ethnographic positions. For example, Aiden's attention to a morality of inclusion contributes to his local ethnographic position as a 'nice guy' boy.

Studies of video game play do not usually provide such detailed information about exactly how the players involved are 'doing' group-based play or morality, often instead focusing on cognitive abilities players may develop (see Greenfield et al. 1994; Green and Bavelier 2003, 2007; Boot et al. 2008; Fisch et al. 2011), or how video games are used for learning (see Gee 2003; Satwicz and Stevens 2008; Lane and Yi 2017; Scholes et al. 2022). They usually examine players' 'think-aloud' vocalisations explaining in-game decisions they are making to succeed rather than conversations which happen during game-play (see Hong and Liu 2003; Blumberg et al. 2008; Boot et al. 2011; Blumberg and Randall 2013). The data in this chapter therefore offer a unique insight into the talk which occurs in facilitating and during boys' video game play, providing an opportunity to understand not only the boys' game management but also how this is linked to their identity constructions during play (for explorations of speakers' identity construction which examine appropriation of video game texts, see Sierra 2016).

7.2 The Participants and Context

As mentioned, the game was part of Adam's 11th birthday party, taking place at his home one Friday evening in the autumn term. The boys invited had known each other since being placed in the same Reception class, aged four, and some had met at Nursery, aged two or three. To begin, the boys ate dinner together in the dining room – a selection of party foods prepared by Adam's

parents including pizza, crisps, fizzy drinks and cakes. Once they had finished eating, the boys helped Adam's parents to tidy up. After thanking them for dinner, they went upstairs to Adam's bedroom with the intention of playing a video game. When this was established was not recorded, but they told me it had been decided at school. After playing video games, they planned to watch a film before going to sleep at around midnight. The only exception was Frankie, who was not able to stay the night as his dad had bought tickets for them to see a men's Premier League football match in Liverpool the following day. Frankie explained they were meant to leave that evening and stay overnight in Liverpool; however, Frankie did not want to miss the party so his dad said they would leave very early in the morning instead.

Adam chose Frankie, Aiden, Matty and Isaac as the friends to invite to his party, and Figure 7.1 shows the relationships between the different boys. Those highlighted in yellow are the five at the party, and those in brackets, Sam, Cenk, Paul and Jordan, are boys who were members of the form-group identified as a close friend by at least one invitee, but they were not invited to the party. The pink lines show these friendships, and they are based on the responses the children gave in the ethnographic interviews to the question, 'Who would you say are your closest friends?', as well as my own ethnographic observations.

Unlike Lawson's (2013) and Wayne Martino's (1999) boys who remained in friendship groups often with labels such as 'Schoolies' or 'Squids', in the interviews, the boys outlined the transience of their 'close' friends. They commented that they often changed year to year, and they were able to provide comprehensive histories detailing who they had counted as close friends throughout their time at primary school. Some boys felt history was the main marker of closeness, for example, Adam said Aiden was a close friend because they met as babies when their mothers
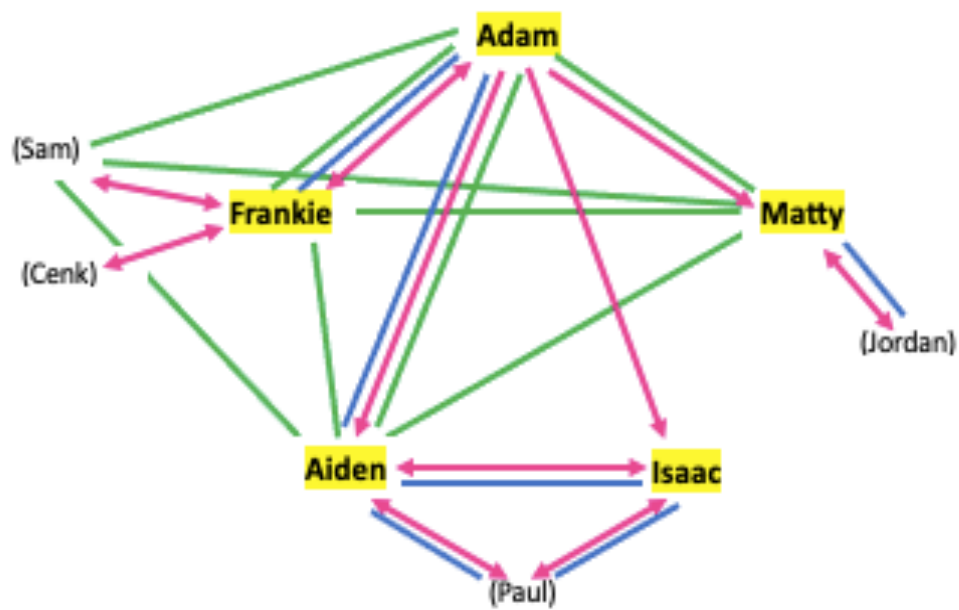
Pink line shows close friend as declared in ethnographic-style interviews (arrow indicates direction, e.g., Adam said Isaac was his close friend; Frankie and Adam said each other)

Blue line shows they spent time together outside of school in person

Green line shows they spent time together outside of school online

Figure 7.1: Boys' friendships

attended a play-group, whereas others, such as Isaac, felt spending increased time together

engaging in shared activities was most important and said Aiden and Paul were his closest friends

as they had started spending more time together in Year 6.

It is interesting to note that both Frankie and Matty were selected as a close friend by several

others in the form-group but seemed less willing to commit to specifying individuals themselves.

Instead, they commented they were friends with the whole form group; in Frankie's

words, 'We're all best friends, I just like everyone'. Intriguingly, even though Frankie and Aiden

have only one connection, spending time together online, they invest much effort

into aligning with and supporting each other in the game in this chapter. This might be respect

based on mutual understanding of each other's popularity as well as the fact that they were

becoming close, but this was only recent.

Figure 7.1 highlights that several boys were frequently spending time together playing games

online. This was a bonding experience, as most of the boys in the class owned Sony PlayStation or

Microsoft Xbox consoles, and would frequently go home and continue talking online while playing

against each other on games using these consoles. The boys chatted on headsets while playing

and came up with creative solutions to ensure those without access to a console were still

included. For example, Marcelo was not interested in playing video games so did not own a

console, but Adam or Matty would call him and put the phone on loudspeaker so he could talk

with his friends while they played. Isaac's console was broken, so Aiden regularly invited him

round to his home so they could play together. When one of the boys was grounded and banned

from playing video games, his parents took away the console controllers. After finding out, the

other boys took it in turns to bring a spare controller into school for him so he could play in secret

since his console remained accessible. Video games and play were therefore important to the boys not only for the experience of playing, but also for the social opportunities offered in the process.

In the next section, I summarise the video game which they eventually select to play at the party, *Rocket League*.

7.3 The Game: *Rocket League*

I can best describe *Rocket League* as like playing football, but cars manoeuvre the ball rather than people. The ball is significantly bigger than the cars, but players may push the ball along the ground (like a footballer dribbling) or jump to hit the ball while it is in the air. There are also marked spaces on the pitch which, if a player drives over, gives them a speed boost. This speed boost allows them to drive more quickly for a few seconds which gives extra power when hitting the ball. It can also help players destroy an opponent's car, which will result in them respawning on their side of the pitch. Speed boosts may also be used to propel players into the air, giving them opportunities to do 'tricks' such as spinning.

Once a player has signed in to *Rocket League*, they choose either the Orange team or the Blue team. Players may choose to play in matches of one-versus-one up to four-versus-four, attempting to score by getting the ball into their goal on their opponent's half of the pitch. The team with the highest number of goals after a designated time (usually five minutes) is declared the winner; in the case of a tie, it becomes 'golden goal', where the team who scores first in overtime wins. All players may gain points through means such as scoring goals (100 points) and saving or assisting goals (each 50 points). Yet more points are available for actions such as 'epic saves', where a player blocks a goal on the edge of scoring (75 points). Points can be traded for upgraded customisations such as body paint, wheels and antennae.

There are options for playing online against users from all over the world, or playing locally, offline, with users signed in to the same console and devices. Like the boys in Penguin Class decided, players can also limit the users they play, thereby ensuring they interact online only with players they know in-person. In the talk I analyse, the boys are playing in offline mode.

In the following sections, I analyse how *Rocket League* becomes the game they settle upon playing, how the boys manage starting the game, including their negotiation of teams, and how the rules of their play are governed. Throughout, the boys' relationships with each other are clearly indicated in their language and actions, as are the identities they are constructing in their talk. In the next section, my analysis of the first extracts, 'Rocket League is Dead' and 'Teams' are longer than the others at they are the first exposure to the boys and their talk.

7.4 Deciding Which Game to Play

In Chapter 6, I shared episodes from the girls' pre-game talk to establish their relationships, stances and local ethnographic positions which I demonstrated map onto their conduct during the game. However, for the boys, game-related talk begins immediately. The first two extracts I analyse therefore offer a first glimpse of the local ethnographic positions, stances, styles and local social order the boys continue to construct throughout the talk in this chapter.

Whereas the girls took almost 20 suggestions or attempts to settle on a game when they played *WMLT* (see 6.4), the boys negotiate very little about which game will be played. Just before the beginning of the first extract, the boys had been running upstairs to Adam's bedroom and no discernible conversation could be heard. It is clear, however, that they are going upstairs because they intend to play a video game. The extract starts as they enter Adam's room:

Rocket League is Dead

1
Frankie: [that's
Aiden: guys why don't we all play Rocket League/
Isaac: yea:[h

2
Frankie: a dead game   [Rocket League
Isaac: no Aiden Rocket League is [(xxx)

3
Frankie: [is **dead**
Adam: [yeah let's play that   [Aiden look how
Aiden: (EXCITABLE SCREAM[ING SOUND)

4
Adam: funny that is/   [Matty slow-mo'd it [like
Aiden: [erm
Matty: some (.) you (.) [your controller/ {*PASSING*

5
Adam: that   [look at this Aiden
Aiden: (.) no that's [yours {*PASSING ISAAC A CONTROLLER*}
Isaac: thank you Deb for the
Matty: *AIDEN A CONTROLLER*}

6
Adam: [thanks for the set
Aiden: ["I got my controller guys"{*SOUTHERN*
Isaac: controller now thanks   we're

7
Frankie: wait   =I'm playing
Adam: =Aiden=
Aiden: *STATE USA ACCENT*}
Isaac: playing on Rocket League then/   erm=

8
Frankie: first I bagsied first
Aiden: guys GUYS why don't we do the
Matty: no:/ {*HALF-LAUGHING; DISBELIEVING*}

The extract opens with Aiden suggesting they play *Rocket League*, 'Guys, why don't we all play

Rocket League?' (stave 1). Aiden's turn, using solidarity marker, 'guys' (a term he uses more than

anyone else in the whole recording), inclusive pronoun, 'we', and phrasing his suggestion as a

question, bears more similarity with Harness-Goodwin's (1990: 110) girls than her boys, who, in

task-oriented play, phrase directives as suggestions for future action using inclusive pronouns

which 'lump speaker and addressee together' so that neither has control of the other. This

suggests Aiden is paying attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative

femininity, and implies he favours a more egalitarian approach to play. Aiden adopts the interactional role of a proposer, and this turn is the first example of Aiden's style, contributing to his local ethnographic position as an 'easy-going, 'nice guy' boy', which he maintains throughout this chapter (with one exception, see 7.6). This construction arguably contributes to his popularity in this group and the form-group, which, like Tilda (6.3), he builds through sociability and likeability. As Aiden's decision is actioned, it shows his leadership, suggesting his attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity is appreciated by the others.

Isaac's response, 'Yeah!' (stave 1), ratifies Aiden's suggestion. Isaac's turn appears linguistically similar to Tilda's for Amy in 'Who's Most Likely To?' (see 6.4), but has a slightly different effect. Tilda's 'Yeah' came after 19 failed attempts to unite the group in 'talking about one thing', and once she had endorsed it, others then explicitly agreed, uttering more 'Yeah's. Isaac, however, does not get any further support. His 'yeah!' shows his interactional role as a supporter as he adopts a similar pro-game stance, however, he seems to be interpersonally aligning with Aiden specifically. This is in-keeping with his personal style where he frequently supports Aiden, and sometimes Frankie, through interpersonal alignment, positioning Frankie and Aiden highly in the local social order. He also makes an effort to be positive throughout, often complimenting others without receiving, or apparently expecting, reciprocation. This contributes to his local ethnographic position as a friendly, amicable, supportive boy. Although his local ethnographic position is associated with niceness and he favours linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, Isaac does not have a locally-accrued status upon which to draw to enable leadership. In addition, he does not make many leadership attempts.

Unlike Isaac, Frankie does not support Aiden and adopts the interactional role of a critic, claiming, 'That's [*Rocket League*'s] a dead game' (stave 1–2). His negative stance towards *Rocket League*

creates a disalignment with Aiden and Isaac. He does not ratify Aiden's suggestion, and uses the boldest strategy utilised by Harness-Goodwin's boys, flat rejection, to dismiss it (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 105). Frankie's use of slang term, 'dead', meaning in this context something similar to passé – irrelevant or boring because of mainstream overuse (Urban Dictionary 2017; this definition was also verified by Frankie) – is typical of his style and contributes to his local ethnographic position as a 'cool' boy. The use of slang is similar to Roberta's use of music-based slang in Pia Pichler's group of cool and socially-aware private school girls to toy with nonconformity and construct herself as 'cool' (Pichler 2009: 47). Declaring *Rocket League* 'dead', rather than 'boring', 'old' or 'overdone', shows Frankie's efforts in constructing his local ethnographic position as a cool boy. The meaning of Frankie's 'dead', as boring because of overuse, further contributes to his 'coolness', as the reason provided for rejecting the game is because it has become too popular and therefore too mainstream. This turn shows that Frankie appears to feel he is in a position to ignore others' wants – that by his very declaration and assessment of a game being 'dead' warrants a reason not to play. He therefore positions himself highly in the local social order, contributing to his local ethnographic position as a self-important boy. However, the others do not agree that it is a 'dead' game, and, despite his popularity, they ignore him. His turn shows these boys can opt for strategies indexing boldness but, crucially, they are not successful in securing action or achieving leadership. Frankie's lack of linguistic strategies paying attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity may explain why his attempt to influence decision-making is unsuccessful. This suggests the importance of such relational practices for leadership.

The others do not appear to agree that *Rocket League* is 'dead', and Frankie's rejection is not ratified by anyone. Instead, party-host Adam interpersonally aligns with Aiden, rather than his best friend, Frankie, and says, 'Yeah, let's play that' (stave 3). As Harness-Goodwin (1990: 77) notes for the Maple Street boys, when an activity occurs on someone's property or using

someone's belongings, it often adds weight to their suggestions. However, it does not give speakers complete authority; for example, Chopper providing the wire hangers does not afford him the same rights as Malcolm in managing the slingshot battle (see II.ii). Although this activity is taking place on Adam's property as part of his birthday party, which might give him additional warrant to see his wants fulfilled, Adam does not invoke or attempt to use this. Instead, the high value he places on interpersonally aligning with Aiden appears to bear most influence on his support. He uses agreement marker, 'yeah', and then matches Aiden's 'easy-going' stance and preference for egalitarianism using a strategy similar to Harness-Goodwin's girls by including 'let's', saying, 'Let's play that' (stave 3). This positions the proposal as a suggestion, but not binding, for future action. Adam puts much work into maintaining his interpersonal alignment with Aiden throughout the talk, contributing to his local ethnographic position as an ingratiating boy and Aiden's as a popular boy. Aiden is also positioned as a leader both because of Adam's efforts to align with him and that his decision is supported.

Contributing to his local ethnographic position as a fair-minded boy, Matty adopts an interactional role as a facilitator and hands out controllers for the console, some of which he brought from home so everyone could join in as Adam owned two controllers but there are five players (stave 4). Intriguingly, Frankie now completely departs from his prior assertion that *Rocket League* is 'dead' (stave 1–2 and 2–3), and seeks to guarantee his involvement, stating, 'I'm playing first, I bagsied first' (stave 7–8). Adopting a domineering interpersonal stance towards his friends where he again feels he is able to ignore their wishes and fulfil his own, Frankie positions himself similarly to Malcolm (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 97). However, when Malcolm uses 'I want' (which is what Frankie's declarative is effectively doing), it is at least vaguely connectable to the task, for example, he says 'I want the pliers' when cutting up metal hangers, but this is to make slingshots for the battle. Frankie's only justification for playing first is that he has 'bagsied' it simply by

uttering the performative. This contributes to his local ethnographic position as a self-important boy. His inclination for boldness is again clear, but it is not accepted by the others. His bold leadership and decision-making attempts are prevented, showing the group's preference for relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity.

Matty, however, challenges Frankie, saying, 'No?!' (stave 8), contributing to his local ethnographic position as an assertive boy. This is in contrast with Baxter's (2006a: 171) boys who do not show any signs of opposition to a boy occupying a position similar to Frankie. Though Matty has been fairly quiet until now as he focused on facilitating others' gameplay, he adopts the interactional role of a provocateur to outright contest Frankie. His one-word polarity marker uttered with a tone of disbelief, 'No?!', indicates he appears affronted by the possibility of Frankie taking the first turn simply because he wants to, without negotiation or others' consent. That Matty disputes Frankie's right to claim the first turn shows he is not willing to allow play and game-management to be based purely on Frankie's whims. Throughout his talk, Matty constructs himself as a fair-minded boy in his style; he often refers back to understandings of fairness, making or suggesting decisions which appear most fair where he frequently uses the logic found in sport – an area in which he was deeply invested. Frankie taking the first turn in the game based merely on his whims would be regarded unfair and therefore at odds with Matty's view on how games should be played. The contest between Matty and Frankie's views recurs throughout the talk in this chapter. While Frankie is unused to being challenged by others very often (who are actually often keen to secure his approval, e.g., see Isaac in 7.6), Matty is willing to dispute his opinions or demands. This may be because they are of somewhat equal popularity in the form group (see Figure 7.1) and are competing for who is the most influential.

In this section, the main decision being made is which game they should play. Aiden's suggestion

of *Rocket League* uses a mitigated directive strategy associated with indexing normative femininity not traditionally heard in boys' single-sex play, but here succeeds. This appears to be because of his style indexing his 'easy-going' and 'nice guy' local ethnographic position, combined with his popularity-based status, accrued through likeability. He also shows his preference for more egalitarian organisation as his language is inclusive and he does not support Frankie's demand that he go first simply because he 'bagsied' it. Though initially rejected by Frankie, Adam and Isaac's overt backing through their talk, and Matty's gestural backing through action when he hands out controllers, show support for Aiden's suggestion. Thus, all three ratify Aiden's proposal. This leads to Frankie changing his mind, though with the approval of the other four, *Rocket League* would most likely have been played regardless of Frankie's opinion.

As I have demonstrated, while negotiating this decision the boys are forging alignments and constructing themselves as 'particular *kinds* of boy' (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original) through their interactional roles, styles and local ethnographic positions. I have also acknowledged some boys' boldness, but shown that such strategies are not successful in securing leadership. In the next section where they choose teams, the stances, styles and relationships established and discussed in 'Rocket League is Dead' come into sharper focus as they make more decisions.

7.5 Choosing Teams

Now they have decided what to play, this section analyses how the boys make decisions related to whether they will play as individuals or in teams. Eventually they settle on teams. They are then further restricted by the constraints of the equipment meaning they must rethink their intentions about the size of teams. 'Teams' follows on directly from 'Rocket League is Dead':

Teams

1
```
Frankie:
Adam:                                                        get off{TO
Aiden:    guys GUYS why don't we do the six-player game
Isaac:                                                              yeah
Matty:
```

2
```
Frankie:  what is it/                              %it's not teams
Adam:     FRANKIE}
Aiden:                 one two three four five\{COUNTING THEM
Isaac:
Matty:
```

3
```
Frankie:  though\%{FRUSTRATED TONE}
Adam:                                        yeah I'm with
Aiden:
Isaac:          me Aiden V/ (.) me and Aiden V\
Matty:
```

4
```
Frankie:
Adam:     Aiden=              [me Aiden me Aiden [me Aiden{BABY
Aiden:                =(lau[ghs)
Isaac:                                      [no I'm gonna try
Matty:          =no:={LAUGHING}
```

5
```
Frankie:       [I can't  [(xxx)         [oh my God
Adam:     VOICE; CHANTING}[no yeah yeah [me (.) me
Aiden:
Isaac:    with  [Aiden                          [I CAN'T (.)
Matty:                                           [he's unbeatable
```

6
```
Frankie:        [I DON'T KNOW      [HOW TO PLAY
Adam:          OK [YEAH LET AIDEN CH[oose
Aiden:                              [IT'S REALLY EASY FOR ME I'M A
Isaac:    PLAY{PRESSING BUTTONS ON CONTROLLER}
Matty:
```

7
```
Aiden:    BOSS{SMILING}
```

In-keeping with his style and reconfirming his attention to inclusion, Aiden replicates his strategy from 'Rocket League is Dead' when he makes his suggestion for the mode of play. He says, 'Guys, GUYS, why don't we do the six-player game?' (stave 1); he again addresses everyone using 'guys' as a solidarity marker, uses inclusive pronoun 'we', and he phrases this as a proposal not a command. Again adopting the interactional role of a proposer, this contributes to his local

ethnographic position as an 'easy-going, 'nice guy' boy'. Playing *Rocket League* could be organised in a variety of ways, but Aiden's suggestion is inclusive, that all present should be able to play simultaneously, in, he told me afterwards, a three-versus-three battle, rather than everyone watching one or two players competing with each other or unknown users online. As was the case in 'Rocket League is Dead' and true to his style, Isaac repeats his interactional role as a supporter, again interpersonally aligning with Aiden, and agrees to the suggestion with, 'Yeah' (stave 1). This gives Aiden's proposal further support. Frankie then betrays his lack of knowledge regarding the game, asking, 'What is it?' (stave 2), suggesting that his earlier resistance was not because *Rocket League* is 'dead' but because he is inexperienced in its play, something further suggested frequently in the following extracts.

Frankie then uses a declarative to say, 'It's not **teams** though' (stave 2–3) after Aiden has counted all present to demonstrate that everyone could be included in a match (stave 2). This declarative has the function of a directive, as Frankie tries to enforce a game not played in teams. It indexes boldness; however, suggesting the boys' preference for strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, it is not followed. Isaac, instead, is very happy to support Aiden and play in teams. He again adopts an interactive role as a supporter and overtly aligns with Aiden, saying he wants to play on Aiden's team, 'Me and Aiden V? Me and Aiden V.' (stave 3). 'V' here stands for 'versus', and Isaac appears to be drawing on its meaning from gamer shorthand term, 'PVP', player versus player (Playstation.com), but without specifying against who they will compete. This positions Isaac as knowledgeable about video games, and may be an attempt to accrue skills-based status. However, that he intonates his utterance as a question positions his directive as a proposal not a demand. This is in-keeping with his style and contributes to his local ethnographic position as a supportive boy. It is possible and likely that Isaac wants to play on Aiden's team because Aiden is highly skilled at *Rocket League* as well as the value he places on their friendship.

Adam also requests playing on Aiden's team, saying, 'Yeah, I'm with Aiden' (stave 3–4). Adam uses a strategy Malcolm might use (Harness-Goodwin 1990), using the first person, 'I', and uttering a declarative to act as a directive based on his whims. Adam was supportive of Aiden in 'Rocket League is Dead' and this overt alignment with him further confirms Adam's investment in Aiden's approval and friendship. However, like Frankie's, this bold form is also unsuccessful in decision-making and leadership as it is not accepted. In fact, Matty shows he is not willing to honour it, and says, 'No' (stave 4). This is the same strategy he used to reject Frankie's 'bagsying' of playing first, a one-word polarity marker, but this time, his laugh is a contextualisation cue that he does not intend to be too severe. Matty therefore questions Adam's request, but, as is made clear in 'Unfair' (below) and confirmed in our ethnographic interview, Matty says 'no' because of the idea of fairness he frequently refers to or indexes. Aiden and Adam are both accomplished players, as is Matty himself. Therefore, if Aiden and Adam team up it would be unfair on the other players as this pair is more likely to win. Adam then positions himself as childly in his use of baby voice, similar to Leon in 5.4.1, in his effort to play on Aiden's team. He chants, 'Me Aiden, me Aiden, **me Aiden**' (stave 4). This shows Adam's first positioning of himself as childly which becomes typical of his style, and contributes to his local ethnographic position as a 'young' boy.

Adam and Isaac's efforts to play on his team position Aiden highly in the local social order. This is most likely because of his higher relative skills-based status, but it is probably also related to his personable local ethnographic position shown in his style and their appreciation of his preference for linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity when suggesting decisions. Matty confirms Aiden's high skills-based status by deeming him 'unbeatable' (stave 5), positioning Aiden as the highest skilled player in the group. This contributes to Matty's local ethnographic position as a fair-minded boy as he shows humility. In other studies boys often openly make skills-

based comparisons in attempt to 'top' each other. For example, in Harness-Goodwin and Goodwin's (1987) study of boys' play on Maple Street, the boys try to walk on their hands, where, in contrast with Matty's championing of Aiden, they make claims such as, 'I could walk on my hands better than anybody here' (Harness-Goodwin and Goodwin 1987: 228; see also Harness-Goodwin 1990; Maybin 2006; Labov 2009[1997]). That Matty resists this, despite his own comparably high skill, also suggests he is constructing a more grown-up pre-adolescent identity as he does not feel the need to boast but is actively willing to compliment his friend.

Adam aligns with Matty's fairness stance, shouting, 'OK, YEAH, LET AIDEN choose' (stave 6), apparently feeling it is fairer for Aiden to select his own teammate than be fought over like a possession. Meanwhile, Isaac shouts, 'I CAN'T PLAY' (stave 5–6), but this is related to equipment: he cannot sync his controller with the console. In response, however, Frankie shouts, 'I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PLAY' (stave 6). This appears to be Frankie admitting the weakness hinted at in stave 2 (when he asks, 'What is it?'), that he is not au-fait with *Rocket League*. Trying to cover-up his weakness is the most likely explanation for his declaration that *Rocket League* is 'dead'; if he presents the game as too passé to bother playing, he may hope others will agree because of his local ethnographic position as a 'cool' boy and reject it, too. Frankie now appears to accept they will be playing *Rocket League*, however, so it seems he perhaps shares this information because he can monopolise on the fairness Matty and Adam seem so keen to implement; now that Aiden has been positioned as the most highly-skilled player, Frankie increases his chances of winning by being placed on Aiden's team.

Seemingly departing from his style, Aiden says, 'It's really easy for me, I'm a boss' (stave 6–7). Like Isaac's use of 'V' (stave 3), Aiden shows his gamer knowledge in his use of 'boss', meaning the best at, or most accomplished in, gaming (Urban Dictionary 2016). Although Aiden is slightly an

outsider to the talk between Matty, Adam and Isaac (he is being argued over without participating in the argument himself), his utterance here confirms he agrees with their assessment of him as a highly skilled player. Although he might appear to be showing-off, it seems Aiden is self-teasing here (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997: 281). This is cued by his smiling, and, with considerations of his style, his willingness to use self-denigrating humour creates a positive image for himself which supports his construction of being a 'nice guy'. This local ethnographic position, as well as his higher relative skills-based status and use of linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, allow Aiden to adopt leadership positions as the talk progresses.

In this extract, it is clear both Isaac and Adam wish to play on Aiden's team. It appears this is because of his higher relative skill, his local ethnographic position associated with 'niceness', and his use of linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, though, like Marcelo in 5.4.1, it is perhaps all three. Matty has challenged the possibility of Adam and Aiden playing together, but he has not explicitly stated why, and Frankie has confessed to his lack of knowledge regarding *Rocket League.* No decisions have yet been made. This extract has also shown that, while some speakers use bold strategies, these are not successful in securing action and do not facilitate leadership. In 'Unfair', the team composition becomes a subject of further discussion. Just prior to this extract, lasting approximately one minute, the boys had been setting up the controllers to play:

Unfair
```
1
Matty:      err (.) I get (.) you get (xxx) me and Aiden can't be on

2
Frankie:                                        me (.) Matty
Aiden:                                 ^hmm^{SMILING}
Matty:      the same team <cause it's unfai:r>{SMILING}          no

3
Adam:      no me and Matty                    [me Matty Frankie
Matty:             no we have to make team[s (.) us three (.)
```

```
4
Frankie:                                         no how about me Aiden and
Matty:     can't be on the same team{POINING TO AIDEN, ADAM AND


5
Frankie:   I (.) saac\
Matty:     HIMSELF}     no (.) we can't do three on three (.) we have


6
Frankie:       [Adam uses combos while he's playing
Adam:                                             =fudge oh\
Aiden:        [no us three (-) us (-) no (.) us three=
Matty:     to do


7
Frankie:                      [OK I'll pick [(.) Aideen (-) I'll
Adam:      (1) I'm not usually [(xxx)
Matty:                                     [you can't pick it


8
Frankie:   pick Aideen
Aiden:                            =what/=
Matty:     can't be me and Aiden=       =cause that's unfair because


9
Frankie:                              [I'm picking Aiden (-) no
Adam:                                 [(xxxxx)
Aiden:                                 [they're not noobs
Isaac:                                 [I'm not a noob
Matty:     (.) these people are noobs (-){SMILING}


10
Frankie:   I'm (.) %I'm picking% (.) [Aiden
Adam:                                [wait they're not noobs guys get


11
Frankie:                            [no you can choose Isaac/
Adam:      off the cable things (1) [get off the cables\
Aiden:                                                  yeah


12
Frankie:                                  yeah I've played this
Aiden:     Isaac's played it at my house
Isaac:                                 yeah


13
Frankie:   before I'm decent
Adam:                 OK can people join
Aiden:                                    who is it/ (.) me


14
Adam:      PLEASE JOIN
Aiden:             and you/
Matty:                    everyone press circle (.) options


15
Matty:     button sorry
```

Matty's declarations that, 'Me [he] and Aiden can't be on the same team ''cause it's unfair', and, 'Us three can't be on the same team' while pointing between himself, Aiden and Adam (stave 1–2, 3–4) again contribute to his local ethnographic position as a fair-minded boy. This is the first overt mention of the concept of 'fairness'. Prioritising fairness over a guaranteed win and wishing for the teams to be equally seeded is related to Matty's stance prioritising a 'morality of rights' (Evaldsson 2004), believing winners are true winners only if they beat the best players. The smile with which he speaks, ''Cause it's unfair' (stave 2) is a contextualisation cue of his self-awareness. It also shows possible discomfort in assessing himself as highly skilled, especially as, from ethnographic observations, I know that his preferred morality of rights penalises boasting; for example, after football at break-times, Matty would reprimand his teammates for boasting about winning.

Showing capriciousness, Frankie and Adam now want to team up with Matty rather than Aiden. Frankie first suggests he and Matty make a team, 'Me; Matty' (stave 2), which is contested by Adam, who says, 'No, **me** and Matty' (stave 3). The skill level-based rankings for *Rocket League* co-created by the boys in their ethnographic interviews are as follows:

1. Aiden
2. Matty
3. Adam
4. Isaac
5. Frankie

Frankie's proposal of himself, Aiden and Isaac (stave 4–5) would be relatively fair according to Matty's preferred morality of rights. He uses a strategy different from his prior 'I want' strategies and pays some attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity by using a suggestion rather than a demand to function as a directive in, 'No, how about me, Aiden and Isaac…?' (stave 4–5). This implies he understands his prior attempts have been unsuccessful. However, Matty also rejects this, saying, 'No, we can't do three-on-three' (stave 5). Though not

being able to play in teams of three appears based on Matty's whims, it was actually a limitation set by their equipment as the screen size was too small to accommodate more than four players (two teams of two), for, when more than one player uses the same console for *Rocket League* the screen is split into smaller windows, and it was too small to be split into sixths.

After Aiden demonstrates the challenge of selecting 'fair' teams with, 'No, us three, us, no, us three' (stave 6) while maintaining his 'nice guy' construction by refusing to commit, Frankie, perhaps frustrated, returns to his typical style and utilises a bold strategy to propose he plays with Aiden, saying, 'OK I'll pick Aideen. I'll pick Aideen'[9] (stave 7). This moves the talk from reciprocal suggestions to centring his wants with the use of pronoun, 'I'. This shows a leadership attempt indexing boldness, suggesting he views himself as powerful and able to choose a teammate without providing any reason and without invitation. However, Frankie is immediately challenged by Matty, who says, 'You can't **pick**; it can't be me and Aiden' (stave 7). Matty's emphasis through contrastive stress specifies his issue as Frankie 'picking'. He appears to object to the idea of one person assuming the decision-maker role based on their own whims, a stance he also assumed in 'Rocket League is Dead' when he flatly refused Frankie's 'bagsying' of the first play-turn. This way of making decisions, often voiced by Frankie, is at odds with Matty's understanding of fairness. However, Matty uses some constructions indexing boldness, but, whereas Frankie's boldness is unsuccessful in leadership attempts as his ideas are not actioned, Matty's are sometimes actioned. This appears related to his local ethnographic position as a 'fair-minded boy', as others understand that he backs these ideas because they are what is best for everyone rather than only himself.

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[9] While neither chose the other as a close friend in their ethnographic interviews (see Figure 7.1), Aiden and Frankie grew closer in Year 6, which Frankie's pronunciation of 'Aiden' as 'Aideen', used as like a nickname as marker of familiarity or closeness, highlights.

Whereas Matty objects to Frankie deciding simply to 'pick', he feels himself entitled to place a condition on the teams, 'It can't be me and Aiden, 'cause that's unfair because these people are noobs' (stave 7–9). Although indexing boldness, unlike Frankie's request, this is not in his own interests. It does, however, serve as a reminder to all present that he and Aiden are the most skilled, placing them highly in the local social order. His use of 'these people' to refer to Adam, Isaac and Frankie is distancing, and a strategy not used even by Malcolm (Harness-Goodwin 1990). Matty is addressing Aiden, apparently attempting to forge an alignment through mutual understanding of the game. Again, Matty's use of 'noob', short for 'newbie' in gaming to denote inexperience, marks his inside knowledge and further distances the others. Aiden, however, refuses to align with Matty, claiming, 'They're not noobs!' (stave 9), with which Isaac simultaneously agrees, 'I'm not a noob' (stave 9), and Adam, 'Wait, they're not noobs' (stave 10). This may be because Aiden is aware of Isaac and Frankie's lower skill and does not wish to be burdened with them as teammates, but, considering his local ethnographic position as a 'nice guy', he is most likely genuinely sticking up for them. He and Isaac played *Rocket League* quite frequently, so he can vouch that Isaac is an experienced player, and his burgeoning friendship with Frankie, who was also popular in the form-group, may provide a reason for defending him. Aligning with Matty's negative assessment may therefore be too risky a social position for Aiden if he wants to maintain his good relationships with all present.

Despite his earlier confession that he 'doesn't know how to play' (see 'Teams'), Frankie contributes to his local ethnographic position as self-important and now completely backtracks on this. He claims that not only does he know how to play, but he is good, 'Yeah I've played this before, I'm decent' (stave 12–13). 'Decent' is used here to mean 'pretty good', and Frankie's use of the more contemporary meaning again contributes to his local ethnographic position as a 'cool'

boy. Interestingly, unlike Isaac, no-one supports Frankie's self-assessment, and they instead focus on setting up the game.

Aiden's, 'Who is it? Me and you?' (stave 14) indicates he is still unclear who will be playing on the different teams, meaning Frankie and Matty's leadership attempts have been unsuccessful. Eventually, it is the console that decides. When Matty instructs, 'Everyone press circle, **options** button, sorry' (stave 14–15), those who press this button most quickly are assigned to a team. By chance, and presumably much to Frankie's delight, this ends up being Frankie and Aiden on one team, and Isaac and 'CPU' (an in-game player controlled by the computer) on the other. This means Matty and Adam will play on a team. Although he did not select the teams, Matty's leadership is shown because the boys follow his instruction to press the Options button. This is most likely because of his higher relative skills-based status, meaning they trust his instructions.

Although he does not utilise strategies as bold and Malcolm (Harness-Goodwin 1990), Matty frequently makes leadership attempts which index boldness. He rejects proposals the others suggest regarding team compositions and team numbers, providing reasons which support his morality of fairness, that they must play in teams, and he, Adam and Aiden cannot be on the same team for this is the fairest outcome for all. I argue this is because of his higher relative skills-based status as well as his local ethnographic position as a fair-minded boy. These position him as someone whose ideas people treat with respect. However, his decisions are not always actioned, and he sees more success when using strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, as I show below.

Throughout, we are also clearly seeing the boys' local ethnographic positions and intersectional identities, doing their masculinities alongside constructing growing-up identities while still being

children. This is indicated particularly in the sheer amount of turns which start with the polarity marker 'no' (stave 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11). In Harness-Goodwin's (1998: 33) study of girls' games of hopscotch, she notes turns in which children immediately signal opposition 'contrast strongly with what has been described in the literature about the preference for agreement in adult conversation'. Like Maybin's (2006, 2009) 10- to 12-year-old children who switched rapidly between discourses of adolescence and childhood, the boys' use of slang and local ethnographic positions (for example, Frankie's 'cool' and Aiden's 'nice guy') imply they are growing up, but some of their lexical choices place them firmly still in childhood.

In the final section of this chapter, disputes become yet more clear and important as the boys engage in a lengthy argument about rules which they revisit and reshape over a 40-minute period during gameplay.

7.6 Deciding the Rules

When I first listened to this audio discussed in this chapter, I was struck by the sheer amount of time the boys dedicated to revisiting and renegotiating the rules by which they are playing. This is understandable: without rules, games arguably could not exist, and their prevalence in children's games has been well-documented. Considering both Iona and Peter Opie's (1959, 1969, 1993) folkloric observations of children's play alongside Harvey Sacks's (1992a: 498-507) discussion of the fundamental organisational features of children's games, Amanda Bateman and Carly Butler (2014) emphasise the importance of rules in children's games, arguing that children are active participants in rule-making. Although, like mine, some studies examine the language used to enforce rules in games with pre-established rules, such as jump-rope, board games or pétanque (Harness-Goodwin 1985; Svensson and Tekin 2021; Zinken et al. 2021; Kornfeld and Rossi 2023),

none have yet focused on how rules are decided and managed by children to play video games with their in-person friends.

Like jump-rope, pétanque and board games, *Rocket League* has established rules enforced by the platform (for example, players cannot choose to drive an aeroplane instead of a car). However, as Harness-Goodwin (1985: 316) notes with the rules of jump-rope, 'the ways in which any particular game is played are open for negotiation on each occasion of its performance'. In this section, I therefore explore how the boys decide the ways in which they will play the game now they have established the limitation that only four players may play at once in a match between two teams of two: after Team A has played Team B, how do they decide which will play Team C? Throughout the recording, the boys engage in a long dispute over who should play in the next match, specifically whether it should be the winners or losers of the previous one. At the end of each match, the rules seem up for debate and even once a decision has been reached (or taken) it continues to be commented upon, at one point becoming so heated that it leads to parent intervention (see 'So Annoying').

In the extracts I analyse, I consider how the linguistic strategies the boys use relate to their different statuses and local ethnographic positions to aid in their decision-making and leadership. Aiden's easy-going, 'nice guy' local ethnographic position is clear, and Isaac is again supportive in line with his local ethnographic position as an amicable, supportive boy. Adam, however, begins to draw on more childly discourses through his whining and positioning himself as a powerless victim of others' decisions. Frankie again attempts coolness, and Matty shows his focus on fairness. However, Matty's definition of fairness differs from Frankie and Aiden's: Matty's stance suggests a morality of rights, whereas Aiden and Frankie's suggest a morality of responsibility (Evaldsson

2004). Each is conscious to promote their perceptions of 'fairness' in gameplay. They attempt

leadership by ensuring their morality is the one followed as the boys engage in talk about rules.

'Winner Stays On' shows the first mention of whether the winner or loser will stay on. Although it

occurs just prior to the starting point of 'Unfair' (see 7.5) and before play has begun, I include it to

document the first example of this rule being raised:

Winner Stays On
```
1
Adam:       wait Isaac let me try/
Matty:                          winner stays on you get (.) err (.)

2
Matty:      I get (.) you get (xxx) me and Aiden can't be on the same

3
Frankie:                                 me (.) Matty/
Aiden:                            ^hmm^ {SMILING}
Matty:      team <cause it's unfai:r>{SMILING}
```

Matty says, 'Winner stays on' (stave 1), meaning whoever wins each match will play in the

following match by staying 'on' the pitch to face the next set of opponents. To clarify, if Team A

wins the 'Team A versus Team B' match, Team A will then play Team C. This is common practice in

many amateur games of this format, including, on their school playground, football and four-

square, and indexes Matty's morality of rights. Matty's strategy, 'Winner stays on', a declarative

acting as a directive, indexes boldness. He appears to draw on his higher relative skills-based

status in both *Rocket League* and sport to support his wants. Crucially, however, no-one

acknowledges or agrees to this.

In 'Unfair', I showed the teams were eventually decided by the console. The talk in 'Winners Slash

Losers' occurs during the first match: Aiden and Frankie versus Isaac and CPU:

Winners Slash Losers

```
1
Aiden:     that's just                        with four-player I'm
Isaac:                 no I'm so bad now

2
Aiden:     actually really bad as well
Isaac:                               I'm (.) really bad I'm the

3
Frankie:   [then he gets the ball with Aiden=
Isaac:     [worst one here
Matty:                                      =mhm (.) my team

4
Matty:     will play the losers\ (-) slash winners/ (.) we'll play

5
Frankie:   [so you and Isaac are a team huh [Aiden/
Adam:                                        who's using the
Aiden:                                  [oh God
Matty:     [the winners

6
Adam:      Gizmo/
Isaac:        m[e      (squeals) (2) (LAUGHS) yes{CELEBRATORY}
Matty:         [Isaac/
```

Note: Dashed underlined text *shows when speakers are responding to on-screen game action*

Isaac's self-deprecation, 'No I'm so bad now' (stave 1) illustrates his inability to play at the standard he believes himself capable. Rather than teasing him, Aiden contributes to his local ethnographic position as a 'nice guy' and empathises, saying, 'With four-player I'm actually really bad as well' (stave 1–2), implying it is the game format rather than Isaac's skill which is responsible. Aiden's conduct is similar to Harness-Goodwin's (1998: 37) observations of middle-class white girls' games of hopscotch. The girls 'divorce the foot that lands on the line [and is therefore out] from the actor controlling that foot'; Aiden here removes blame from Isaac by making the game format accountable rather than the person operating the controller to play the game. In contrast with the boys who make comparisons to boast or determine who is better on Maple Street (Harness-Goodwin and Goodwin 1987: 228), Aiden and Isaac depart from Frankie's, 'I'm decent', and Aiden's, 'I'm a boss' (see 7.5), to compete now for who is the worst. Competing for who is the lowest-skilled has not previously been identified in studies of boys' play-based talk,

though resembles 'capping' but for the superlative 'worst' rather than the 'best' (this is also referred to as 'topping', see Labov 1972; Coates 2003; Maybin 2009; Pichler 2009; Cameron 2011[1997]). For Isaac, it removes the possibility of teasing from others by acknowledging it himself, and for Aiden, it contributes to his 'nice guy' construction; as one of the highest-skilled players, declaring himself 'really bad' offers Isaac some comfort. Aiden's efforts here contribute to his local ethnographic position associated with niceness which works alongside his locally-accrued status and strategies associated with indexing normative femininity, to support his leadership. This is shown by others agreeing with his opinions about gameplay.

Frankie and Matty do not engage in sympathising like Aiden does, remaining more focused on playing (Frankie) and watching (Matty) the match. Clearly absorbed by establishing the rules, Matty says, 'My team will play the losers… slash winners. We'll play the winners' (stave 3–5). Unlike his prior declarative in 'Winner Stays On' that his team would play the winners, he now raises the possibility that he and Adam could play the losers but then settles on playing the winners. It is unclear from where this idea came, being completely at odds with the morality of rights fairness-focused stance Matty has adopted throughout. Although Harness-Goodwin's (1985: 316) jump-rope-playing girls show rule-changing may develop while children engage in play, which Matty also appears to be doing here, their negotiation is dialogic. Matty again receives neither confirmation nor acknowledgement from anyone else. He, does however, settle on playing the winners, but this is interrupted by Frankie who, as a result, does not appear to hear Matty's final declarative which he takes to mean a settled decision (see 'No 'Cause We Won', below). This shows Matty's assumption of a leadership position, apparently feeling that because he has made and uttered a decision, it is the one that will be followed.

Frankie's interruption is crucial for understanding the rest of their playing of *Rocket League*. His turn interrupts Matty's declaration that his team will play the winners of the current match. Thus, Matty feels the game is proceeding under the understanding that the winner stays on, while the others may feel it is undecided. Again, no other speaker confirms, or contests, Matty's assertion, questioning whether anyone else regarded it as confirmed. Nevertheless, this moment presents the crux of the dispute that follows.

At the end of the Aiden and Frankie versus Isaac and CPU match, there is a dispute over who will now play against Matty and Adam's team:

No, 'Cause We Won
```
1
Frankie:   sitting on them%
Adam:
Aiden:                       (SQUEALS/LAUGHS) with one second [left
Isaac:
Matty:                                                        [Aiden

2
Frankie:
Adam:
Aiden:     {ELATED}
Isaac:                    that was [so good{YORKSHIRE ACCENT}
Matty:     what a goal            [no (.) Adam you're on now you're

3
Frankie:                          [(LAUGHS)
Adam:
Aiden:
Isaac:
Matty:     against Isaac and: [(.) I mean sorry Frankie and

4
Frankie:
Adam:
Aiden:     [(laughs){ELATED; DISBELIEF}        no cause we won
Isaac:
Matty:     [Aiden (.) Aiden you're going down{SMILING}

5
Frankie:   [yeah so they're against Matty and thingy (-) wait who
Adam:
Aiden:
Isaac:
Matty:     [yeah I know I thought we said we'd play the winner
```

```
6
Matty:     otherwise there's no point trying (.) I might as well

7
Frankie:
Adam:                              oh I could've scored that
Aiden:                 we've/                              =NO (.)
Isaac:
Matty:     play for you                                  NO=

8
Frankie:   [NO                    [NO:
Adam:
Aiden:     [AGHH::::: [(1)   NO      NO (.) [AGHH::::: [(1) [NO NO
Isaac:              [YESS: ___ [YES::
Matty:                                      [YES:      [HA: [(LAUGHS)

9
Frankie:
Adam:      [(xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)
Aiden:     [NO (-) NO NO=                       [I thought we had
Isaac:            =YES        THAT WAS [(XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX)
Matty:               WOOHOOHOO

10
Frankie:
Adam:
Aiden:     ended I fully (xxx) I thought we had flipping (-) ADAM
Isaac:
Matty:

11
Frankie:                    NO      oh no
Adam:      (-) IT'S 3-D        (laughs)
Aiden:
Isaac:               what°
Matty:                                 Aiden's too good
```

Note: Dashed underlined text *shows when speakers are responding to on-screen game action*

Notably, when these initial decisions about who will play next are being proposed, Matty and Aiden believe the match has finished (stave 2–7). Aiden's admission, 'I thought we had ended!' (stave 9–10) confesses he had misread the game timer and had mistakenly ceased playing. This contextual information illuminates the following actions Matty calls for and Aiden and Frankie question. Matty says, 'No, Adam, you're on now, you're against Isaac and, I mean, sorry, Frankie and Aiden' (stave 2–4). Believing Frankie and Aiden have won, Matty therefore actions the 'winner stays on' format which he declared in 'Winners Slash Losers'. He again shows boldness, using his

favoured strategy of a declarative acting as a directive to action his proposals. Matty tells Adam he

will be playing in the match about to begin, and who against, positioning himself as the leader and

decision-maker (stave 2–4). However, Aiden questions this, saying, 'No, 'cause we **won**' (stave 4).

The use of contrastive stress on 'won' questions Matty's decision-making and leadership, showing

Aiden believes the rule on which they have decided is that the loser, rather than winner, stays on.

Again confirming his 'nice guy' construction and adopting a morality of responsibility stance, Aiden

forfeits playing the next match when he could easily accept Matty's viewpoint and play again

without question. Frankie aligns with Aiden, revealing he has also understood the loser will stay

on, saying, 'Yeah so they're [Isaac and CPU] against Matty and thingy' (stave 5). Frankie's use of

'thingy' in place of Adam's name suggests distance compared with the relationship he promoted in

'Unfair'. It may be that, in 'So Annoying', Adam remembers this and it motivates him to question

Frankie directly about his assessment of him as 'annoying' (see below). Despite this, Frankie's

adoption of a morality of responsibility to put others first indicates he is propositionally aligning

with Aiden. This shows Aiden's leadership as he voiced this stance first, and, even though such a

stance is at odds with the local ethnographic position as a self-important boy he has constructed in

the previous extracts, Frankie makes efforts to align with him.

Matty's response to Aiden, 'Yeah I know, I thought we said we'd play the winner otherwise there's

no point trying – I might as well play **for** you' (stave 5–7) occurs concurrently with Frankie's turn,

'Yeah so they're against Matty and thingy' (stave 5). Matty appears to be paying attention to

relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity here and uses a slightly

different strategy which is more mitigated than his usual style, which might have been a direct,

'No, winner stays on'. Firstly, his use of agreement marker, 'Yeah', shows acknowledgement of

Aiden's point without boldly questioning it as using 'no' would (see 'Unfair'). His use of 'I thought'

works as a hedge to mitigate the disagreement (Pomerantz 1984: 64), especially as the use of

'thought' implies he may be willing to admit making an error. His inclusive pronoun, 'we', also shares agency with the whole group. He provides a clear reason, 'otherwise there's no point trying', rather than issuing an instruction with no justification which would therefore appear based on his own whims. This reasoning again positions him as sportingly fairness-focused in his preference for a 'morality of rights' (Evaldsson 2004), where to be the true winner one should beat the best. All parties here therefore make suggestions based on moralities of fairness, but their understandings of fairness differ.

After extra time automatically provided by the game, Frankie and Aiden finish as the winners. In the next extract, Frankie and Aiden become more determined to enforce the 'loser-stays-on' rule parallel to Matty's attempt at 'winner-stays-on':

Are We Playing Again?
```
1
Frankie:           OK let's be Blue next time Aiden
Adam:        [mi:ne
Aiden:       [guys                                    it doesn't matter

2
Aiden:      Matty (-) oh wait are you playing ag (.) [are we playing
Matty:                                               [no leave match

3
Aiden:     again/ (.) [why:/                          guys are we
Isaac:                    no: we're gonna leave match{TO HIMSELF}
Matty:     leave       [match

4
Frankie:           =why::={FRUSTRATED}
Aiden:     playing/=          =are me and [are me and (-) GUYS are me
Matty:                                    [I can't I can't use Gizmo

5
Adam:                                 =yeah
Aiden:     and Frankie playing again/=     [OK\
Isaac:                                     [no/ (.) no they're not

6
Adam:                          [no what I've not (.) I have
Isaac:     (.) no you said loser [stays on
```

```
7
Frankie:                                  [NO (.) what're you trying mate
Adam:        not played
Aiden:                                                            loser
Matty:                     no I said [winner

8
Adam:                   ["I'm playing"{WHINING}
Aiden:     stays on
Isaac:                                            [no you
Matty:              [no I said I'd want to play Aiden [and

9
Frankie:                                 =winner [plays on/{AFFRONTED} no
Adam:                                          [this is my controller
Aiden:                    =oh shut up=
Isaac:     said loser=

10
Frankie:   [no-one said            [loser mate
Adam:                                           [controller (xxx)
Aiden:                             [it's (xxxx)
Matty:     [it's winner stays on [(.) it's winner [stays on and give

11
Frankie:                                      =he [did say loser
Adam:                                          [can I please play
Aiden:                  no no you did say loser=
Matty:     it to Aiden

12
Adam:      as my user                              I haven't been on
Aiden:                    NO cause it's not YOU Adam

13
Frankie:          well yeah because most of
Adam:      for ages
Isaac:                                        no we didn't we say use

14
Aiden:     [what (.) yeah we did (-) I remember we said
Isaac:     [(.) loser
Matty:                                            you flipping

15
Isaac:                                        <what the hell/>
Matty:     idiot (.) yeah we did winner (.) shut up

16
Frankie:                                        [just stop putting
Adam:              Frankie get off the (-) cable [please
Aiden:     %wait% (1)

17
Frankie:   cable all [over me then
Adam:                [you're sitting on itᵊ
Matty:                                     can you just let me
```

```
18
Matty:      change my car I cannot use Gizmo{SMILING}
```

This extract shows clearly the boys' dispute. Now the match has finished, which he and Frankie won, Aiden asks if he and Frankie are playing again, 'Oh wait are **you** [Isaac] playing ag[ain]? Are we playing again?' (stave 2–3). That Aiden even asks this question shows he is unsure if the winners or losers are staying on, and, though he is open to either, a decision was not reached. Matty, however, takes the decision-maker role and uses an imperative typical of his style and local ethnographic position as an assertive boy, 'No – leave match, leave match' (stave 2–3). For context, in *Rocket League*, if players do not leave the match and re-join, it automatically restarts after a short period; they must therefore leave the match so a team can play against Matty and Adam. Matty again uses boldness in his leadership attempt. However, Aiden says, 'Why?' (stave 3), showing Matty's leadership is not immediately or fully successful as Aiden does not willingly take the proposed action. This may be because Matty's strategy is at odds with the group's preference for speakers to pay attention to relational practices by using strategies associated with normative femininity.

This is shown again when, apparently unsatisfied with Matty's answer to his question regarding who is playing next, Aiden asks, 'Guys, are we playing – are me and, are me and, GUYS, are me and Frankie playing again?' (stave 3–5). Instead of Matty, it is Adam who answers Aiden's question with, 'Yeah', Frankie and Aiden are staying on, which Aiden accepts with 'OK' (stave 5). As Frankie and Aiden just won, Adam is therefore aligning with Matty, that the winners stay on. At odds with his style, however, Isaac challenges this. He says, 'No, no they're not, no, you [Matty] said **loser** stays on' (stave 5–6). Isaac's contrastive stress emphasises to what he is objecting: Frankie and Aiden staying on to play Matty and Adam means the winners stay on, but Isaac believes Matty said the losers would stay on, which would be himself and CPU on this occasion. As detailed in

'Winners Slash Losers', however, Matty settled on the winners staying on, but Frankie's interruption prevented it from being heard. The previous transcripts demonstrate therefore that Isaac is mistaken, as Matty did not settle on this. Regardless, Isaac positions Matty highly, as one who makes decisions, although because in this instance he would benefit, this may be for self-serving reasons.

Rather than thinking of everyone as Aiden and Matty have done, Adam now completely centres himself, saying, 'No, what, I've not, I have not **played**' (stave 6–7) to object. He seems to misunderstand that even though he will be playing regardless and the decision is over which team he will face, he chooses to position himself as a victim, claiming it is unfair because he has not yet been given the chance to play. Adam again invokes a childly positioning shown in 'Teams', and may be an attempt to gain power through sympathy, especially after his alleged close friend, Frankie, just anonymised him by referring to him as, 'Thingy' in 'No 'Cause We Won'.

Despite Isaac's accusation, Matty maintains, 'No I said winner' (stave 7), showing his rights-based stance of morality. Frankie's response appears to take Matty's proposal very personally, saying 'NO, what're you **trying** mate' (stave 7). Frankie's 'NO' is uttered with increased volume, showing not only that he is opposing Matty, but he is invested in this stance and disalignment. Providing more evidence that he has adopted a morality of responsibility, this shows his effort to propositionally align with Aiden, thus confirming Aiden's leadership.

Frankie's immediate production with use of polarity marker to initiate the turn to highlight his opposition positions him as childly (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 178; Harness-Goodwin and Goodwin 1987: 206-207), however, his use of 'mate', positions him much more adultly (Rendle-Short 2009, 2010, see also Kiesling's (2004; 2005) discussions of 'dude'). Although the term 'mate' is a

synonym for 'friend', Johanna Rendle-Short (2010: 1210) notes its negative use, particularly in turn-closing positions in antagonistic contexts, claiming that in disagreements, 'mate' 'emphasises the fact that at this particular point in time they are not mates because they are not behaving like mates'. When opposing others, Harness-Goodwin and Goodwin (1987: 21) find their speakers also often negatively characterise the producer of talk, usually declaring them 'crazy' (e.g., 'You is crazy boy.'). This calls into question the content of the turn alongside the character of the person producing the talk. Frankie's use of 'mate' is not the same as saying Matty is 'crazy', but it indexes a similar stance; Matty is characterised as someone who is crafty or sneaky and Frankie is thus positioning himself as the opposite.

In addition, Frankie also appears to be indexing toughness. Rendle-Short (2010: 1202) notes, though its meaning is undergoing change, 'mate' has been traditionally associated with working-class masculinity, a construction associated with toughness, as also shown by Lawson's study of schoolboys' gender constructions (2013, 2015, see 2.2.3). Frankie appears to be positioning tough masculinity as 'cool' and socially positive in pursuit of challenging Matty and getting his own way. Like Martie in Maybin's (2009) study of middle school pupils, Frankie is able to switch rapidly between discourses of adulthood and childhood, utilising a positioning in both to get what he wants.

Frankie is supported by Aiden, who uses a declarative as a directive, '**Loser** stays on' (stave 7–8). Aiden now visibly propositionally aligns with Frankie in pursuit of what they see as fair based on a morality of responsibility. In-keeping with his style, Isaac aligns with Frankie and Aiden claiming, 'No, you said loser' (stave 8–9), although, as noted, it may be because this alignment serves his own interests. This alignment makes their opinion more difficult to question. When Matty claims, 'No I said I'd **want** to play Aiden and…' (stave 8), Aiden replies, 'Oh shut up' (stave 9). This, as well

as his use of a declarative, is at odds with his style, marking a clear departure from his 'easy-going'

construction, suggesting the dispute is frustrating him. It also indexes toughness, further

demonstrating his propositional alignment with Frankie through adopting a similar stance.

Perhaps also frustrated, in-line with his style, Matty uses declarative, 'It's winner stays on. It's

winner stays on', with imperative, 'and give it to Aiden' (stave 10–11). This is bold of Matty, as it

presents his opinion as an immovable truth, and his bald imperative positions himself as the

decision-maker whose demands will be followed without question.

These bold strategies are not successful, however, as Aiden and Frankie again display their

alignment and contest, 'No, no, you did say loser' (Aiden) and 'He **did** say loser' (Frankie; both

stave 11), while Adam maintains his childly positioning, 'Can I **please** play as my **use**r – I haven't

been on for **ages**' (stave 11–13). Having just won and thus deliberately taking the turn away from

themselves, Aiden and Frankie appear to be showing clearly their selflessness and preference for a

morality of responsibility. While typical of Aiden's established 'nice guy' stance, Frankie again

deviates from his earlier style, considering others' wants above his own. This shows Aiden's

influence and leadership; in order to align with Aiden, Frankie is willing to suspend his 'self-

important' construction clear in earlier extracts and offer another team the chance to play at

personal cost.

Matty becomes more frustrated, and says, 'You flipping idiot. Yeah we did – winner. Shut up'

(stave 14–15). Matty both opposes the proposal and characterises the hearer (which is

presumably Aiden as the originator of the responsibility-based stance of morality) with an overtly-

insulting pejorative person descriptor, 'idiot'. This is more severe than Frankie's 'mate' (stave 7,

10). Like Frankie and Aiden (stave 7, 9, 10), Matty now also appears to be investing in toughness

with his use of 'flipping' and 'idiot', although he shows he is not willing to fully commit to this

construction as he selects a euphemism instead of an actual expletive. Matty's tough construction is something from which amicable Isaac wishes to distance himself, saying, 'What the Hell?' (stave 15) to belittle Matty's stance, positioning it as something unexpected and unnecessary. It is also likely that he particularly objects to Matty's characterisation of Aiden as an 'idiot' because he considers Aiden a close friend and doesn't agree with this criticism. Perhaps regretting his display of boldness and hostility towards Aiden, Matty's next turn, 'Can you just let me change my car? I cannot use Gizmo' (stave 17–18) with the use of a question intonations and hedge, 'just', shows him adopting a calmer tone while asking for permission from others, using strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. Perhaps because of his attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity, the group allows Matty to change his car. This may also be related to their efforts to construct themselves as growing-up boys who regard such arguments as immature.

Interestingly, it is Matty's wish that is actioned for the following match: the winners stay on. This reminds me of the boys' jump-rope organisation observed by Harness-Goodwin (2001), where the boy with the highest relative skill, Malcolm (though not Malcolm from Maple Street), had the power to orchestrate participation. This allowed him to use bald imperatives and allocate roles to individuals. Though Aiden has the highest relative skill, he was almost matched by Matty, who, they told me, had more experience of the game in terms of hours played. What is most interesting about Matty's conduct is that he should not really care about whether the winner or loser stays on: he is playing in the next match regardless of his opponents. This again shows his investment in a morality of rights stance, as he cares deeply about his version of fairness being actioned, contributing to his local ethnographic position as a fair-minded boy.

It is the boys' different understandings of fairness which have influenced the opinions they voice in

their attempts at leadership in this extract. There has again been evidence of how their local

ethnographic positions as particular kinds of boy relate to their decision-making, but, in this

extract, the discourse of toughness has now been implied. Even though the boys viewed

themselves as fair and kind people, they have ultimately resorted to the 'masculine dividend'

(Lawson 2015: 63; see Connell 2005[1995]: 79 on the 'patriarchal dividend') of the threat of

violence with which toughness is associated to argue for their ideas. However, toughness has not

necessarily facilitated leadership. In fact, the use of bold strategies for attempting leadership has

been unsuccessful, showing the importance they place on linguistic strategies associated with

indexing normative femininity often supported speakers' local ethnographic positions associated

with 'niceness' or 'kindness'. In the final extract I analyse, however, it appears that the boys,

especially Frankie and Matty, have taken the issue of rule-making and leadership very personally.

Baxter observed this in the girls' group in her (2006a) study of secondary school speaking and

listening assessments, but not the boys' group, suggesting that taking leadership attempts

'personally' is, in fact, not gender-specific. Her girls' propensity to take leadership attempts as

personal caused them to 'seethe' (ibid: 170), and it is clear in the next extract that some of these

boys are displaying similar behaviours. The girls in Chapter 6 do not seem to respond in the same

way, frequently able to move on with relative ease after leadership attempts indexing boldness.

Occurring around 20 minutes after 'Are We Playing Again?' when some more matches have been

played, Frankie continues the dispute, which, becoming so heated, causes Aiden to shout, and

Adam's mum to intervene:

So Annoying
```
1
Frankie:
Adam:
Aiden:            I'm blaming my camera for our match{SMILING} (2)
Isaac:      got one
Matty:
```

```
2
Frankie:   you guys are (.) all [so annoying except for Aiden (.)
Adam:
Aiden:                                    [Isaac join
Isaac:
Matty:


3
Frankie:   and Is[aac
Adam:
Aiden:         [you're on Blue you can't do that (.) join Orange
Isaac:
Matty:


4
Frankie:                                         you are so annoying
Adam:      [what about me how am I being annoying
Aiden:     [Isaac
Isaac:
Matty:


5
Frankie:
Adam:      how                                       I'm sorry but
Aiden:            SHUT UP {VERY LOUD; STACATTO} (1)
Isaac:
Matty:          how/


6
Frankie:                              [cause you just a:[re
Adam:      how am I being annoying [(.) just tell me
Aiden:
Isaac:                                            [am I being
Matty:


7
Frankie:                      [no
Adam:                         [you're just saying tha:t (.) you're
Aiden:
Isaac:     annoying Frankie/
Matty:


8
Frankie:                      [no you're being so annoying
Adam:      just saying that [cause you feel like it    how (.)
Aiden:
Isaac:
Matty:


9
Frankie:   [you are                        %ok I'll just%
Adam:      [what am I doing that's annoying              just tell
Aiden:
Isaac:
Matty:
```

```
10
Frankie:
Aiden:
Adam:        me what [I'm doing that's being      [annoying
Isaac:               [wait (.) I'm Orange right/
Matty:                                            [isn't it just cause

11
Frankie:                    no:ə
Adam:                       no it's because [(.) it's because I'm
Aiden:
Isaac:
Matty:      we beat you{SMILING}            ["%I don't know%" {EYE-

12
Frankie:                               =you are=
Adam:       not being annoying am I\=      =you just want to call
Aiden:
Isaac:
Matty:      ROLLING}

13
Adam:       me annoying


        PARENT INTERVENTION — 6 MINUTES

14
Frankie:    you just keep changing the rules just cause you want to

15
Frankie:    stay on
```

Note: Dashed underlined text *shows when the speakers are responding to on-screen game action*

Unprompted, Frankie says, 'You guys are all so annoying, except for Aiden and Isaac' (stave 1–3).

This bears similarities to Malcolm's (Harness-Goodwin 1990) proclivity for uninvitedly sharing

personal opinions and negative assessments of others about which he feels they should care. This

sees Frankie returning to engaging in practices which contribute to his local ethnographic position

as a self-important boy. Aiden appears unwilling to support Frankie in this, and instead focuses on

Isaac's gameplay, telling him when it's time to begin, 'Isaac, join' (stave 2), and, 'You're on Blue,

you can't do that – join **Orange**, Isaac' (stave 3). This contributes to Aiden's local ethnographic

position as an 'easy-going, 'nice guy' boy', and allows him, like in many of his previous interactions,

to resist unnecessary involvement and keep the peace.

Someone who is attending to Frankie, however, is Adam, who has just been identified as 'annoying' through implication. He confronts Frankie, saying, 'What about me, how am I being annoying?' (stave 4). Adam appears to be departing from his prior childly positionings in this moment as he does not use baby voice and appears to refuse to be insulted. Frankie now retorts, 'You are **so** annoying' (stave 4). Adam is now no longer annoying, but, with the addition of intensifier, 'so', apparently more annoying than Frankie previously stated. Adam and Matty now both request evidence, each asking, 'How?' (stave 5). Although they may contest Frankie's assessment of them, Matty and Adam's choice to respond to him in this way indicates they care about his opinion, positioning him highly in the local social order.

Clearly frustrated by their arguing, Aiden departs from his usual style and shouts, 'SHUT UP' (stave 5), louder than any speaker anywhere in the recording. Unlike many studies of children's arguing (Harness-Goodwin 1982, 1983, 1990; Genishi and de Paolo 1982; Maynard 1985a, 1985b, 1986), Aiden wishes for it to cease rather than contribute to its continuation. This stance is usually one adopted by adults who treat arguing as something to be stopped among children (Harness-Goodwin and Goodwin 1987: 226); he therefore positions himself as growing-up. In-keeping with his 'nice guy' construction, he is maybe also conscious that it is Adam's birthday party, and therefore an event where they should all be having fun in which arguing does not fit. Although the argument is evaluated negatively by Aiden, he again draws on a construction of slight toughness through increased volume and bald imperative in his linguistic strategy. That there is silence for two seconds shows Aiden's leadership as they all action his request. However, it does not last.

After the tense silence, Adam returns to requesting Frankie specifies, '**How** am I being annoying? Just tell me' (stave 6), a question he repeats until the end of the extract. Frankie, however, is

unwilling or unable to provide specifics, responding with, ''Cause you just are' (stave 6). His reference to his own whims confirms he positions himself highly, and this is ratified by Isaac, who asks, 'Am **I** being annoying Frankie?' (stave 6–7). Isaac therefore shows he cares about Frankie's opinion of him, and he is keen to ensure he has secured approval. Frankie responds by confirming, 'No' (stave 7), showing Isaac is not 'annoying'.

Frankie continues to resist offering a reason to Adam and Matty, so Matty supplies one for him, 'Isn't it just 'cause we beat you?' (stave 10–11). Matty speaks this while smiling, a contextualisation cue that he is finding humour in the situation thus positioning Frankie as childish, a positioning he ratifies with his elongated and schwa-final response, 'No^{ə'} (stave 11). Adam, however, remains keen to absolve himself through Frankie's confirmation that he is not annoying, 'You [Frankie] just want to **call** me annoying' (stave 12–13). As he is someone whose opinion Adam cares about very much, it confirms Frankie's popularity through his high positioning in the local social order.

It is at this point that Adam's mum enters the room explicitly stating she is there to calm the argument. Despite any orientations to toughness, this repositions all speakers as childly as they need an adult to defuse their argument since they were unable to do so themselves. Once Adam's mum has left, Frankie provides the reason for Adam and Matty being 'annoying', 'You just keep changing the rules just 'cause you want to stay on' (stave 14–15). Finally, in an act of apparent selflessness, and again confirming Adam's high positioning of Frankie in the local social order, Adam offers his controller to Frankie, saying he can play as his user and he will instead play on his phone. This may also show Adam aligning with Aiden's easy-going, 'nice guy' stance as his peace-making positions him more adultly, as he makes a sacrifice for the sake of calming the environment.

This extract has shown evidence in contrast with Baxter's (2006a: 169, 170) study of the talk of single-sex groups, where she claimed assuming a dominant leadership role is construed at a 'highly personal level for girls' who regarded power-struggles as 'nakedly personal'. Her student observers said this was common for girls, who would 'seethe', whereas boys 'could laugh about it afterwards'. Aiden, Matty and Isaac have shown willingness to move on quickly like Baxter's boys, whereas Frankie and Adam have shown they are reluctant to do so, more like Baxter's girls. This may be because Adam admires Frankie so much that he wants to be evaluated positively by him, and because Frankie sees Adam and Matty as the main proponents of the gameplay structure which went against his and Aiden's wishes. From ethnographic observations, however, any tension between the boys appeared to have dissipated by the following Monday at school.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the talk of Adam, Frankie, Aiden, Isaac and Matty as they engage in managing and playing a video game for Adam's birthday party. I focused on how the boys made decisions regarding the video game they would play, how the teams would or should be selected, and the rules by which players should abide. Throughout, I examined the linguistic strategies the boys utilised when suggesting, enforcing or responding to decisions, and made connections between their styles, stances, locally-accrued statuses and local ethnographic positions. Frankie appears to draw upon his popularity-based status and coolness when he attempts leadership, however, as shown in 'Rocket League is Dead' and 'Teams', his use of bold strategies are not ratified by the others. They occur alongside his construction as a self-important boy, and this appears to cause others to be more resistant to actioning his decisions. His bold forms are therefore less successful, but when he uses strategies associated with indexing normative

femininity or adopts a stance which aligns with Aiden's local ethnographic position as an 'easy-going, 'nice guy' boy', he sees some success in leadership.

Matty and Aiden are able to utilise their higher relative skills-based status in combination with their local ethnographic positions for leadership. Matty's morality of rights-based stance in his focus on fairness works alongside the group's knowledge of his local social practices where he invests in competitive sport to show his commitment to this understanding of fairness. The others appear to appreciate this and therefore sometimes respect his decision-making, but this is usually only if he uses linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. Aiden's leadership is often accepted. He is able to combine higher relative skills-based status with his local ethnographic position as an 'easy-going, 'nice guy' boy', and opts for linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. His local ethnographic position as 'easy-going' and 'nice' also means he frequently resists overtly rejecting someone else's decision, perhaps deciding it is better to maintain his local ethnographic position than engage in a heated debate.

Although Adam has the opportunity to draw on a similar higher relative skills-based status, his leadership attempts are often positioned as slightly self-serving and he positions himself as childly. Use of whims rather than the collective good for justifying decisions is not appreciated by this group, and his ideas are therefore rarely actioned. Isaac's local ethnographic position as an amicable, supportive, positive boy shows that, without skills-based status, decisions are less likely to be actioned. Perhaps because he does not have this status, he rarely makes leadership attempts. Thus, although these statuses, which are often not mentioned overtly (see 7.5 for an exception), stand as proxies for some boys' ideas being actioned, speakers more often see success when locally-accrued status is combined with linguistic strategies paying attention to relational

practices associated with indexing normative femininity and a local ethnographic position associated with niceness.

In this chapter, the boys have engaged in disputes, shown support, and issued instructions as part of their decision-making. A theme which emerged as important is fairness, or, 'morality' (Evaldsson 2004); the boys all appeared to wish for the game to be played fairly, but their understandings of fairness bisected. Matty felt they should orient to a 'morality of rights', prioritising a traditional sporting tournament format whereby the winners of the previous match stay on to play the next opponents, whereas Frankie and Aiden promoted a 'morality of responsibility', giving support to the underdogs. Their differing opinions on this led to some quite personal evaluations. 'So Annoying' in particular shows they are capable of holding grudges if they wish, and they are able to single out individuals, which Harness-Goodwin (2001) reports happening with girls but not boys. As noted, this offers a new perspective on Baxter's (2006a) findings that it is only girls who take leadership personally.

The speakers have also shown their intersectional constructions as they pay attention to gender and age with some connotations of social class. As boys on the verge of adolescence, they have invoked maturity at some points, and childly constructions at others. Most of the speakers have shown how they switch between discourses of adolescence and childhood (Maybin 2006, 2009), as they begin to assume a growing-up identity and leave childhood behind, without yet being able to fully commit to adolescence (Eckert 1996). Social class has been suggested in constructions of toughness where Frankie aligned with a masculinity traditionally associated with working-class men (Lawson 2015), and in empathy, where Aiden invoked the removal of agency seen in middle-class white children's games (Harness-Goodwin 1998, 2001) to justify Isaac's lower standard of play.

An episode of talk like this, where pre-adolescent boys use language to structure and play a video game with their real-life, in-person friends, has not been documented before. It therefore offers further opportunity for understanding leadership in the play-oriented talk of boys, merging how they simultaneously make decisions, achieve their identity constructions and maintain relationships.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I aimed to explore the relationship between children's language, leadership and identity. In line with Holmes et al.'s (2007: 435) definition of leadership as 'a performance […] integrat[ing] the achievement of transactional objectives with more relational aspects of […] interaction', I used data from their spontaneous talk in curriculum- and play-oriented contexts to consider how the speakers achieved a learning or play-based objective while maintaining relationships in self-selected groups. When I analysed my data, the importance of the local was revealed, confirming the value of sociolinguists' inclination to move away from 'grand theories' of leadership in favour of local, linguistic-analytic approaches to highlight and explore its interactive nature (Baxter 2015). As my research questions asked, 'How is leadership done in this form-group?', which, based on my early observations I then refined to, 'What sort of person does leadership in this group of children, why are they successful, and how do they achieve this?', my use of linguistic ethnography has allowed me to provide detailed information about how children who are successful in leadership have constructed their local identities and how these identity constructions are related to leadership attempts. I have viewed each participant as a 'whole' speaker (Hymes 1972), who engages in many local social practices including language-use to adopt stances and develop styles which construct local gender identities that relate to leadership success.

Using a social constructionist approach, where identity is regarded as 'emerging' in interaction (Bucholtz and Hall 2005), I explored the children's talk and its relation to their local ethnographic positions and locally accrued statuses in the two contexts. I found linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity (Holmes and Schnurr 2011[2006]: 317) were used for relational

practices, practices which 'foster relationships' (Holmes 2009: 189) and 'create team' (Fletcher 1999) to enable leadership success. These linguistic strategies also contributed to speakers' local ethnographic positions as they built their styles through more frequent use of particular strategies and repeated stance-taking (Kiesling 2023). Some of these local ethnographic positions were more successful in supporting leadership, such as 'consultative, thoughtful boy' (Marcelo) and 'funny, easy-going girl' (Tilda), which are associated with being friendly or 'nice'. I exemplified how leadership was also facilitated by speakers' locally-accrued, rather than institutionally-awarded, statuses often accrued through their local social practices. These were usually higher relative skills-based status or popularity-based status, and could stand as proxy for their decisions being actioned without being explicitly acknowledged. However, status, linguistic strategies and local ethnographic positions were not enough on their own. Therefore, the original contribution to knowledge made by this thesis is that leadership was most successful for this group of children when speakers were able to combine three areas:

1. Using linguistic strategies showing attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity;

2. A meaningful locally-accrued status;

3. A local ethnographic position and style associated with friendliness or niceness.

Usually, anything less was not enough to be successful. This is demonstrated in Figure 8.1. My thesis also shows that identity and leadership are interactively and mutually constituted (Baxter 2015), but that detailed local ethnographic knowledge enhances understandings of this. Therefore, while I argue that local identity constructions contribute to success in leadership, I show leadership attempts also provide opportunities for speakers to construct and constitute their identities in my attention to their meaningful local ethnographic positions.
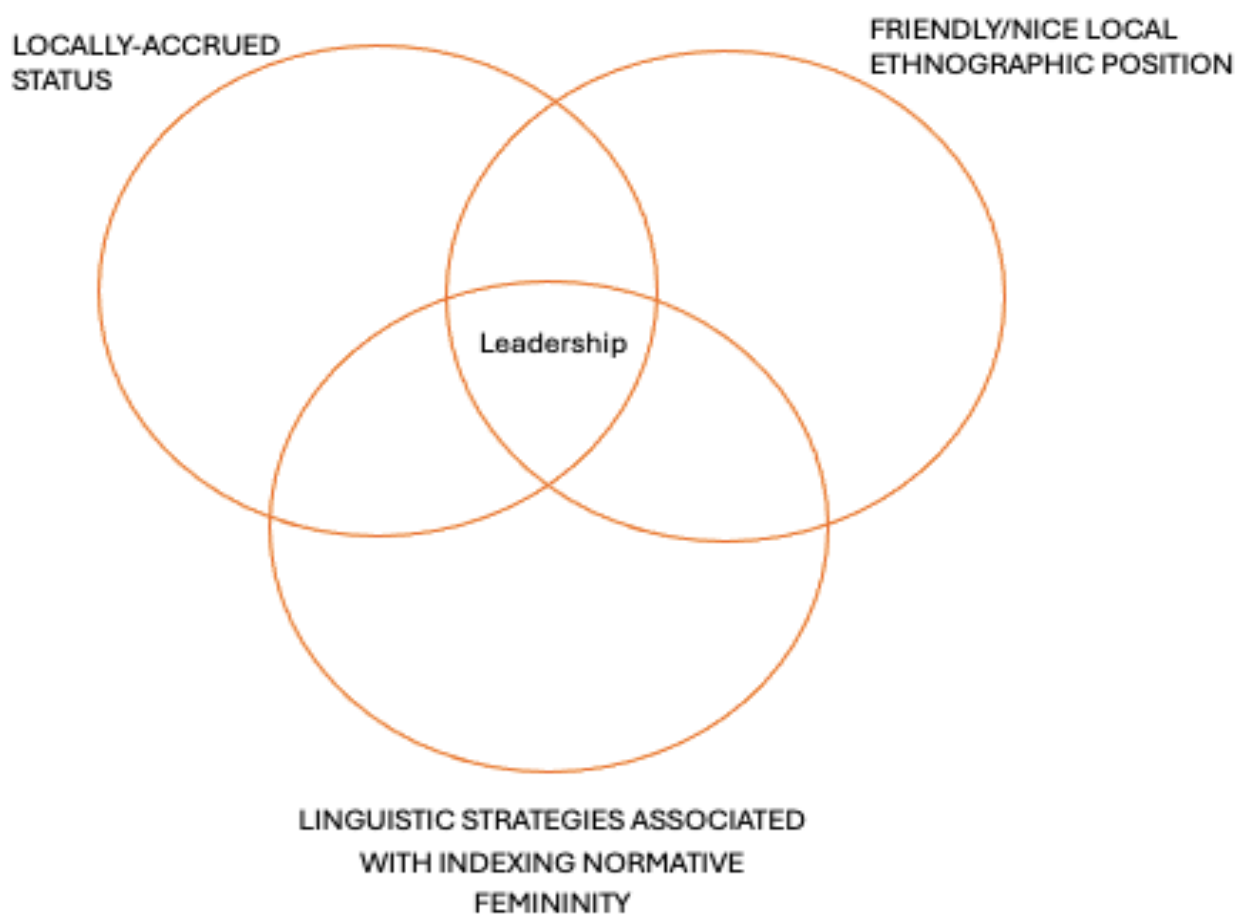
Figure 8.1: A Model for Successful Leadership in Penguin Class

In the next section, I give more detail on my findings before explaining my study's contribution to language, leadership and gender.

8.2 Overview of Findings

In this section, I summarise my findings from my analysis chapters and detail my contributions to the field of language, gender and leadership. I first outline my findings from Part I and Part II about curriculum- and play-oriented talk, exemplifying specifically my findings regarding local identity constructions, status and linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity.

Throughout, I outline how this contributes to the current literature. I then discuss what my research means for the broader context of the field.

8.2.1 Local Ethnographic Identities

My thesis argued that children's local identity constructions facilitated leadership. Contributing to the literature by being able to show the value of detailed ethnographic information in understanding leadership, I made connections between the use of linguistic strategies (see 8.2.3) and individuals' local ethnographic positions when explaining leadership success. As Bucholtz (2009[1999]) shows with her nerd girls, these local ethnographic positions were constructed through their local social practices, and a resource on which they were able to draw was language. Therefore, completing linguistic analysis revealed the ways in which identity 'emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction' (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 585-586) for these children as I analysed their naturally-occurring talk.

I found uncovering speakers' styles through an exploration of linguistic and non-linguistic resources, particularly their repeated stance-taking and preferred linguistic strategies, was most illuminating for revealing their meaningful local identities which facilitated leadership. Because of my linguistic ethnographic approach, I was able to identify decision-making talk episodes as 'rich points' (Jewitt 2008) for observing leadership. However, as Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 588) note in their explanation of the 'emergence principle', identity work in any given interaction may derive from 'earlier interactions'. I therefore also include analyses from many 'earlier interactions' outside of decision-making talk to provide a more comprehensive picture. I made connections with their intersectional constructions of gender and age by considering the indexical connections between their language and these social categories. For example, Tilda's frequent use of humour

and laughter in Chapter 4 and 6 showed they were typical of her style. When I examined her repeated stance-taking, it was clear she frequently adopted an easy-going stance indexed in, for example, her frequent adoption of an interactional role as a 'joker' or 'supporter', her choice of linguistic form for issuing directives (8.2.3), and her willingness to forfeit her dislike of the colour orange for her Group's benefit (4.2.1). Tilda's femininity and age were discursively indexed in her suggestion of topics to discuss, such as 'crushes' and 'boys' (6.4.1), as she positioned herself in a discourse of heterosexual femininity and as a growing-up girl in the discourse of age. When I considered her other local social practices using my ethnographic knowledge, I realised that she was constructing herself not in the 'broad social category' of young girl, but a 'specific identity' as an easy-going, popular, funny, growing-up girl (Bucholtz 2009: 148). Tilda's local ethnographic position was therefore associated with likeability, which she achieved through being friendly and nice to others, for example, making active attempts to include them (6.3.3). The local ethnographic position she had constructed through her social practices therefore supported her in leadership attempts as others were more willing to align with her, detectable through their adopted stances.

I note that some prior studies exploring leadership offer ethnographic information, such as Harness-Goodwin (1990) who uses her knowledge of her children's friendships and relationships to explain why some were permitted or selected to play coveted roles in task-oriented games such as slingshot battles and make-believe games of 'House'. Although she does not consider leadership, Bucholtz's (2009[1999]) study of nerd girls offers detailed ethnographic information related to meaningful local identity constructions. Both studies were inspirations, and, contributing to the literature, I can offer detailed ethnographic information about individual children's local ethnographic identities using observations of their local social practices, interactional roles, stances and statuses to make connections with leadership, offering

explanations for success and failure. By adopting a social constructionist perspective, I was also able to show the contextual fleeting and situational construction of identities. For example, in Part I, I was able to establish an extra resource in identity construction by exploring how their stance towards the school project contributed to their learner identities as pro-school, actively pro-school, or more neutral pupils. I also showed how speakers' local identities could differ between contexts. For example, in Part I, Frankie's constructions contribute to his local ethnographic identity as a 'popular, cool boy', but in Part II, he constructs himself as a 'popular, cool, self-important boy'.

My thesis also contributes to the literature because I have shown leadership attempts and identity construction may be used to mutually constitute one another. The children's local ethnographic identities constructed through their social practices facilitated leadership as the local ethnographic positions associated with 'niceness' or 'friendliness', such as 'easy-going, funny, popular girl', seemed to cause others to (want to) forge an alignment with them. However, I noted that leadership attempts also provided opportunities for speakers to constitute their local ethnographic identities. For example, in Chapter 7, when the boys had to decide which video game to play at Adam's party, Aiden's local ethnographic position at the party as an 'easy-going, nice guy' boy' is constituted in the attention he pays to putting others at ease when suggesting a game evidenced in his style, as he prefers to use linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity such as questioning intonation which present his idea as optional rather than compulsory. Because of this attention to others' wishes, it constructs him as considerate and 'nice' or 'friendly'. Thus, others were willing, and often keen, to align with him and agree to his decisions. His efforts to include others therefore counted as practices for sociability, which constituted his local ethnographic position as an 'easy-going, nice guy boy'.

Constructing a 'nice' or 'friendly' local ethnographic position was also powerful for leadership when attempts were at odds with an individual's usual, and accepted, 'nice' style. Constructing such an ethnographic position allowed speakers to be bold or assertive without sanction. For example, Aiden occasionally showed directness in Chapter 7. However, because of his efforts to construct his local ethnographic position as an 'easy-going, 'nice guy' boy' in his style and social practices, he was able to escape penalty, and his decisions or ideas were often supported and actioned. In contrast, Amy frequently used bold strategies to make decisions, often favouring language Harness-Goodwin (1990) observes in boys' task-talk such as bald imperatives, overt instruction and her whims as justification (see 4.2.2). Although associated with indexing normative masculinity, her other local social practices, such as her fashion choices and hobbies, constructed her as normatively feminine. Her linguistic choices in leadership contributed to her local ethnographic position as a 'domineeringly assertive, serious girl'. Even though her local ethnographic position was not one associated with 'friendliness' or 'niceness', and her strategies were not particularly appreciated by her Group, she assumed a leadership position. Although she was arguably unsuccessful in achieving relational practices, her ideas were the ones followed and her decisions were actioned. This led me to consider other resources children might use to enable their leadership. After engaging with McRae (2009), I felt statuses children had accrued stood as proxy for their ideas being actioned. I offer my conclusions about status in the next section.

8.2.2 Status

I found that the children's locally-accrued, rather than institutionally-awarded, statuses were used as resources for doing leadership without being explicitly invoked. These statuses were formed through children's local social practices. This contributes to the literature on leadership because Harness-Goodwin's (1990) boys use the more essentialist resources of physicality and older age to accrue status to enable leadership, which my children do not, and her girls are concerned with

egalitarianism and use only friendship-based status in games of 'House'. Although McRae (2009) also finds statuses stand as proxy for decisions being actioned, her speakers had been bestowed senior statuses through managerial job titles. My speakers also had opportunities to draw on similar institutionally-granted statuses, such as 'Class Captain', but they were not meaningful or respected in the same way as they are for McRae's managers. Statuses which were locally-accrued in the peer-group held the most power.

The use of locally-accrued status was hinted at in Baxter's (2006a) study of secondary school pupils' curriculum-oriented talk ranking items for shipwreck survival, where those generally regarded as popular appeared to be able to use such a status to contribute to their warrant to assume leadership positions. However, the leaders' out-of-class popularity was not explored in any detail. Swain's (2004) boys are also concerned with popularity, and more ethnographic detail is provided about how their locally-acquired statuses are accrued with attention to their creativity against the limitations placed on them by their respective schools. Swain shows how status, accrued through resources such as trainer brands and footballing ability, position them as more powerful in a peer-group hierarchy. However, my thesis contributes to the literature by exploring how statuses other than, but including, popularity, were acquired. Harness-Goodwin's (2001) study of jump-rope touches on this. She found that children who were more highly skilled at jump-rope were afforded the rights to make decisions about play based on their higher relative skills-based status. Like her study, my thesis also identified and examined statuses beyond just 'popularity', and, when popularity was the status being used, it also explored how this was acquired.

My thesis showed that, in Penguin Class, locally-accrued statuses could be thought of as being resources like language and other social practices. These resources were not addressed or invoked

but stood as proxy for others agreeing to suggestions or trusting certain speakers' decisions. I showed that these statuses were built through local social practices, for example, Bella's higher relative skills-based status in art was accrued through her out-of-school hobbies and her high academic achievement levels in the subject. I showed that, because of Penguin Class's shared history, they knew of each other's local statuses without needing to invoke them overtly; for example, no-one said, or needed to say, 'We should do what Bella says because she's the best artist in our form-group'. Instead, because her higher relative skill was known, it stood as proxy for her ideas to be trusted and followed. This was evident because her decisions were actioned whereas her teammate, Lilah's, attempts were less frequently successful, even if she suggested the same idea as Bella. In the transcript showing a disagreement about immediate next steps, 'Wait For It to Dry', it is Bella's ideas which 'win' despite the girls' similar strategies.

As well as higher relative skill, the statuses I observed which supported particular individuals' leadership in their curriculum-oriented talk were quality-control, friendship and likeability-based popularity. I showed that in each Group, leaders used different statuses, with the exception of Groups 1 and 4, where I found both Bella and Marcelo's higher relative skills-based status in art stood as proxy for their decision-making. In my analyses of play-oriented talk, I observed likeability-based popularity status in both contexts and higher relative skills-based status in the boys' game, but this was because of their decision to play a video game which required dexterity achieved through experience in using physical equipment such as the console and controllers. Identifying these statuses was made possible through my ethnographic approach, as I observed their local social practices and interactions, getting to know them as 'whole' individuals. My methodology also allowed me to discuss my interpretations with the participants who were able to confirm whether they did or did not hold such statuses.

An interesting case was Amy's conduct in both the curriculum and the game talk. Comparable with Harness-Goodwin's study (2001) which showed girls and boys using linguistic forms associated with indexing boldness when issuing directives, such as bald imperatives, 'Here – get it!', and aggravated forms based on their whims, 'OK, go away now', Amy also favoured similar strategies. My thesis therefore showed that, like Harness-Goodwin notes, it is not exclusively boys who show boldness in their choice of linguistic strategy for decision-making (both the above examples were uttered by girls in her study of jump-rope). However, while Harness-Goodwin argues it was because of some jump-ropers' locally-accrued higher relative skills-based status that permitted them to show boldness, Amy did not have access to the highest relative-skills based status in her Group, as she was marginally outperformed in art by Lan. Instead, she assumed the role of a quality-controller, and this was tolerated, if not necessarily appreciated, by her teammates. Amy appeared to have accrued this status through her form-group reputation, as she was described by other children as someone who is 'good at everything' and 'will make sure the work gets done'. Lan and Seyda's ratification may therefore have been based on this.

Whereas for Harness-Goodwin (2001), higher relative skill allowed those speakers to issue bold directives, for my children, the status of likeability-based popularity served speakers in a similar way, which I detailed in 8.2.1. Although, as I explain in the next section, my children were most successful in leadership when they used linguistic strategies which paid attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity, some children occasionally used bold forms. When they did, they were often tolerated because of their likeability-based popular statuses. Whereas popularity can be the result of influence, where the most popular are not necessarily the most liked (Francis 2010: 480), my children who held statuses of popularity had achieved this through efforts they had actively made in inclusion, friendliness and being nice to others. My thesis showed evidence of this in their talk, such as when Tilda makes efforts to include

Amy through self-teasing humour and empathy (see 8.2.1). In the next section, I reflect on my findings about the children's preferred linguistic strategies.

8.2.3 Linguistic Strategies Associated with Indexing Normative Femininity

In line with Holmes (2007: 435), this thesis defined leadership as 'a performance […] integrat[ing] the achievement of transactional objectives with more relational aspects of […] interaction'. It showed leadership could be evidenced when a speaker's decisions were actioned alongside their efforts to maintain positive social relationships. Language was a key resource speakers drew upon to achieve these interrelated transactional and relational objectives (Baxter 2015).

My thesis contributes to the literature because, unlike Harness-Goodwin's (2001) children who had acquired higher relative skills-based status in jump-rope, most of my speakers did not use their statuses to evade the use of practices associated with indexing normative femininity (see 8.2.2 for my discussion of an exception). Instead, as demonstrated by Figure 8.1, locally-accrued statuses were used alongside attention to linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. This included using questioning intonation, e.g., 'What about… Lily?', inclusive pronouns, e.g., 'we', and modals, e.g., 'could'. These are efforts to mitigate any forcefulness which might be implied in the act of making a decision and issuing directives to action them.

Like Ervin-Tripp (1976), I noted there is not a direct one-to-one mapping of linguistic form to meaning, but that 'social conditions' influence understanding when they are used. The strategies associated with indexing normative femininity noted above counted as 'relational' strategies for my children, strategies which 'foster relationships' (Holmes 2009: 189) and create 'team' (Fletcher 1999). Holmes and Marra (2004) note the influence of 'social conditions' but consider the influence of a context's local culture in determining what 'counts' as relational practice. In their

'masculine' CofPs, strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity, such as sparky, aggressive humour, are used to build relationships, but my children had co-constructed a 'feminine' CofP, where strategies associated with indexing normative femininity counted as relational practice.

Intriguingly, this was regardless of the speaker's gender construction. For example, in Group 4 (Marcelo, Leon and Adam; Part I), even though he and his Group knew of his higher relative skill, Marcelo did not take the power afforded by this status for granted and used strategies paying attention to relational practices associated with indexing normative femininity to suggest ideas and decisions. Unlike the 'masculine' CofP Holmes and Schnurr observe, Penguin Class did not exclude or make fun of him for this. Though Marcelo's conduct in Penguin Class bears some similarity with observations of adult men's leadership in 'feminine' CofPs (Holmes and Schnurr (2011[2006]), it contributes to the literature by showing that children also value, and can use, such strategies. This was the case across the play- and curriculum-based contexts. However, such strategies were not utilised by all speakers. For example, Amy favoured bold strategies commonly associated with indexing normative masculinity (see 8.2.2), as did Sam (Group 5). Although it is tempting to therefore label Amy 'bossy', I refrain from doing so because of the negative gender stereotypes surrounding such terms. Her language shows the importance of viewing gender as socially constructed and situational. Although she used many strategies observed in boys' talk and associated with indexing normative masculinity, I was able to consider her local social practices to understand she was constructing herself as a domineeringly assertive girl rather than attempting to be a boy. I was reluctant to call her 'bossy' as I have shown her strategies were similar to Sam's, but he would most likely not be regarded 'bossy' in global discourses of masculinity.

As shown in Figure 8.1 and explained by this section, my thesis has contributed to the field by

showing the children in Penguin Class are able to make decisions, and thus show leadership, through a combination of constructing a local ethnographic position associated with 'niceness', locally-accrued status, and the use of strategies associated with indexing normative femininity. In the next section, I reflect on how my thesis addresses some of the key concerns in language, leadership and gender.

8.3 Contribution to Language, Leadership and Gender Studies

As I noted in 8.1, the study of leadership is departing from the 'grand theories' as leadership becomes viewed as something people 'do', not something people simply are. My ethnographic-informed study has responded to the call outlined by Baxter (2015) for more research that recognises the value of social constructionist approaches to leadership. It has answered a key question in language and leadership: how individuals employ particular linguistic resources to achieve leadership goals effectively at a local level, and how this is related to gender. Using my ethnographic and linguistic data from children's spontaneous talk deepens current understanding of language, leadership and gender, showing that language is indeed a key resource for doing leadership which may also be used to construct and constitute local identities. Contrasting with traditional ideas about leadership which have been strongly associated with masculinity as 'assertive, adversarial, goal-oriented and competitive' (ibid: 430), my thesis shows normatively 'feminine' practices are of high value.

The traditional view about associations with normative masculinity was questioned as thinking moved towards how leadership combines 'transactional' behaviours focusing on the task to be completed or the problem to be solved (Dwyer 1993: 572) and 'change-oriented' practices based on the development of the individual (Bass 2006). To this, feminist scholars added 'relational' practices concentrating on fostering relationships (Holmes 2009: 189) and doing 'team' (Fletcher

1999). These practices are indexed in language, and they have been associated with gender in indexing normative masculinity (transactional) and normative femininity (relational, though see Holmes and Marra 2004).

When I began this study, I had observed four girls I felt frequently showed leadership in groupwork: Tilda, Lilah, Fliss and Grace. When I undertook this project, I expected to find evidence of their adoption of and willingness to use linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative masculinity as they unashamedly told others what to do without experiencing opposition. However, as I listened more closely to the talk from all participants, I noticed leadership was not limited only to these four girls, and speakers of all genders appeared to favour linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity when leading.

This reminded me of the debate summarised by Cameron and Shaw (2015) about 'Venusian' leaders. They note that 'Venusian' virtues, of cooperation, empathy and openness, so called because these are behaviours traditionally associated with indexing normative femininity, are beginning to be valued more highly in leadership. However, they note those who benefit from their use are often not 'prototypical Venusians', but cisgender men who are given credit for what is viewed as going above and beyond compared to women for whom it is viewed 'natural' (one only needs to think of individuals such as 2016–2024 men's England football manager, Gareth Southgate, to appreciate this). This concern had also been expressed in education contexts by Graddol and Swann (1995), who note that, in English speaking and listening assessments, girls were not graded as highly as boys for showing the same attention to collaboration. I therefore questioned whether boys in my research were being given undue credit for their attention to relational practices utilising linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity; perhaps they were regarded more often as 'good leaders' by the participants because they paid

attention to relational strategies associated with indexing normative femininity while benefiting from the belief that authority is associated with masculinity and 'normatively male' (Cameron and Shaw 2015: 16). However, using ethnographic interviews to ask the children's opinions, they identified both boys and girls as individuals they regarded 'good' leaders, and, crucially, it appeared to be those who favoured strategies associated with indexing normative femininity in their language and many of their local social practices. My research therefore showed that strategies associated with indexing normative femininity are appreciated and valued by all regardless of a speaker's gender, and girls are able to lead using such linguistic strategies as much as boys.

The fact remains, however, that in the world of business, women continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions. In their reflections on women's progression into leadership in the UK, Susan Vinnicombe and Sharon Mavin (2022: 250) note that, while women are increasingly being appointed to leadership teams – the most recent data, shared in the 2022 FTSE report, showed 35% of FTSE 250 board directors were women – only 12% have women who Chair these boards. Although Baxter (2015: 429) suggests women might face 'linguistic barriers' which hold them back from 'the top', my research evidences that it does not have to be like this. I have shown it is dependent on the local culture, and Penguin Class have co-constructed a local culture where strategies indexing normative femininity are preferred for relational practices. My research therefore directly challenges Fletcher's (1999) view that women's relational practices are necessary but invisible, showing they are necessary and very much appreciated.

A particularly interesting example of the influence of this local co-constructed culture is the boys' game (Chapter 7), where they show a preference for strategies associated with indexing normative femininity for leadership despite being a single-sex group of boys and at Adam's home,

not at school. Although they used some bold strategies, these were usually unsuccessful for leadership as these decisions or suggestions were often ignored or challenged. This shows the power of the CofP, and, I showed in my analysis, might also be linked with their age. I therefore explored the children's intersectional identities, particularly the intersection of gender and age, and made some links with social class. Linguistic strategies associated with indexing normative femininity are often mitigating, and usually direct or bold strategies are used by young children in early- or mid-childhood, and sometimes pre-adolescence. As Eckert (1996) notes, a key concern of pre-adolescent children is to construct themselves as growing-up children by, likes Coates's (2013[1999]) girls, starting to talk more like adults. This is in ways such as less frenetic topic change and turn-taking becoming more orderly. Directness is also often used by children from working-class backgrounds regardless of age, therefore, its absence suggests they might be constructing themselves as middle-class children. Interestingly, however, although avoiding conflict is also regarded a means of talking like grown-ups, both of the games I analysed contain disputes or conflict, the boys' so serious that it required parent intervention. This indicates that, while they are growing up, the children in Penguin Class, like Maybin's (2009) children who are a similar age, switch between positionings as adolescents and children as they are not yet able to fully commit to grown-up identities.

As well as exploring their normatively 'feminine' culture, my thesis also contributes to understandings of language and gender in my exploration of how children's gender constructions are related to their leadership. I have been able to detail their local ethnographic constructions as 'particular *kinds*' of girls and boys (Cameron 2009: 4, emphasis in original) by observing their local social practices. I have therefore been able to offer evidence for gender as socially constructed. Whereas Davies (2011[2003]) finds no difference between her girls' groups' 'collaborative' approach to a task, and finds her boys resort to sexist and homophobic practices when

deliberately disengaging in groupwork, my study has shown the situational variation between different groups' task-management and leadership, and provided reasons for those differences which challenge essentialist notions that gender pre-determines how individuals speak. Rather, it found groups' task-management and talk were not related to 'essentialist' notions of gender where all girls were 'collaborative' and all boys were 'competitive'. If these behaviours were observed, it has offered reasons why as well as reflecting on their relation to leadership success. For example, whereas Sam's 'tough' construction (see 5.4.2) may have succeeded for him if he were working with the boys in Davies's study, in this CofP, such constructions did not support success. This highlights the benefit of a linguistic ethnographic approach, which I reflect upon in the next section.

8.4 Methodological Reflections

This thesis used linguistic ethnography as its methodology. It explored the relationship between language and local culture, seeking to 'capture and understand' meanings for participants in this setting (Rampton et al. 2014: 2). The supplementary and additional ethnographic information I gained through observations, fieldnotes and interviews to present the children as 'whole' speaking subjects (Hymes 1972) greatly supported my analysis. It allowed me to make connections and offer additional knowledge to build understanding of their language and context to provide a holistic picture, as, like Hymes, I felt the children's language and linguistic behaviour could not be understood or appreciated without considering their culture, relationships and practices. I could therefore offer interesting insights which might have been missed had the added information not been considered, such as the children's relationships with each other, their skills, and their interests. Particularly illuminating was the ability to understand the children's local ethnographic positions, and how these identity constructions related to their leadership. Without this concept, much of my analysis would have reached different, and arguably less valuable, conclusions. I was

drawn to these areas, and especially gender, with the children's help who shared their 'valuable insights' about 'important matters' (Pinter 2023: 3).

Because I occupied the positions of teacher and researcher simultaneously, I reflected on my relationships with the participants daily. I accepted that, while being a teacher enabled me to 'adopt a functional role' in the culture under study (Saville-Troike 1989: 109), I was not able truly to be one of them. This came from both the adult/child and the teacher/pupil imbalance of power. However, I was able to build and sustain positive relationships with them within this imbalance. That they frequently returned to the school 'to say hi' for a few minutes when walking home from secondary school confirmed I had managed to achieve positive relationships, especially because this happened even when they were not collecting siblings who were still in attendance at the school.

However, it is undeniable that I sometimes found the dual role of teacher and researcher challenging to balance. Eventually, I became accustomed to wearing two 'hats' as I separated my role as their teacher from my role as a researcher. In addition, I always returned to my rule of 'do what is best for the child', a mantra I learned from a diplomatic Head of Year, and one I still employ for decision-making in my teaching practice. Ethical considerations were therefore always at the forefront of my mind when completing this research, especially because the participants were children. To give them ownership and afford them some power, I approached the project as a 'collaboration'. This meant, like Pinter (2014) recommends, they took an active role, collecting data and assisting me with its interpretation. As I noted in the Methodology chapter, this meant children self-recorded when and where they wished, and they were never subjected to even being asked to record themselves, which, even if they had said yes, would not have constituted true consent. Because of the positive relationships we had built, when it came to the interviews, they

were willing to be open and honest with me. Although the subjects discussed were not especially controversial, I was able to gain valuable insight into their relationships with and opinions of each other because of their willing honesty.

In the writing-up, I also had to decide what to include as part of my ethnographic information when analysing their talk. Before deciding whether to include information, I reconsidered my two 'hats' and reflected upon whether I had become aware of knowledge as the teacher or as the researcher. Anything I learned solely as the teacher I have not included, such as the details of the emotional issues experienced by a couple of the boys for which they requested my support. When I have shared details of their academic achievement, the information I have provided would, I believe, have been obvious to any researcher.

I acknowledge that my 'children-first' policy may mean some data have been overlooked, but I did not wish to prioritise the project over their wellbeing or our relationships. This is especially because relationships are so important in teaching, and I did not want the children to feel betrayed by my inclusion of information they had given to me as the teacher, which could cloud their happy memories of their final year in primary school. I also acknowledge that when I began interpreting the data, I was sometimes possibly overly positive, unable, perhaps stemming from an unwillingness, to evaluate anything about them negatively. As my project progressed, I found that, like Snell (2015: 230), being able to use the research tools of linguistic ethnography supported me as I subjected my data to 'rigorous and accountable' analysis. My fieldnotes and observations allowed me to 'conjure up the experiences again' (Copland and Creese 2015: 43), which, when consulted alongside the children's self-recorded audio and their interviews, were valuable in helping me to balance my perception with the reality of what was recorded in the field. If I felt I was in danger of being too positive or too negative and therefore presenting a consciously

incomplete picture, I returned to the data collected to focus on what the children really did or said, and what my genuine in-the-moment observations and thoughts were.

Despite the tensions which presented as I managed the dual role, I regard LE as the best and most appropriate methodology for completing this project because it allowed me to see the children as 'whole' speaking subjects (Hymes 1972) and work collaboratively with them. It also offered the children some control in the research, where, as promoted by Pinter (2014, 2023), they took on researcher roles. Snell et al. (2015: 12) propose that LE often aspires for social change or social impact, and I feel this collaborative project has been both with them, and for their (and all pupils') benefit. Firstly, it has caused me to reflect on my own teaching practice. When teaching lessons where learners are required to work in small groups, self-selected or otherwise, I dedicate time to co-generating success criteria for how they might pay attention to relational practices to manage their friendships and relationships while working towards the achievement of a curriculum objective. An example is shared in Image 8.1; the suggestions written in purple were made by the learners for strategies they felt would work rather than prescriptive formulas enforced by me. Secondly, it attuned me to the risk of gender bias in speaking and listening assessments. I now advocate for children in those assessments to ensure all are assessed fairly, conscious to resolve gender bias as far as possible. On a wider level, it would be positive for education departments and schools beyond ones in which I am employed to adopt a similar approach.

8.4.1 Children in Research

Throughout this thesis, I have presented children as 'whole' speaking subjects (Hymes 1972). This means I have not viewed them as passive, unfinished or incomplete, but as agentive speaking subjects 'actively engaged' in their identity constructions as people in their own right (Harness-Goodwin 1990: 283). This thesis has shown that these children have used talk and other social
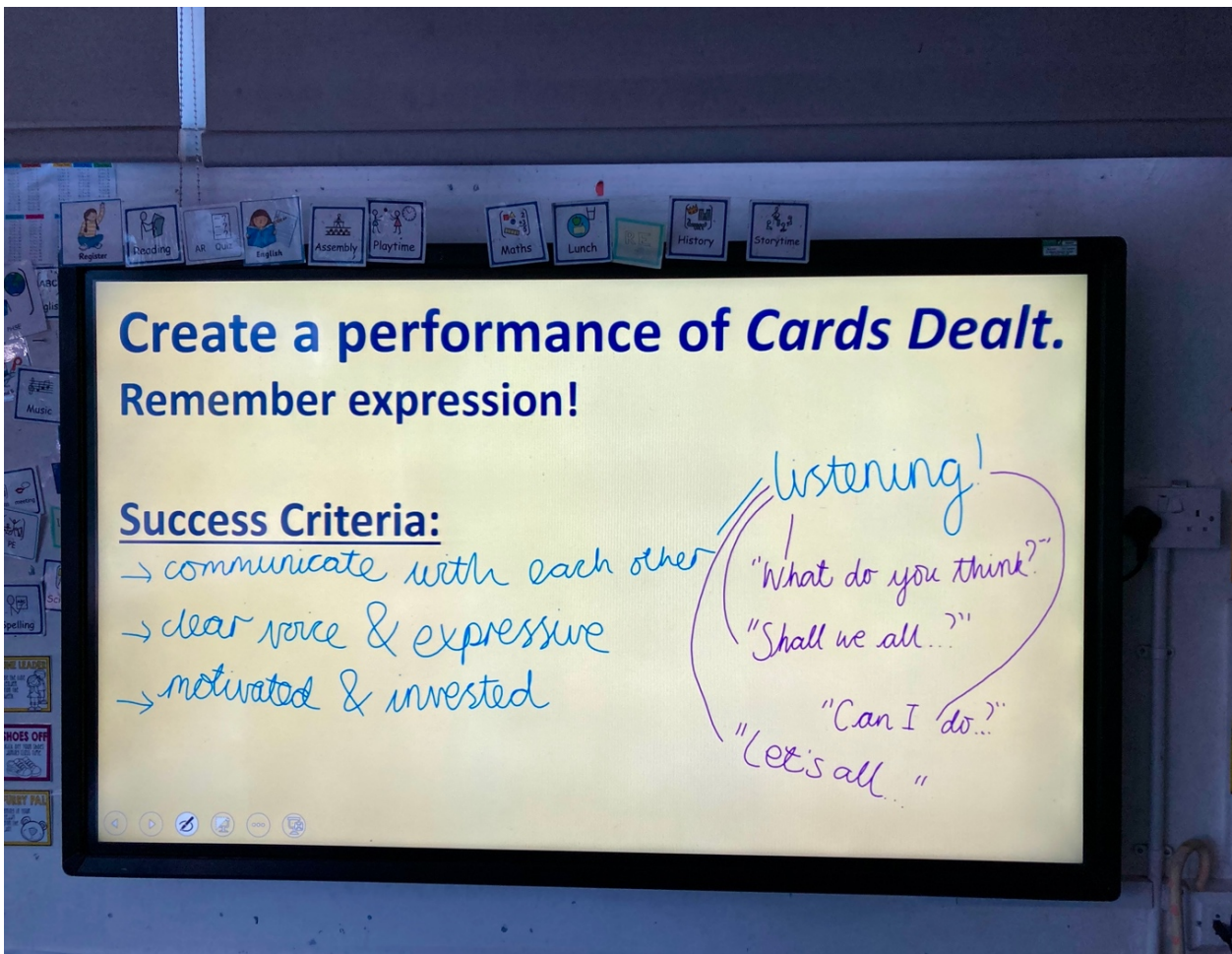
Image 8.1: Co-generated success criteria for a speaking and listening lesson

practices not to rehearse life as their future adult selves, but to construct meaningful identities, as children.

As Pinter (2014: 172) notes in her discussion of children's participant roles in sociolinguistic research, ethnographies examining children's talk and social practices have made strides in representing children's 'unique perspectives'. However, children may be viewed only as 'subjects', where adult researchers make decisions about research objectives, evidence, timings, participation and data collection, and often include the use of adult-focused tools. As she outlines in her exploration of how researchers might engage children in research, this may stem from adults' routine underestimation of children (Pinter 2023: 2). However, as both a teacher and a researcher, I do not allow myself to underestimate children, and valued highly their contributions

to the research. Teaching them how to use the voice recorders as well as giving them complete freedom about when and where they recorded themselves and accepting any erasing of recordings (sections of, or whole, episodes), gave them more power to determine what was important to contribute to the research. In addition, they contributed to the writing of the interview questions (see Appendix 3), and helped me find the focus of gender when I began to explore leadership by confirming its importance to them. This thesis has therefore allowed the children's 'valuable insights' about 'important matters' to be shared (Pinter 2023: 3). If working with children in a similar research project again, I would look to offer them further ownership. As Lucy Henning (2023) shows in her exploration of young children's (aged 4–5) participation in a primary school-based literacies-focused ethnography, this may involve the children providing drawings, photographs of their environment, written accounts and video recordings alongside voice recordings, interviews and observations. It could also involve enabling children to give even more input about the research question and how we could represent findings, ensuring they are relevant to and for the children's needs, priorities, wellbeing and challenges, especially as no adult is more of an 'expert' in being a child than children themselves (Pinter 2023: 10).

This thesis has demonstrated that children are actively engaged in their socialisation, and worthy of study. It shows that making time to listen to children's perspectives can aid researchers' understandings, and they are also able to make many, and varied, valuable contributions.

8.5 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study

I began my PhD shortly after Baxter's (2015) study, where she emphasised that linguistic interactions are a principal means by which leadership is enacted and achieved, and her social constructionist approach shows how speakers utilise linguistic resources to do leadership but not in conventionally gendered ways. Baxter highlighted the significance of language and gender in

leadership. As this thesis has shown, I have developed her ideas to include how language is used to construct gender identity and do leadership simultaneously. However my research comes from a small and limited data set, and more research is needed to explore the relationships between leadership and language in different contexts to further examine how leadership is done in 'natural' settings (i.e., not in controlled focus groups), using spontaneous talk.

My data and conclusions come from the talk and observations of a small number of pre-adolescent children. Although this places it firmly in the linguistic ethnographic approach where we look to examine interesting or 'telling' cases (Mitchell 1984: 237 cited in Rampton et al. 2004), it means my results are not generalisable beyond this setting. However, certain generalisations can be made about the multifacetedness of leadership I observed, that linguistic resources work alongside local social practices and local identity constructions within a co-constructed local culture to which all individuals contribute. It became clear that none of these areas was enough on its own and that, to do leadership, individuals needed to combine all three. This shows the value of a social constructionist approach, questioning ideas that leadership is an innate personality trait or the application of learned behaviours from a 'grand theory' (see 2.1.1).

This study also shows there is hope and potential for leadership to change and develop not only through language, but a community's co-constructed culture in which language is instrumental. To see if this is age-related, the talk of children younger than pre-adolescence could be explored to consider if it is possible to evidence when such cultures are established, and post-16 to see if it continues throughout or is re-established after adolescence. A longer-term ethnography would also be compelling. For me, this was not possible because the children's education continued in at least six different settings once they progressed to Year 7, meaning they were no longer a homogenous group. Because staying as one form-group is rare, even in 'all-through' or 'continuity'

schools where children are educated in one institution from Reception to Year 13, this may be unfeasible as form-groups change at key points, often when children become grouped by achievement levels as they get older (as much as teachers in the field often disagree with 'setting').

In this thesis, I hope I have shown that language is a principal resource for constructions of gender identity as well as leadership, which, alongside other local social practices, contribute to local identity constructions. I also hope to have demonstrated the effectiveness of linguistic ethnography as a methodology, revealing how individuals' local identities inform their leadership attempts and contribute to their success, where, regarding individuals as 'whole' speakers, observations can inform understandings of talk. My research shows leadership does not have to be a masculine endeavour, as strategies associated with indexing normative femininity allowed the most success. However, this only made sense with knowledge of the speakers, their co-constructed culture, and setting.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Information Sheet and Consent Form for Children

Date: 4th September 2017

<u>INFORMATION SHEET</u>

As part of my English language studies in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London, I would like to do a small study involving the way you speak when you are with your friends. This will involve recording some of your conversations, which I hope you will do without me there. I am going to write up some parts of the conversations, and I will look for features that appear in the speech that I have recorded.

I am asking you because I am interested in the way young people speak. I would like you to record yourself talking with your friends in Penguin Class. The recordings can be as long or as short as you like, and you can record yourself from any time between now and March, 2018. You can also choose to delete parts of the recording if you wish, and you can choose when to switch the device on or off. There will be 'interviews' after April, which will involve me speaking to you on your own or as part of a small group. I may ask you some questions about the recordings during these interviews. I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part.

You are free to stop being part of the study at any time throughout the period of my fieldwork/data collection. At every stage, all names to do with you, the other children, your family and school will remain confidential. The only exception to this is if you were to talk about something that made me concerned about you and your safety, or someone close to you. If I were to be concerned, I would speak to Ms Emery-West about what you had said.

Anything you record will be kept safely and will be used for academic purposes only, except in the case of me speaking to Ms Emery-West.

Signed

Chloe Cheetham

Goldsmiths, University of London

Department of English and Comparative Literature

CONSENT FORM

Project title: Young identities: How do children show who they are in the ways they speak?

1.   Ms Cheetham has read and explained the Information Sheet about this project. I have read it and understood it myself.

2.   She has explained to me the reason why I have been chosen to be part of the project and what I will need to do. Any questions I have had have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements for my participation, which are described in the Information Sheet.

3.   I understand that I am doing this voluntarily and that I have the right to stop being a part of the project at any time throughout the period of Ms Cheetham's fieldwork/data collection.

4.   I have received a copy of this Consent Form and the accompanying Information Sheet.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 2 – information Sheet and Consent Form for Parents/Carers

Date: 4th September 2017

INFORMATION SHEET

As part of my linguistics studies in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London, I would like to carry out a small study involving language and group identity. This will involve the recording of some of your child's conversations. I am going to transcribe portions of the conversations, and will look for particular features that appear in the speech that I have recorded.

I have approached you because I am interested in the way young people speak. I would like your child to record herself/himself talking with her/his friends in Penguin Class. The recordings can be as long or as short as they like, and they can record themselves from any time between now and March, 2018. They may also delete anything they do not want me to hear, and they can choose when to switch the recording device on or off. There will be 'interviews' after April, where I may ask them some questions about the recordings. I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part.

You are free to withdraw your child from the study at any time throughout the period of my fieldwork/data collection. At every stage, all names to do with the children, their families and school will remain confidential. The only exception to this is if a child protection disclosure were to be made. In this instance, the information would be passed on to Leigh Emery-West, Skipwith Primary's Lead Child Protection Officer, who would then advise on the course of action to take.

The recorded data will be kept securely and will be used for academic purposes only, except in the case of a disclosure.

If you have any queries about the study, please feel free to contact myself or my course supervisor, Pia Pichler, who can be contacted on p.pichler@gold.ac.uk, or by phone on 0207 919 7454.

Signed

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CONSENT FORM

Project title: Young identities: How do young people negotiate their group identity through classroom- and non-classroom-based talk? Which language features are present in the way their group identity is created, maintained and innovated?

1.   I have read and had explained to me by Chloe Cheetham the Information Sheet relating to this project.

2.   My child and I have had explained to us the purposes of the project and what will be required of my child, and any questions have been answered to our satisfaction. My child and I agree to the arrangements for my child's participation as described in the Information Sheet.

3.   I understand that my **child's** participation is entirely voluntary and that my child has the right to withdraw from the project any time throughout the period of my fieldwork/data collection.

4.   I have received a copy of this Consent Form and the accompanying Information Sheet.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 3 – Ethnographic Interview Questions

<u>Settling Questions</u>
1. Please could you state your names for the voice recorder?
2. Ask a few general questions to settle into the space/situation e.g., how's your day been? How was the show rehearsal?

<u>Children's Questions</u>
3. What do you appreciate most about Penguin Class?
4. Who are your closest friends? Has this changed over the years?
5. Who do you play with the most?
6. Who do you have play dates with? What did you do on your last playdate with them?
7. What do you like about your friends? How did you become friends?
8. How do you behave differently around different people?
9. How do you think you speak?

<u>Leadership</u>
10. Who do you like being with the most for group activities like projects or drama?
11. *Play recordings* – who do you feel is leading the group?
12. What makes a good leader?

<u>Politeness</u>
13. I've been thinking about politeness. Do you think the children in our class are polite? Are you polite?
14. Sometimes people say that girls are more polite than boys. Do you think there's a difference in whether the boys or the girls are more polite in Penguin Class?
15. Are you polite at home?
16. Are you polite to your siblings and parents at home?
17. Do you think you are more or less polite at school than you are at home?

<u>Voices</u>
18. I was at dance with Ms McCartney last night, and we noticed that we put on accents a lot. Do you ever find yourself doing that? {if Q18=NO, terminate]
19. [If Q18=YES] Why do you think you put on voices?
20. [if Q18=YES] Do you put on voices more with some people than others?
21. *Play recordings* – do you know why you put on an accent/sang here?

Appendix 4 – Transcript Conventions

`[text]`	indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech
`=`	latching
`(.)`	micro pause
`(-)`	short pause – longer than a micropause but shorter than one second
`/`	rising pitch/intonation
`\`	falling pitch/intonation
`<text>`	enclosed speech delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker
`>text<`	enclosed speech delivered more quickly than usual for the speaker
`%text%`	enclosed speech delivered quietly/reduced volume
`ALL CAPS`	speech delivered loudly/increased volume
`bold`	speaker stress/emphasis
`no:::`	prolongation of a sound
<u>`no`</u>`{LAUGHING}`	non-verbal information, usually adding information about underlined words
`.hhhh`	audible inhalation
`hhhh`	audible exhalation
`(xxxx)`	inaudible
`^word^`	spoken at a higher pitch