

# **Part V**

## **Institutional Discourse**

---



# 25 “Feminine” Workplaces: Stereotype and Reality

---

JANET HOLMES AND MARIA STUBBE

## 1 Introduction

The notion of the “gendered” workplace arose repeatedly during our research on workplace discourse in New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> Both those participating in the research and members of the wider New Zealand community were very willing to identify some workplaces as particularly “feminine” and others as very “masculine,” though they were not always so articulate about what exactly they meant by such descriptions. This chapter explores the notion of the gendered workplace, and examines, in particular, how such notions develop, as well as how they unravel when subjected to more detailed analysis of actual workplace interaction.

Gender appears to be a particularly salient dimension of social interaction in New Zealand. Indeed, New Zealand has been described as a “gendered culture,” a culture in which “the structures of masculinity and femininity are central to the formation of society as a whole,” a culture in which “the intimate and structural expressions of social life are divided according to gender” (James and Saville-Smith 1989: 6–7). Gender, it has been suggested, is the motif and preoccupation of New Zealand society, as class is in Britain. And perhaps gender appears particularly salient in New Zealand because social class categorization is generally weaker than in Britain. Rags to riches stories of people (usually men) who have succeeded in making their fortunes in business and have joined the commercial elite are endemic in New Zealand newspapers. New Zealanders firmly believe that social mobility is easier in New Zealand than in Britain, especially for men.

The recent rise to prominence of a raft of successful career women suggests, however, that New Zealand social patterns are changing. In the year 2000 in New Zealand, as almost every newspaper and magazine noted, women held the positions of Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Chief Justice, Attorney-General, and Governor-General, as well as the top position in Telecom, and

the position of Chief Executive in a number of Ministries and influential government organizations. Nevertheless, the rapidity of this change, its potentially ephemeral nature, and the specific characteristics of the women who have made it to the top (most had no brothers, none had an older brother, and many have no children), all support the view that New Zealand may be a particularly interesting focus for exploring the notion of the “gendered” workplace.

## 2 “Feminine” and “Masculine” Workplaces

What exactly do people mean when they refer to a “feminine” or “masculine” workplace? While non-linguistic characteristics such as the gender composition of the workforce, the nature of the organization’s work, and how often people socialize in and out of work are undoubtedly components of the picture, it is also clear that specific kinds of communication pattern are equally important. In fact, many distinguishing features of what are widely considered male versus female styles of interaction have been identified since the early 1970s (e.g. see Aries 1996; Coates 1996; Crawford 1995; Holmes 1995; Romaine 1999; Talbot 1998; Tannen 1993; Wodak 1997). In addition to scholarly research in this area, there are also many “self-help” texts identifying typical, and often stereotypical, components of gendered communicative styles both at work and at home (e.g. Elgin 1993; Gray 1992; Rearden 1995; Tannen 1990, 1994b). Table 25.1 provides a summary of some of the most widely cited features of “feminine” and “masculine” interactional styles.

The inevitable simplification involved in such a list, and the resulting dichotomizing of male and female style, is clearly misleading, and popular approaches which focus only on contrasts such as these have been severely criticized, especially when they suggest that such differences are unavoidable, culturally conditioned, or even innate (see, for example, Cameron 1992; Crawford 1995; Freed 1992; Meyerhoff 1991; Troemel-Ploetz 1991). A list such

**Table 25.1** Widely cited features of “feminine” and “masculine” interactional style

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

as this takes no account of the many sources of diversity and variation (such as age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so on) which are relevant when comparing styles of interaction. It largely ignores stylistic variation arising from contextual factors, including the social and discourse context of an interaction, and the participants' goals. And there is no consideration of how such differences develop: fundamental underlying issues such as the social distribution of power and influence are inevitably factored out.

Nevertheless, such a list captures quite well the components people typically have in mind when they refer to "masculine" and "feminine" workplaces (see also Talbot, this volume). And, while obviously crude and simplistic, the list summarizes many of the distinguishing features of male and female styles of interaction which emerged from the first raft of language and gender research, much of which was well conceived and carefully executed. As Cameron (1996) points out, the findings of this research have proved remarkably robust (see also McElhinny, this volume).

Research on interaction at work, in particular, has generally confirmed these patterns. In interviews, team discussions, in classrooms, and in department meetings, patterns of domination of talking time, aggressive interruption, and competitive and confrontational discourse have been found to characterize men's rather than women's discourse, and it is certainly true that such features are habitually labeled "masculine" rather than "feminine" (see Tannen 1994a; Swann 1992; Stanworth 1983; Nelson 1998; West 1984). Men have been found to interrupt more than women in similar employment positions (e.g. Case 1988; West 1984; Woods 1988), to take more and/or longer turns (e.g. Eakins and Eakins 1976; Edelsky 1981; Holmes 1992; James and Drakich 1993), and to adopt an aggressive rather than a facilitative personal style in many workplace interactions (e.g. Ainsworth-Vaughn 1992; Case 1991; Tannen 1994b; Holmes 2000a). Moreover, the "masculine" style tends to be more highly valued, largely due to the fact that men have dominated most workplaces until relatively recently, occupying nearly all the influential and powerful positions. Hence, as Kendall and Tannen point out, "styles of interaction more common among men have become the workplace norm" (1997: 85).

It is perhaps worth emphasizing at this point that we are not talking about places that are literally "women's" workplaces and "men's" workplaces, but rather about cultural dimensions and perceptions, which are a matter of degree. Some men can and do interact at times and in ways that contribute to the perception of a workplace as more "feminine," just as the behavior of some women reinforces the view of their workplaces as particularly "masculine." Moreover, different workplaces can be characterized as more or less "feminine" and more or less "masculine" in different respects. So, in a particular workplace, meeting structures may conform to a more "masculine" style, while the way small talk is distributed may fit a more "feminine" stereotype. Moreover, individuals may behave in stereotypically "masculine" or "feminine" ways even at different points within the same interaction. The notion of the gendered workplace is thus a considerable simplification with potentially misleading

implications. This point will be elaborated more fully in the final section of the chapter.

### **3 “Masculine” and “Feminine” Styles of Interaction in New Zealand Workplaces**

What evidence is there of female and male patterns of interaction in the New Zealand workplaces we have studied, and how do these patterns relate to the notion of the “gendered” workplace? In exploring this point we first focus on some broad patterns identified in three different aspects of workplace interaction, namely features of the structure of talk in meetings, the distribution of humor in meetings, and the distribution of small talk at work.

The data we draw on was collected by the Wellington Language in the Workplace (LWP) Project (Holmes 2000b). The Project was designed to analyze features of effective interpersonal communication in a variety of New Zealand workplaces and used a methodology which allowed workplace interactions to be recorded as unobtrusively as possible (Stubbe 1998a). The LWP Project currently has a corpus of over 1,500 workplace interactions to use as the basis for analysis.

It is both impossible and unilluminating to examine workplace talk in a functional vacuum. People participate in a wide range of types of workplace talk, from one-to-one meetings, through small group discussions, to large-scale formal meetings, as well as variable amounts of social talk around the edges of task-oriented talk, and at ratified social breaks. Any analysis of gendered styles of interaction, and the related issue of what people mean when they talk of a “feminine” or “masculine” workplace, must therefore compare reasonably similar activities, with reasonably similar objectives. We first consider, then, aspects of formal meetings, a type of interaction which dominated the timetable of many participants in the workplaces studied.

#### **3.1 Meeting talk**

A number of features of meeting talk tend to be associated with one gender rather than the other. It is widely believed, for instance, that meetings with a majority of female participants are more likely to digress from the agenda than meetings with predominantly male participants. There is no evidence to support such broad generalizations in the data from our workplace meetings. The style of a meeting or, more often, a particular section of a meeting, typically reflected its function rather than the gender of its participants. Meetings with an explicit agenda, a strict time limit, and a number of issues requiring a decision tended to be predominantly linear in structure, following the agenda from item to item, with only minor and brief digressions. More exploratory meetings, or

sections of meetings, where participants were brainstorming a problem, or discussing options for future action, were typically more spiral in structure, pursuing a range of different ideas for a short period, and returning to elaborate some at a later point. Movement through the agenda was less straightforward in these cases. The complexity of such patterns is illustrated in the qualitative analyses below (see also Marra, forthcoming; Stubbe, forthcoming a).

Another prototypically gendered aspect of meetings, mentioned above, is the amount of talk engaged in by meeting participants. The general consensus among researchers who have analyzed talk in formal meetings is that men typically contribute a good deal more talk than women in such contexts (see James and Drakich 1993; Holmes 1995). Indeed, even within more "feminine" workplaces, such as educational institutions, formal contexts have proved to be male-dominated with respect to the distribution of talk (e.g. Eakins and Eakins 1976; Stanworth 1983). One might expect, then, that at least in the more formal meetings in our corpus, men would dominate the talking time. The reality, however, proved rather more complex.

We analyzed the distribution of talk in a set of formal meetings from four different but comparable workplaces, two of which were publicly perceived as relatively "feminine" (though only one was actually dominated by women workers), and two as more "masculine" workplaces (where both were in fact numerically dominated by males). The results suggested that organizational role and status, rather than gender, were the most influential factors in determining who contributed most talk. The meetings were selected to be reasonably similar in function; they were reporting meetings of teams or groups who met regularly. In every meeting the person chairing the meeting talked most (Holmes 2000a). Even in "masculine" workplaces, when women managers or project leaders chaired the meetings they dominated the talking time. And the proportion of the total talking time taken by female chairs and male chairs was remarkably similar (ranging from 37 to 53 per cent with no significant variation along gender lines). Factors such as organizational responsibility and role predominated in accounting for who contributed most talk in workplace meetings, regardless of the "gender" of the workplace. Patterns such as these suggest that stereotypes of gendered workplaces may need updating. The same is true of claims about women's sense of humor.

### ***3.2 Humor in the workplace***

Popular stereotypes portray women as humorless creatures, rarely cracking jokes and slow to respond to the humor of others (Crawford 1995). Similar claims have been made about women at work; researchers suggest that "women may have a lower propensity to use humor as a part of their professional repertoire" (Cox, Read, and Van Auken 1990: 293; see also Walker 1981; McCauslan and Kleiner 1992). The implication is that stereotypically "feminine" workplaces are serious work contexts where humor rarely intrudes into

discussion. Like many stereotypes, this one seems to have developed with minimal observation of the actual patterns of use of humor by women and men at work. Again, the reality turns out to be different.

We examined the distribution of humor in 22 meetings from our workplace corpus: the dataset comprised 16 mixed-gender meetings, three from a stereotypically “feminine” workplace with only women participants, and three from a stereotypically “masculine” workplace with just male participants. The resulting analysis of 396 instances of humor provided ample evidence to challenge the stereotypes (Holmes, Marra, and Burns, forthcoming).<sup>2</sup> Overall, the women produced more humor than the men in these meetings. So, for example, the average ratio for women was 25 instances per 100 minutes compared to the men’s ratio of 14 instances per 100 minutes. This pattern held both for the relative contributions of women and men in the mixed-gender meetings, and on the basis of a comparison of the six single-gender meetings. Moreover, not only did women produce more humor overall than men in these meetings, the very presence of women tended to be associated with higher levels of humor: as the proportion of female participants in a meeting increased, so did the amount of humor. There is no support here for the picture of the serious businesswoman who lacks a sense of humor, nor for the suggestion that a “feminine” workplace is a humorless setting.

It is worth noting that the stereotype of the humorless businesswoman is to some extent inconsistent with the widely accepted view that “feminine” workplaces are warm, friendly places where a high value is placed on solidarity and collegiality. One possible explanation for this apparent contradiction is that women become more serious, and less inclined to encourage or contribute to humor, as they ascend the organizational ladder; in other words, it is women in roles of responsibility, especially in “masculine” workplaces, who lack a sense of humor. Exploring this hypothesis, we examined the influence of the chair, typically the section manager, on the amount of humor in meetings (Holmes, Marra, and Burns, forthcoming). While all the chairs in our database responded positively to humor, some of them were more active than others in initiating humor. The analysis indicated that in both mixed-gender and single-gender groups, female chairs contributed a higher proportion of humor than their male counterparts, providing no support for the suggestion that women lose their sense of humor as they gain seniority. Where there was a gender difference, it was in the relative amounts of different *types* of humor engaged in by women and men. In general, women were more likely than men in these meetings to initiate extended humor sequences, a collaborative activity which tended to generate good feeling and positive collegial attitudes.

In a number of ways, then, women played a proactive positive role in contributing to the humor in meetings. These analyses of workplace humor provide convincing evidence that “feminine” workplaces do not lack humor, and that women’s contributions to workplace humor are typically frequent and collegial in orientation. We turn now to the third component in this overview of trends in workplace communication, namely a consideration

of the relation between stereotype and reality in the distribution of small talk at work.

### **3.3 *Small talk at work***

While humor is stereotypically, and inaccurately, associated predominantly with "masculine" workplaces, small talk is stereotypically associated with "feminine" workplaces. In "feminine" workplaces, the stereotype suggests, small talk is copious and obligatory. In fact, of course, small talk and social talk occurred in all the workplaces we studied. People used small talk at the boundaries of interaction, at the beginning and end of the day, at the start and end of meetings, and sometimes at points within meetings (Holmes 2000c).

It is not possible to rigorously compare the amount of small talk used in different workplaces given the fact that our recordings were collected from volunteers who, despite our request to include all their workplace talk, sometimes edited out talk they regarded as unimportant, irrelevant, and non-serious. Three pieces of evidence, however, are worth considering in assessing the accuracy of the stereotype. First, the data analyzed in the papers in Coupland (2000), a collection devoted to small talk, but without gender as an explicit focus, is overwhelmingly dominated by women. Female participants contribute by far the most, and sometimes all, of the small talk analyzed in these papers. Second, of the papers which specifically examine small talk in the workplace, the majority select domains which are most commonly associated with women (hairdresser, supermarket checkout, travel agent, call center, women's health care), and the remainder provide examples and extracts featuring many more female than male protagonists. While the first point suggests that women engage in small talk more often than men, the second indicates that caution is necessary in interpreting such research. Just as some researchers appear to have looked for data in places which can be designated as stereotypically "feminine" workplaces, others may have been predisposed to identify women's contributions as prototypical exemplars of small talk.

The third piece of evidence comes from our analysis of the gender distribution of small talk in meetings from a range of the white-collar workplaces researched. In all workplaces, whether "masculine" or "feminine," the beginning of a meeting was an obligatory site for small talk, especially when participants had not met before that day. Its absence was perceived as "marked." Small talk was also usual while waiting for participants at larger meetings. However, in the most "masculine" white-collar organization with whom we worked, the small talk at the beginning of meetings was noticeably briefer, and the small talk topics less personal than in all other workplaces. The meetings got under way relatively quickly, and social talk digressions were few and brief. Conversely, in the most "feminine" workplace where we recorded, small talk at the beginning of meetings was more extended, and often very personal, indicating that the participants regularly maintained their relationships through

such talk (Holmes 2000c). Social talk often “leaked” into meetings in this workplace, though an apparent social digression frequently turned out to have relevance for the organization’s business in the longer term (a point elaborated below). Certainly, it appeared that there was greater tolerance for small talk in the more “feminine” white-collar workplaces researched.

This relatively neat pattern, however, was challenged by two sets of data, one from a factory, the second from meetings in one particular private, commercial organization. In the factory, small talk was frequent throughout the day, and was typically very personal in its content. In the private, commercial organization, which was in some respects a stereotypically “masculine” workplace, small talk, social banter, and witty repartee based on knowledge of their colleagues’ recent social activities was the norm at the beginning of meetings. Interestingly, both workplaces had a dynamic female manager, with a strong personality and very good sense of humor, though there were other social factors at work too. Distributional and frequency data provide only part of the story.

As more women move into senior positions and take on managerial responsibility, our analyses suggest that they may influence the traditional stereotypes of gendered workplaces. On the one hand, they may influence the amount of social talk and humor which is considered acceptable in meetings and other workplace settings. On the other, they may adopt patterns of talk and interaction which have previously been considered stereotypically “masculine.” This trend was also apparent in other dimensions of our analysis. Women managers were demonstrably skilled at getting their message across, at giving authoritative directives, at managing meetings, and providing leadership (see Holmes, Stubbe, and Vine 1999; Holmes 2000a). But the analyses which provided this evidence also indicated the complexity of the way effective women managers operate in the modern workplace. These analyses benefit from an approach which examines the detailed “practice” of talk at work, within a community of practice framework. We turn now to a more detailed qualitative analysis of the way individual women “do gender” in two contrastingly gendered workplaces.

## **4 A Community of Practice Approach to Analyzing the “Gendered” Workplace**

The term “community of practice” was introduced to language and gender research by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992; see also Wenger 1998; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999; Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999; and McConnell-Ginet’s and Eckert’s chapters in this volume). A community of practice (henceforth, CofP) is

an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. (1992: 95)

The CofP approach focuses on what members do – the practice or activities which indicate that they belong to the group, and also the extent to which they belong. It also takes account of the attitudes, beliefs, values, and social relations which underlie their practice. Hence, the CofP model encourages a focus on “not gender differences but the difference gender makes” (Cameron 1992: 13). It is therefore useful in examining the issue of what people mean when they talk about a “feminine” or “masculine” workplace or workplace culture.

Wenger (1998: 73) identifies three criterial features of a CofP: (1) mutual engagement, (2) a joint negotiated enterprise, and (3) a shared repertoire of negotiable resources accumulated over time. The linguistic manifestations of a shared repertoire provide a basis for comparison between workplaces, and suggest some of the ways in which a distinctive workplace “culture” is constructed through interaction. Indeed, Wenger (1998: 125–6) identifies a number of more specific “constitutive characteristics” of a CofP, some of which lend themselves to the analysis of patterns of interaction and, more specifically, patterns of discourse (for further discussion, see Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999; Holmes and Marra, forthcoming). In our analyses to date, as indicated in the first section of the chapter, we have focused particularly on contrasting *styles* of workplace interaction, with attention to a number of Wenger’s characteristics, including shared ways of engaging in doing things together, and discursive ways of sustaining relationships and displaying group membership, such as social talk, small talk, and the use of humor. In the next section, we explore how some of these aspects of workplace interaction are manifested in complex and detailed practice at the micro-level, and how gender is “produced and reproduced in differential forms of participation in particular CoPs” (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1995: 491).

## 5 The Gendered Workplace in Practice

As noted above, people often have quite definite views about whether the culture of their own or other workplaces is based on “feminine” values in the sense that it is hospitable to women, or whether it is more traditionally “masculine” and male-dominated. Perceptions are influenced by stereotypes relating to the nature of the work carried out, the gender composition of the workforce, and individuals’ personal experiences, as much as by the actual practices found there. Nevertheless, such informal assessments tend to be remarkably consistent, and have generally been in accord with our own judgments, based on ethnographic data, of where the different workplaces included in our study might fit on a continuum from “feminine” to “masculine” organizational culture. We therefore considered it would be interesting to take these subjective comparisons as a starting point for exploring in more detail how particular discourse practices relate to gender in actual interactions.

We compare the interaction styles of teams in two sharply contrasting New Zealand workplaces. The first is a stereotypically “feminine” workplace, an office in a white-collar “knowledge industry” government organization, while the second, a factory, can be characterized as having a more “masculine” organizational culture. We briefly describe the distinguishing characteristics of each workplace as a gendered community of practice, before looking more closely at examples of how gender is constructed through discourse in each setting. These analyses draw on typical excerpts from the interactions of a competent female manager and her team, focusing on the aspects of discourse introduced above: strategies for managing meetings, and the functions of humor and social talk at work. The excerpts selected are designed to illustrate the richly textured underpinning of aspects of the gender stereotypes, as well as the way other aspects of these stereotypes unravel when put under the microscope.

## 6 Doing Gender in a “Feminine” Workplace

The office workplace represents the stereotypically feminine end of the gender continuum. It is a relatively small organization with a predominantly female staff whose main task is to monitor and advise on economic and social issues in New Zealand from the perspective of equality for women. When we tested our ethnographic data against the three criterial features for a CoFP of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire, it was clear that the “feminine” cap fitted this workplace well in broad terms at the time the data was collected.

First, members of the organization, and in particular members of the work units within it, engaged with one another many times a day in a variety of ways. They spoke face-to-face in formal meetings and informal problem-solving sessions, engaged in informal work-related and social chat in their workspaces, at breaks, and in passing; they communicated by telephone or e-mail on occasion, and they regularly read and commented on one another’s written output (e.g. letters, reports, etc.). There were organized opportunities for socializing at work with colleagues and with external contacts, with some individuals also choosing to mix socially outside of work. In short, the communication patterns in this workplace could be characterized as “high involvement” and heavily context-embedded, with a strong emphasis on face-to-face interpersonal talk, all features consistent with the feminine end of the style continuum.

Second, there was a very clear sense of joint enterprise both in the organization as a whole and within individual teams, which went beyond simply doing the tasks at hand to encompass the pursuit of certain ideals relating specifically to gender issues. For instance, its staff included women who had joined the organization largely because they felt a particular commitment to furthering the aspirations of women. The organization is also perceived by outsiders as promoting a feminist agenda, something which its staff are

sensitive to, as illustrated in this brief excerpt (transcription conventions are provided at the end of the chapter):

(1)

*Context: Two female workers informally discussing a forthcoming publication*

there was a meeting to discuss the titles when I was away. . . . I suppose my concept of what we want to convey is not something that . . . we sort of don't want to sound like it's an agenda we're trying to push because we're feminists right. . . . I'm trying to think who we're targeting I just think the word agenda goes puts them right off

In terms of workplace culture this shared philosophy was reflected in an overt emphasis on practicing the principles of employment equity, and on creating a professional environment that was comfortable for women to work in. It also influenced the kinds of communicative practices shared by the workers in this office – the third criterial feature of a CofP.

There is ample evidence, both from our analysis of actual interactions and observations reported by our informants, that these shared practices were typified by many of the features stereotypically associated with a feminine style. For example, participants in the study explicitly noted to us that although there was a recognized workplace hierarchy, this tended to be downplayed in most contexts, with managers adopting a relatively egalitarian and consensus-seeking approach in their interactions with their teams. Participants' understandings of their particular roles within the work unit or project team, and their unit's collective role within the larger institution or organization, were typically negotiated in this workplace, rather than being laid down from above. Our informants also commented that interactions were relatively informal in tone, and that the boundaries between people's personal and work lives were fuzzier than at other workplaces they had experience of, where maintaining such boundaries was often seen as an important aspect of "being a professional." They felt there was an acceptance, even an expectation, that people could and would talk about aspects of their personal lives with their colleagues in the course of the working day, and they explicitly attributed this to its being a workplace which operated with a distinctively feminine culture.

These patterns are realized in the data through a variety of specific discourse practices which interact in complex ways. Managers would often negotiate directives and decisions at some length, or embed them in collaborative problem-solving, rather than issuing direct instructions. For instance, the chair of a meeting would take specific steps to ensure that participants had genuinely reached consensus before moving on to the next issue or agenda item. This was particularly noticeable when someone had expressed a contrary view, or a reservation, at an earlier stage in the discussion. In such cases, the chair would quite explicitly seek the views of the formerly dissenting participant on the decision which was being considered.

At a more extended level of analysis, meetings often did not follow a strictly linear pattern of topical organization and decision-making. Digressions and

topic shifts back and forth were common, and our analysis also revealed many examples of the seamless integration of personal or affectively oriented talk and collaborative humor sequences with business talk. For instance, sequences of jointly constructed humorous talk and amusing anecdotes were commonly interleaved with the business at hand during formal meetings and other discussions. Although strictly speaking “off-topic,” such digressions were usually related in some way to the issue being discussed, and performed important discourse management and affective functions. The overall effect is one of high-energy, good-humored, friendly interaction, with many of the features of “all-together-now” talk identified by Coates (1988, 1996) in describing the talk of women friends. To illustrate some of these points, we next analyze in some detail a meeting typical of many recorded at this workplace.

### 6.1 *The Flying Filers*

The data excerpts below come from a fairly lengthy regular team meeting which provided an especially rich illustration of the above points, while also allowing us to explore the extent to which the picture it paints of this office as a “feminine” workplace is complicated by other discursive features. The team is discussing the allocation of responsibilities in relation to a range of tasks over the next period of time. These intersect with problems relating to loss of personnel and the fact that the departmental filing has got severely behind. A number of possible solutions are discussed, some involving the reassignment of duties. One solution, first proposed at a relatively early point in the meeting, is to bring in external filers, “the flying filing squad.” A senior team member, Zoe, is clearly not happy with this suggestion, and throughout the discussion she raises objections whenever it re-emerges, as it regularly does. Leila, the manager, uses a number of strategies to defuse and resolve this tension.

Example (2) illustrates how Leila encourages the participation of all those present in the decision-making process right from the start. In introducing the issue, she acknowledges that it may prove insoluble:

(2)

Leila: I mean we may not be able to find a solution but that I mean you’re the people who are in the best situation for knowing that # what’s your feeling?

When the suggestion of bringing in outsiders to deal with the filing backlog is first mooted, Zoe comes in immediately:

(3)

Zoe: mm/but\ okay but hang on what are our other options here um we’ve also got Hannah

Leila: /mm\  
yeah

Leila responds positively, saying *that's a good suggestion*, and she allows Zoe to express at some length the reasons for her reservations. The discussion then develops into a collaborative consideration of the staffing problems raised by Zoe's alternative solution. Leila explicitly seeks agreement, and checks that all are happy with the final resolution of each problem.

However, despite the collaborative tone overall, at various points during this discussion, Leila does invoke her managerial status rather more explicitly. In example (4), she refers to her expectations about the need for further staff, and by her repetitive use of *I*-statements she makes it clear that, while she is happy to consult, this type of planning nevertheless falls within her prerogative as manager:

- (4)
- Leila: I think we have the solution here I think the good news is that I'll- I probably don't have to think about recruiting someone else
- Zoe: oh right
- Leila: I mean /I-\ that's that's the first bit of good news that I guess I see that that's =
- Zoe: /yeah\
- Leila: = what it looks that's what it feels for me # am I being overly optimistic
- Hannah: I'm not clear what you're planning for nominations
- Leila: well I'm not planning anything yet

Leila also regularly uses various strategies which explicitly control the way in which the interaction develops. In example (5), for instance, she summarizes and ratifies the decisions reached so far:

- (5)
- Leila: . . . so I think what we need though we need extra help with information requests # Emma has that immediately # effectively we have a nominations vacancy I would prefer if we could solve our nominations problem in-house probably

At another point, she initiates an abrupt topic shift after several minutes of off-topic talk to get the discussion back on track.

At the same time, throughout this sequence Leila pays a great deal of attention to the positive face needs of her colleagues, and to Zoe's in particular, often using humor to maintain the solidarity of the group, thus helping to avert the possibility of the disagreement turning into unresolved conflict. In example (6), Leila points out that she and Zoe have been working together on this issue, and pays her a humorous compliment on her ability to "mother" new staff, which raises a laugh from the group as a whole:

- (6)
- Leila: Zoe Zoe and I'd been talking I mean one we're gonna need Zoe um anyway to do handing over with the other librarians when they come /on\ board and I think that =
- Karen: /yeah\

- Leila: = they're probably going to feel a need for a little bit of mothering and I think Zoe will be good at that and the /other thing she's been\ really good with Kerry I've =
- Karen: / [laughs]\
- Leila: = watched her [laughs] I've seen her doing it = /
- Emma: / (=mother librarian
- Leila: she'll be sort of the great aunt librarian / [laughs]\
- All: / [laughter]\

Soon after this, they return to the issue of the filing, and Leila reintroduces the suggestion of the flying filing squad with a humorous anecdote describing how she saw their van and attempted to get the phone number from the side of the van while driving along:

- (7)
- Leila: . . . and I was trying to sort of /edge round and I was [laughs]:\ stretching this way =
- All: / [laughter]\
- Leila: = in the /car: [laughs] I was a wee\ bit like ( ) [laughs] you must have been =
- Emma: / ( ) thought you were a maniac\
- Leila: = away the day that I told this that I'd found these funny people and er Zoe tracked them down
- All: [laughter]

While this could be seen as an unnecessary digression, it in fact serves a number of useful purposes, by fostering good collegial relationships and reframing the proposed solution in a non-threatening way. Notice particularly the way in which Emma contributes to the humor, and how Leila closes her short narrative with *I'd found these funny people and Zoe tracked them down*, thus subtly pointing out that she and Zoe are a team, and also implying that Zoe must have been open to the idea at that time.

Gradually a solution to a number of the staffing problems identified begins to emerge. At this point there is a good deal of collaborative humor, reflecting relief that a solution is in sight:

- (8)
- [laughter throughout this section]
- Leila: Emma you are part of the solution in that I think that ( )
- Emma: I only want to be part of the problem
- XX: really
- Leila: [laughs] [in fun growly tone]: don't you dare be part of the problem I'll keep on giving you vitamin c bananas [laughs] chocolate fish [laughs] I gave I gave um I you know everyone had chocolate fish last week but Emma had more chocolate fish than anybody the only thing was she had holes in her teeth / [laughs]\ she couldn't =
- Emma: /I couldn't eat them\
- Leila: = eat them / [laughs]\

Emma: /I've been putting\off going to the dentist for /six months now and\ I've =  
Leila: /[drawls]: oh no:\  
Emma: = got a hole in /my tooth\ [laughs] anyway  
Leila: /oh yuck\

The way Leila shares information about the holes in Emma's teeth and jokingly threatens to feed her with various goodies simultaneously reinforces the supportive team culture, and constructs Leila in a nurturing role somewhat akin to that of a mother with a child – benevolent but nonetheless an authority figure.

Zoe continues to raise objections (e.g. *it seems to me um a bit silly to bring in the flying filers if all they're gonna do is file for us when we can get Robyn to do it*), and it takes over half an hour for her to come to terms with Leila's proposed solution. But finally it is clear that she is reconciled to it (see Holmes 2000a). Leila's strategies of clearly stating and restating the contentious issues, requesting Zoe to make explicit her reservations, and overtly seeking her agreement before proceeding have resulted in a satisfactory ending. The final resolution of all the staffing issues leaves the team feeling very positive, as indicated by a good deal of collaborative and mutually supportive humor at the end of the meeting. Leila's use of humor at this point lightens the tone, and reasserts the solidarity of the group after a meeting in which she has needed at times to be assertive and overtly managerial. In example (9), Leila first jokingly threatens two people who are about to move from the library to another section with the fact that they will have to work harder, and then pretends that her own skills are limited to making coffee:

(9)  
Leila: you have to work hard you two /no I mean round there [laughs\  
All: /[[laughter]\  
Emma: as opposed to the library  
Leila: [laughs] absolutely  
All: /[[laughter\  
XX: /there's a benefit\ I- the coffee's constant round there  
Emma: [laughs] this is a constant  
Leila: the coffee is con- yeah I can make coffee /it's one thing I know I can do  
[laughs] =  
Emma: /lot of very strong black coffee  
good\  
Leila: = 'cause it's one thing I feel confident about in my cool competency # making  
[laughs] coffee: [laughs] it's one thing I really got a good performance on  
[laughs]  
All: [laughter]

We have dealt with this example in some detail to illustrate some of the discursive practices typical of this workplace. There is a marked orientation toward collaborative styles and processes of interaction, together with a high

level of attention to the interpersonal dimension. While Leila is clearly in charge, she usually chooses less direct, more linguistically polite strategies to achieve her goals in a consensual way. Such patterns are of course consistent with both the “feminine” stereotype and the research evidence on preferred “feminine” styles of interaction, especially in same-sex groups (cf. Coates 1996). However, as illustrated above, even in such a workplace, managers do still exert their authority overtly and directly in certain situations, colleagues openly disagree with one another and compete to push their own point of view, and it was clearly regarded by participants in the interaction as unremarkable for them to do so. Just because a workplace has a predominantly “feminine” culture, this does not mean individuals will always use “feminine” discourse strategies, nor does it rule out the use of stereotypically more “masculine” strategies where these are appropriate and necessary.

## 7 Doing Gender in a “Masculine” Workplace

It is often claimed that females who attain high-status positions in traditional male-dominated workplaces succeed by adopting a “masculine” style of management and communication. Our data provided an opportunity to test this claim by comparing the discursive practices identified in the “feminine” workplace described above with those of female managers in a number of stereotypically “masculine” workplaces. Not unexpectedly, operating in a mixed-gender environment and a more masculine workplace culture does indeed appear to influence the discursive practices of women managers. However, while it is certainly apparent from their discourse strategies that women in these workplaces are interacting in a differently gendered CofP from the more “feminine” one described above, it is not the case that they shift wholesale to a “masculine” style; and nor do they all use exactly the same mix of strategies. Rather, just as in the meeting analyzed above, these women skillfully blend a range of communication strategies from right across the masculine–feminine continuum in a way that is appropriate to the norms of their workgroup, and to the specific situation at any given time.

We first briefly describe the CofP characteristics of a particular work team in a stereotypically “masculine” workplace, and then illustrate in more detail the different ways in which gender is constructed through the discursive practices found in this setting. The “masculine” workplace selected for this discussion provides a maximal contrast with the “feminine” workplace already described. It is a multicultural factory with a majority of male staff engaged in skilled trade and semi-skilled manual work, in what is traditionally a male occupational area. Because gender differences are often more apparent in male working-class and trade contexts (e.g. Weigel and Weigel 1985; Bernstein 1998), we might predict a greater tendency in such an environment for a woman manager to adopt discourse and management strategies from the “masculine” end of the

continuum in order to develop and maintain her credibility with her male subordinates. However, although our data confirms this hypothesis to an extent, the actual picture is more complex.

## 7.1 *The Power Rangers*

As elsewhere in the factory, men form a majority in the close-knit production team, pseudonymed the Power Rangers, which was the focus of our study. Their level of mutual engagement on a day-to-day basis is not uniformly high, as the packers and manufacturers work in two adjacent but separate areas on different floors of the factory, and there are long intervals where individual team members may not need to communicate with one another. Moreover, talk is not the main currency of work as in the office workplace described above – rather, talk is regarded as a means to a practical end. Nevertheless, the team enjoys sustained and multiplex mutual relationships. They have daily briefing sessions, individuals have regular contact with one another in the course of their 12-hour shifts, they see one another at “smoko” (tea/coffee breaks), and there is regular social contact between many team members outside work hours. Moreover, because many of the team members have worked together for a relatively long time, and have developed a strong sense of group identity, they are a very cohesive group. There is a real sense of joint enterprise in this team, which is highly motivated both in terms of completing the immediate tasks during a shift, as well as meeting longer-term goals such as continuing to out-perform other production teams, and meeting quality and safety targets. Teamwork is highly and explicitly valued, something which is further reinforced by the Polynesian cultural background of a majority of the team, which tends to privilege the group over individuals.

One of the more noticeable ways in which these characteristics are reflected in discourse is in a strong orientation to team morale, and a very distinctive sparky communicative style. The team uses many markers of solidarity in their interactions, and there is a lot of in-group talk and gossip. The Power Rangers also have a well-deserved reputation at the factory for uninhibited swearing, and constantly joking around and “having each other on” which sits alongside their status as the top-performing team. At the time of the study, their particular blend of verbal humor, jocular abuse, and practical jokes contributed to a unique team culture, and generally helped to create positive relationships within the team (see also Stubbe 2000; Stubbe, forthcoming b; Holmes and Marra, forthcoming). These kinds of playful yet highly competitive and “in your face” strategies for building solidarity are well documented as common characteristics of all-male groups (e.g. Kuiper 1991; Kiesling 2001).

Example (10) provides a typical illustration of how members embed the team culture in the course of routine task-oriented interactions. Ginette, the manager, is participating in a longstanding team ritual when using the intercom, by the mock-serious use of ham radio conventions like *copy kiwi* and *stand by* to

initiate the interaction with Russell. Her use of the nickname *kiwi* and the familiar and friendly term of address *bro* when addressing Russell, and his use in return of *bro*, are also characteristic of the way this team interacts.<sup>3</sup>

(10)

*Context: Ginette the team leader talks to Russell in manufacturing via the intercom*

Ginette: copy kiwi copy kiwi

Russell: what's up

Ginette: stand by and I'll give you the figures bro

Russell: yep go

Ginette: for the line 1 acma rainbow flight we need 24 tonnes 24

Russell: yo bro

Ginette: . . . then we are on orange wave orange wave # for the line 1

As mentioned above, the amount and style of humor used by members of this team is one of its defining characteristics. Example (11) is a classic example of the sort of no-holds-barred contestive humor that is commonplace between members of the Power Rangers:

(11)

*Context: Two male production workers talking during a lull in their work*

Peter: oh man I'm starving I am starving . . . I might go and join the war remind me of the old days the army and the front row . . .

David: you'd be the first one to get shot

Peter: why /what makes\ you say that

David: /you're so\ you're so big

Peter: brother [warningly]

David: it's very rare that a bullet will miss you  
[laughter]

Peter: yes /(that's not on)\

David: /look at the\ size of your stomach

Peter: that's NOT on (3)

David: actually they'll close their eyes and sh- fire a shot  
[laughter]

Peter: [drawls]: oh: I see

David: they got no problem missing that

Although this example happens to involve two men, Ginette the manager, like the other female team members, actively participates in such joking, and in fact she often deliberately initiates it as a way of countering boredom and maintaining morale amongst the team. A classic example occurred on April Fools' Day when she tricked several team members into ringing the zoo to ask for "Mr Lion," much to the mirth of their colleagues.

Ginette's routine use of such high solidarity discourse strategies when she interacts with members of her team clearly serves to minimize the difference in status between them. What is less clear is whether this is best explained as

a "feminine" tendency on the part of Ginette to emphasize social connection ahead of her individual status as team leader (cf. Tannen 1990), something which also happens to be a typical feature of Polynesian culture (Metge 1995), or as an attempt by her to accommodate to the "masculine" mateship culture of the factory. In this instance, the same discourse strategies can in fact be interpreted in a number of different ways, and as they are all mutually reinforcing, the inherent ambiguity does not much matter, and may in fact be useful to Ginette in trying to balance the different aspects of her identity as a Polynesian woman who leads a predominantly male production team (cf. Stubbe 1998b).

At the same time, as example (12) illustrates, she routinely adopts a stereotypically very "unfeminine" direct, no-punches-pulled style when it comes to giving instructions or meting out criticism (see also Stubbe 1999). Notice the explicit directives, and also the appeal to individuals not to let the rest of the team down:

(12)

*Context: Some team members have not been filling out packing codes correctly*

Ginette: check the case . . . make sure you check them properly 'cause like I said it's just one person's stupid mistake makes the whole lot of us look like eggs +++  
check them properly

There is then a bit of horseplay from team members, one of whom says he didn't have a pen. Ginette responds:

Ginette: no pen you come out here and get one

These are very direct imperative forms, expressed forcefully with an explicit *you* in the final instance. At the end of this long harangue, which has been spiked sporadically with humor, she says:

Ginette: please fill them out properly fuck youse

The comic mix of imperative form and forceful expletive, alongside the formally polite *please*, and the friendly colloquial pronoun *youse*, an in-group solidarity signal, elicits appreciative laughter from the team. Ginette thus ends the instructions on a less serious note, while nevertheless getting her message over very explicitly.

Her direct style in this context works well, not just because it accommodates to masculine discourse practices, but also because she has developed a strong, positive relationship with her team: they trust her and are confident that she will look after their interests when dealing with higher management, for instance. They also know that later in the day she will be just as ready to join in with a joke or a tease as anyone else in the team, and that she does not abuse her position of authority.

When dealing with team members on a one-to-one basis or in training sessions, Ginette's style is often quite different. She is sensitive to their particular problems, and takes care to preserve their face. In example (13) she follows up on a team member who has still not understood the correct procedure for entering the packing codes onto a stock form, despite the very explicit briefing earlier in the day.

(13)

*Context: Ginette is explaining the correct way of entering the packing codes to Sam*

Ginette: what do we have on here

Sam: four five six seven

Ginette: why have you put four five six seven

Sam: 'cause I was taking it off that one but gonna take it off that one

Ginette: you don't take it off that one

Sam: no er well yeah I did I know I was my- that was my mistake

Ginette: yeah

Sam: yeah

Ginette: no the way you did it this morning is good that's what we're supposed to do (9) see how important important the checks a- are you know if you do them properly

Sam: well I yeah I'm usually pretty good on on that sort of thing now so-

Ginette: yeah

Sam: if you go by the book you can't go wrong

Ginette: that's right just remember that when you're doing the check list you put down what YOU find not what it should be so you're checking against what it should be if it don't match then there's something wrong

In such situations Ginette acts more as a coach or mentor, following up on what the team member is doing, leading them through the solution to a problem, and patiently waiting and encouraging them to work out things for themselves rather than simply demonstrating or instructing.

It could be argued that much (though certainly not all) of the time, Ginette constructs her leadership role as akin to that of a mother, although this is never expressed quite as explicitly as it is in the office setting (examples (6) and (8) above). This is reflected in the way Ginette talks to the team – by turns bossy, giving direct instructions, and supportive and nurturing – as well as the way she very consciously looks after their practical and emotional needs. Indeed, she explicitly promotes the model of the team as a family that sticks together, a view which appears to be shared by the rest of the team as shown by the affectionate nicknames Camp Leader and Camp Mother, used to refer to her and another female team member who was co-team leader at one time.<sup>4</sup>

These brief analyses of interaction in the factory team highlight the complexity of the notion of a "feminine" or "masculine" workplace. On just about any measure, a factory can be characterized as a particularly "masculine" workplace, yet the patterns identified do not coincide neatly with the discursive practices typically associated with masculine styles of interaction. In this setting the

high premium placed on solidarity and team cohesion means that social talk, usually associated with the feminine end of the spectrum, is frequent and very personal; and while there is a good deal of the contestive humor associated with male groups, there is a similar proportion of collaborative and supportive humor (Holmes and Marra, forthcoming). Ginette clearly accommodates to many typically male discursive practices, but she blends these with features associated with more "feminine" styles of interaction. Because of the unique interplay between gender and many other variables such as culture, class, educational background, gender composition, and the different kinds of work involved, the way in which Ginette enacts her gender identity, and balances this with her professional role in the context of a "masculine" organizational culture, is quite different from the way Leila achieves this in the context of a much more "feminine" organization. However, neither manager restricts herself to narrowly defined "feminine" or "masculine" discursive practices in order to do so. Rather, both draw creatively on a wide range of discursive resources to perform their roles as effective managers in these differently gendered workplace contexts.

To sum up, then, given its salience in New Zealand society, it is inevitable that the social category of gender will be used to guide people's behavior at work. Stereotypes provide simplifications which reduce the complexity of ongoing decisions about how to act, talk, dress, and so on, and how to respond to the actions, talk, and dress of others (but see Cameron, this volume; Talbot, this volume, for further discussion). For those involved, describing a given workplace as more or less "masculine" or "feminine" serves as a useful shorthand to describe the discourse practices and cultures in relative terms. In this section, however, using detailed analyses of interactions in New Zealand workplaces, we have demonstrated that the reality is rather more complex and difficult to interpret than such polarized terminology implies. First, there is no one-to-one correspondence between gender and the use of a given linguistic or discourse feature in any specific context. And second, gender is only one of a number of relevant social and contextual variables affecting the way an interaction unfolds. The dangers of over-reliance on stereotypes are quite apparent. To mention only the most obvious, simplistic notions of "appropriate" styles of interaction based on gender stereotypes inevitably underestimate the impressive management skills of practitioners such as Ginette and Leila, skills which were especially evident in their sensitive responsiveness to the complexities of the very varied contexts in which they were negotiating meaning.

## 8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored discourse features which have been widely used to characterize the organizational culture of different workplaces as being

relatively more “feminine” or “masculine.” The first section summarized patterns observed in a large set of data recorded in a range of New Zealand workplaces. Analyses of the structure and distribution of talk in the workplaces in our data suggest that factors other than gender determine the patterns of talk in meetings: the function of the meeting and the relative status of participants are among the most obvious of these. Our analysis of the distribution of humor in workplace meetings directly contradicts the stereotype which suggests that humor is more characteristic of “masculine” workplaces. It was apparent that women typically contributed more humor than men in the meetings analyzed, and the women chairs, in particular, encouraged workplace humor. While patterns of small talk in most workplaces appear to support the stereotype that “feminine” workplaces are more tolerant of off-task social talk, there are exceptions in the form of apparently “masculine” workplaces where, at least in some contexts, small talk is frequent and social talk is encouraged.

The second section of the chapter challenged the stereotypical assumptions underlying the notion of a gendered workplace by focusing on the discursive practices of two particular women managers. Like their male counterparts, they convey their instructions clearly and directly, and skillfully control meetings making use of a variety of strategies: they typically dominate the talking time, control the opening and closing stages of meetings, keep the discussion on track, summarize progress, and check that consensus has been reached. But they also use a wide variety of more subtle strategies to keep control of the discourse, with choice of strategy influenced by specific context. Directness, it appears, is generally appropriate in meetings when giving instructions to subordinates about routine tasks within their area of responsibility. However, these women tend to use a much less confrontational and more ameliorative style when dealing with problems on a one-to-one basis, when the task is more complicated, or when criticism of an individual is implied. In such cases, mitigation and indirectness are more often evident, even where this might appear to be a less immediately efficient style. Similarly, women managers typically use humor and social talk strategically to construct solidarity and cement good relationships in the workplace, as well as to control the behavior of others in an acceptable and collegial manner.

Gender is such a salient dimension that interaction is typically viewed through “gendered” spectacles much of the time. Consequently, people tend to overlook data which does not fit gender stereotypes. But, as we have illustrated, the reality is that much of what goes on at work does *not* fit the gender stereotype. The data produced by the New Zealand women managers in our study suggests that they typically make use of a wide verbal repertoire style (Smith-Hefner 1988; Chambers 1992; Case 1995), integrating features typically associated both with masculine and with feminine speech styles in earlier research.

It is here that the CofP approach provides an especially useful framework for exploring workplace norms and teasing out distinctive aspects of workplace

culture in relation to gender. It also provides a basis for examining the ways in which individual women and men construct their gender identities and balance these with their professional roles within the parameters established as acceptable by the group with which they work. Each workplace team over time constructs a unique set of discursive practices from the resources available to them, compatible with other aspects of the way they work together. These shared practices, and the ways in which individuals conform to or challenge the group's norms, contribute to the construction of differently gendered communities of practice in each workplace.

So, finally, how would we characterize the contribution of the sociolinguist in the analysis of the concept of the "gendered" workplace? It can be argued that it is at least threefold. First, we can check, and challenge if appropriate, the content of the broad generalizations which constitute the inevitable stereotypes that develop in a community. Second, we can provide detailed evidence to unravel and complexify the stereotypes themselves, moving a stereotype in the direction of a more accurate "social type" perhaps (see Hall 1997; Talbot, this volume). Third, we can contribute to the development of analytical approaches which avoid reifying social categories that distort perceptions of what people are achieving through discourse, and which capture more satisfactorily the complexities of meaning negotiated through discourse in workplace interaction.

---

## TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

---

All names are pseudonyms.

XX	Unidentified speaker
YES	Capitals indicate emphatic stress
[laughs]	Paralinguistic features in square brackets
+	Pause of up to one second
(3)	Pause of 3 seconds
.... / ..... \ ...	Simultaneous speech
.... / ..... \ ...	Simultaneous speech
(hello)	Transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance
?	Rising or question intonation
-	Incomplete or cut-off utterance
#	Signals end of "sentence" where it is ambiguous on paper
=	Utterance continues on speaker's next line
...	Section of transcript omitted
(. . .)	Indecipherable speech
:	Indicates the scope of the paralinguistic feature it accompanies

## NOTES

- 1 We would like to thank Meredith Marra and Miriam Meyerhoff for valuable comments on a draft of this chapter. We also thank all those who allowed their workplace interactions to be recorded, and other members of the Language in the Workplace Project team who assisted with collecting, transcribing, and analyzing the data, especially Bernadette Vine, Meredith Marra, Megan Ingle, and Louise Burns. The research was supported by a grant from the New Zealand Foundation for Research Science and Technology.
- 2 Humorous utterances were defined as utterances identified by the analyst, on the basis of paralinguistic, prosodic, and discursual clues, as intended by the speaker(s) to be amusing and perceived to be amusing by at least some participants (Holmes 2000d: 164).
- 3 Although *bro* is an abbreviation of *brother*, and therefore more commonly used as a solidarity marker between males, it is not unusual for it to be used in addressing women who are members of the in-group, particularly in Polynesian contexts.
- 4 These nicknames are drawn from an act in the repertoire of a popular New Zealand comedy duo, the Topp Twins, who portray two bossy female youth group leaders.

## REFERENCES

- Ainsworth-Vaughn, Nancy 1992: Topic transitions in physician-patient interviews: Power, gender and discourse change. *Language in Society* 21(3): 409–26.
- Aries, Elizabeth 1996: *Men and Women in Interaction: Reconsidering the Differences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bernsten, Janice 1998: Marked versus unmarked choices on the auto factory floor. In Carol Myers-Scotton (ed.) *Codes and Consequences: Choosing Linguistic Varieties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 178–91.
- Cameron, Deborah 1992: “Not gender differences but the difference gender makes”: Explanation in research on sex and language. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 94: 13–26.
- Cameron, Deborah 1996: The language-gender interface: Challenging co-optation. In Victoria L. Bergvall, Janet M. Bing, and Alice F. Freed (eds) *Rethinking Language and Gender Research: Theory and Practice*. New York: Longman, pp. 31–53.
- Case, Susan Schick 1988: Cultural differences, not deficiencies: An analysis of managerial women’s language. In Suzanna Rose and Laurie Larwood (eds) *Women’s Careers: Pathways and Pitfalls*. New York: Praeger, pp. 41–63.
- Case, Susan Schick 1991: Wide verbal repertoire speech: Gender, language and managerial influence. *Women’s Studies International Forum* 16(3): 271–90.
- Case, Susan Schick 1995: Gender, language and the professions: recognition of wide-verbal-repertoire

- speech. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 25(2): 149–92.
- Chambers, J. K. 1992: Linguistic correlates of gender and sex. *English World-Wide* 13(2): 173–218.
- Coates, Jennifer 1988: Gossip revisited: Language in all-female groups. In Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron (eds) *Women in Their Speech Communities*. London: Longman, pp. 94–121.
- Coates, Jennifer 1996: *Women Talk*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Coupland, Justine (ed.) 2000: *Small Talk*. London: Longman.
- Cox, Joe A., Read, Raymond A., and Van Auken, Philip M. 1990: Male–female differences in communicating job-related humor: An exploratory study. *Humor* 3(3): 287–95.
- Crawford, Mary 1995: *Talking Difference: On Gender and Language*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Eakins, Barbara Westbrook and Eakins, R. Gene 1976: Verbal turn-taking and exchanges in faculty dialogue. In Betty Lou Dubois and Isabel Crouch (eds) *The Sociology of the Languages of American Women*. San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, pp. 53–62.
- Eckert, Penelope and McConnell-Ginet, Sally 1992: Communities of practice: Where language, gender and power all live. In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz, and Birch Moonwomon (eds) *Locating Power: Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California, pp. 89–99.
- Eckert, Penelope and McConnell-Ginet, Sally 1995: Constructing meaning, constructing selves: Snapshots of language, gender, and class from Belten High. In Kira Hall and Mary Bucholtz (eds) *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*. London: Routledge, pp. 469–507.
- Eckert, Penelope and McConnell-Ginet, Sally 1999: New generalizations and explanation in language and gender research. *Language in Society*, Special Issue: *Communities of Practice in Language and Gender Research* 28(2): 185–201.
- Edelsky, Carole 1981: Who's got the floor? *Language in Society* 10: 383–421.
- Elgin, Suzette H. 1993: *GenderSpeak, Men, Women and the Gentle Art of Self Defense*. New York: Wiley.
- Freed, Alice 1992: We understand perfectly: A critique of Tannen's view of cross-sex communication. In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz, and Birch Moonwomon (eds) *Locating Power: Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California, pp. 144–52.
- Gray, John 1992: *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Hall, Stuart 1997: The spectacle of the "Other". In Stuart Hall (ed.) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage, pp. 223–90.
- Holmes, Janet 1992: Women's talk in public contexts. *Discourse & Society* 3(2): 131–50.
- Holmes, Janet 1995: *Women, Men and Politeness*. London: Longman.
- Holmes, Janet 2000a: Women at work: Analysing women's talk in New Zealand workplaces. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics (ARAL)* 22(2): 1–17.
- Holmes, Janet 2000b: Victoria University of Wellington's Language in the Workplace Project: An overview. *Language in the Workplace Occasional Papers* 1. <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/wlp/resources/op1.htm>
- Holmes, Janet 2000c: Doing collegiality and keeping control at work: Small

- talk in government departments. In Justine Coupland (ed.) *Small Talk*. London: Longman, pp. 32–61.
- Holmes, Janet 2000d: Politeness, power and provocation: How humor functions in the workplace. *Discourse Studies* 2(2): 159–85.
- Holmes, Janet and Marra, Meredith forthcoming: Having a laugh at work: How humor contributes to workplace culture.
- Holmes, Janet, Marra, Meredith, and Burns, Louise forthcoming: *Women's Humor in the Workplace: A Quantitative Analysis*. (To appear in *Language in the Workplace Occasional Papers*.)
- Holmes, Janet and Meyerhoff, Miriam 1999: The community of practice: Theories and methodologies in language and gender research. *Language in Society* 28(2): 173–83.
- Holmes, Janet, Stubbe, Maria, and Vine, Bernadette 1999: Constructing professional identity: "Doing power" in policy units. In Srikant Sarangi and Celia Roberts (eds) *Talk, Work and Institutional Order: Discourse in Medical, Mediation and Management Settings*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 351–85.
- James, Bev and Saville-Smith, Kay 1989: *Gender, Culture and Power*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- James, Deborah and Drakich, Janice 1993: Understanding gender differences in amount of talk. In Deborah Tannen (ed.) *Gender and Conversational Interaction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 281–312.
- Kendall, Shari and Tannen, Deborah 1997: Gender and language in the workplace. In Ruth Wodak (ed.) *Gender and Discourse*. London: Sage, pp. 81–105.
- Kiesling, Scott 2001: "Now I gotta watch what I say": Shifting constructions of masculinity in discourse. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 11(2): 250–73.
- Kuiper, Koenraad 1991: Sporting formulae in New Zealand English: Two models of male solidarity. In Jenny Cheshire (ed.) *English Around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 200–9.
- McCauslan, Jenny A. and Kleiner, Brian H. 1992: Women and organizational leadership. *Equal Opportunities International* 11(6): 12–15.
- Marra, Meredith forthcoming: Decisions in New Zealand Business Meetings. PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- Metge, Joan 1995: *New Growth from Old: The Whaanau in the Modern World*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.
- Meyerhoff, Miriam 1991: Review of Tannen 1990. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 11: 236–41.
- Nelson, Marie Wilson 1998: Women's ways: Interactive patterns in predominantly female research teams. In Jennifer Coates (ed.) *Language and Gender: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 354–72.
- Rearden, Kathleen Kelley 1995: *They Don't Get It Do They*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Romaine, Suzanne 1999: *Communicating Gender*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Smith-Hefner, Nancy J. 1988: Women and politeness: The Javanese example. *Language in Society* 17(4): 535–54.
- Stanworth, Michelle 1983: *Gender and Schooling*. London: Hutchinson.
- Stubbe, Maria 1998a: Researching language in the workplace: A participatory model. In *Proceedings of the Australian Linguistics Society Conference*, Brisbane, University of Queensland, July 1998. <http://www.cltr.uq.edu.au/als98>

- Stubbe, Maria 1998b: Striking a balance: Language, gender and professional identity. In Suzanne Wertheim, Ashlee C. Bailee, and Monica Corston-Oliver (eds) *Engendering Communication: Proceedings of the Fifth Berkeley Women and Language Conference*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California, pp. 545–56.
- Stubbe, Maria 1999: Just Joking and Playing Silly Buggers: Humor and Teambuilding on a Factory Production Line. Paper presented at NZ Linguistics Society Conference, Massey, 24–26 November 1999.
- Stubbe, Maria 2000: "Just do it . . . !": Discourse strategies for "getting the message across" in a factory production team. In *Proceedings of the Australian Linguistics Society Conference*, University of Western Australia, September 1999. <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/LingWWW/als99/>
- Stubbe, Maria forthcoming a: "I've got a little problem!" The discourse organization of task-oriented discussions in professional workplaces. (To appear in *Language in the Workplace Occasional Papers*).
- Stubbe, Maria forthcoming b: Miscommunication and Problematic Discourse in the Workplace. PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- Swann, Joan 1992: *Girls, Boys and Language*. Oxford and New York: Blackwell.
- Talbot, Mary M. 1998: *Language and Gender: An Introduction*. Oxford: Polity.
- Tannen, Deborah 1990: *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York: William Morrow.
- Tannen, Deborah (ed.) 1993: *Gender and Conversational Interaction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tannen, Deborah 1994a: *Gender and Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tannen, Deborah 1994b: *Talking from 9 to 5: Women and Men in the Workplace*. London: Virago Press.
- Troemel-Ploetz, Senta 1991: Review essay: Selling the apolitical. *Discourse & Society* 2(4): 489–502.
- Walker, Nancy A. 1981: Do feminists ever laugh? Women's humor and women's rights. *International Journal of Women's Studies* 4(1): 1–9.
- Weigel, M. Margaret and Weigel, Ronald M. 1985: Directive use in a migrant agricultural community: A test of Ervin-Tripp's hypothesis. *Language in Society* 14: 63–79.
- Wenger, Etienne 1998: *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- West, Candace 1984: When the doctor is a lady: Power, status and gender in physician–patient dialogues. *Symbolic Interaction* 7(1): 87–106.
- Wodak, Ruth (ed.) 1997: *Gender and Discourse*. London: Sage.
- Woods, Nicola 1988: Talking shop: Sex and status as determinants of floor apportionment in a work setting. In Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron (eds) *Women in Their Speech Communities*. London: Longman, pp. 141–57.