

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

An exploration of female leadership
language

case studies of senior women in Bahrain

Haleema Ebrahim

2013

Aston University

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An Exploration of Female Leadership Language: Case Studies of Senior Women in Bahrain

Haleema K. Ebrahim

Doctor of Philosophy (Doctor of Linguistics by Research)

ASTON UNIVERSITY

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Haleema K. Ebrahim

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Thesis Summary

This is a multiple case study of the leadership language of three senior women working in a large corporation in Bahrain. The study's main aim is to explore the linguistic practices the women leaders use with their colleagues and subordinates in corporate meetings. Adopting a Foucauldian (1972) notion of 'discourses' as social practices and a view of gender as socially constructed and discursively performed (Butler 1990), this research aims to unveil the competing discourses which may shape the leadership language of senior women in their communities of practice. The research is situated within the broader field of Sociolinguistics and the specific field of Language and Gender.

To address the research aim, a case study approach incorporating multiple methods of qualitative data collection (observation, interviews, and shadowing) was utilised to gather information about the three women leaders and produce a rich description of their use of language in and out of meeting contexts. For analysis, principles of Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) were used to organise and sort the large amount of data. Also, Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA) was adopted to produce a multi-faceted analysis of the subjects, their language leadership, power relations, and competing discourses in the context.

It was found that the three senior women enact leadership differently making variable use of a repertoire of conventionally masculine and feminine linguistic practices. However, they all appear to have limited language resources and even more limiting subject positions; and they all have to exercise considerable linguistic expertise to police and modify their language in order to avoid the 'double bind'. Yet, the extent of this limitation and constraints depends on the community of practice with its prevailing discourses, which appear to have their roots in Islamic and cultural practices as well as some Western influences acquired throughout the company's history. It is concluded that it may be particularly challenging for Middle Eastern women to achieve any degree of equality with men in the workplace because discourses of Gender difference lie at the core of Islamic teaching and ideology.

Key Words: Language and Gender, Case Study, Middle East, Arab World, Patriarchy, Islam, Community of Practice, FPDA

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Introduction

Leadership is considered an 'inherently masculine concept' (e.g. Eagly and Carli 2003; Martin Rojo and Esteban 2003; Sinclair 1998). The notion of 'think leadership, think male' (Schein 1975) has dominated Western corporate business cultures for decades (Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006; Olsson 2006). Historically, most leaders have been men. Therefore, the 'language of leadership often equates with the language of masculinity' (Hearn and Parkin 1988:21). Effective leaders have always been expected to use stereotypically masculine language characterised by assertiveness, competitiveness, task-orientation, and display of power (Bass 1998; Berryman-Fink 1997; Hearn & Parkin 1988; Martin 1993; Still 1996). In contrast, stereotypically feminine language has been perceived as deviant and alien to the practice of leadership (Ely 1988; Geis et al. 1990; Heilman et al. 1989; Trauth 2002).

While research in leadership and language has been carried out almost exclusively on male subjects, recently, there has been a growing interest in researching female leadership. With the emergence of the 'new wave' management model (Burton and Ryall 1995) which recognises the importance of a team-based framework, diversity and shared visions, traditionally feminine traits (such as empathy, people orientation, and consultative and collaborative language) have become an essential requirement for effective leaders.

While this 'female advantage' (Eagly and Carli 2003) should provide a unique opportunity for women seeking management positions, women leaders nowadays are still subject to the double bind (Alvesson and Billing 1997; Case 1994; Peck 2000; Still 1996) where they are perceived as 'unfeminine' when they use conventionally masculine leadership language or 'unprofessional' when they utilise conventionally feminine linguistic practices ; in both cases, they are evaluated as less competent leaders (Alvesson and Billing 1997; Brewis 2001; Chase 1988; Coates 1998; Kendall and Tannen 1997; Lakoff 1990; Wodak 1995).

In the Arab Middle East, the limited research in management and organisations (e.g. Ali 1992; 1995; 1999; Ali et al. 2003; Al-Lamki 1999; 2000; Metcalfe 2007; Rice 1999; Robertson et al. 2002; Tayeb 1997; Weir 2000) have found that traditional Islamic and cultural discourses constitute all aspects of the private and public sphere. Islamic principles assign men and women different but complementary roles, rights and responsibilities in society. Metcalfe (2007:60) notes '[t]he Quran, although it promotes equality, does emphasise difference'. The association of men with the public sphere and women with the private is still governing the prevailing gender system in Arab Islamic states (Abdalli 1996; El-Jardawi 1986; El-Rahmony 2002; Orabi 1999). According to Sharabi (1988; 2002) and Barakat (1993; 2004), this, along with the prevailing patriarchal practices, create and re-enforce inequality between men and women in Arab-Islamic societies (see also Ahmed 1998; Barakat 1993, 2004; Ghoussoub 1987; Keddie 2006; Metcalfe 2007; Mostafa 2005; Joseph 1996; Joseph & Slyomovices 2001; Sabbagh 2005; Segal et al. 1990). Yet, owing to processes of globalisation, modernisation and exposure to the Western value system, traditional Arab values underwent major changes during the 20th Century (Amin 1993; Al-Suwaidi 2008; Mostafa 2005), creating a contested space where people are often caught between dominant traditional Islamic and cultural discourses and more Western, progressive and liberal discourses¹.

Equally, various changes on political, economic and social levels in the Arab Middle Eastern countries have caused significant transformations in gender ideologies² in the region. However, research in management and gender in the Middle East (e.g. Al-Lamki 2000, 1999; Ozbilgin and Healy 2003) has revealed that while women have been entering the workforce with growing numbers 'shattering the glass ceiling' and becoming leaders and managers, they are often 'constituted along patriarchal lines with women's role as Mother emphasized' (Metcalfe 2007:58).

¹For definition of discourse(s), see Definitions of Key Terms below.

² For definition of ideology(ies), see Definitions of Key Terms below.

This research study aims to explore the leadership language of three senior business women working in an apparently male-dominated corporation in Bahrain—which Baxter (2010) identifies as a corporation where men are considered the leaders of the organisation, and women as the subordinates or the assistants of the men. The main goal and outcome of this study is to offer models of good practice in order to inspire women ‘taking the road less travelled’ and seeking management positions in this part of the world (the Arab Middle East) where the gender system is grounded on the principle of biological difference between men and women (Metcalfe 2007).

In the next section, I will explain the underlying reasons for the study. Why have I chosen the language of leadership? Why the language of female leadership? And finally, why the Arab Middle Eastern context?

Rationale

First, I will outline the reasons behind my focus on the language of leadership. Today, despite the considerable increase in the number of women entering the labour market, men are still occupying the most powerful positions in top management level in UK corporations and other countries worldwide (Adler and Izraeli 1994; Davidson and Burke 2004; EHRC 2008). In the UK, for instance, according to the reports of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC 2008), only 12% of FTSE 100 companies’ directors are women and it will take 73 years before gender equality is achieved in company boardrooms.

While studies in management (e.g. Bennis and Thomas 2002; Case 1994; Dwyer 1993; Gardner 1990; Gardner et al. 1996; O’Connor 1997; Parry 1998) have found that most managerial work revolves around communication, traditionally, leadership research has tended to focus on socio-economic, cultural and political factors hindering women from reaching leadership positions (Singh 2008; Vinnicombe, Singh, Burke, Billilmoria, & Huse 2008). Recently, however, studies such as Baxter (2010), McConnell-Ginet (2000), and others have

emphasised the importance of leadership language for both men and women as a possible factor in explaining the under-representation of women at senior management levels.

Equally, Holmes (2006) argues that it is essential for researchers to examine the gendered norms of workplace talk because it plays a major role in excluding women from leadership and powerful positions in business corporations. Therefore, based on the perspective that language could be a crucial factor behind the persistence of the 'glass ceiling' for women, I have chosen to research the language of leadership of senior women working at a male-dominated organisation in Bahrain.

Secondly, the reason behind my focus on the language of female rather than male leaders or perhaps both is driven by the relative lack of research in female leadership. While there has been a growing interest in the field of female leadership language as an alternative to the established masculine model, the majority of such research has taken place in organisations in the West: USA, New Zealand, Australia and the UK (Baxter 2008; Holmes 1990; 2006; West 1995; Elgin 1993).

Thirdly, I have chosen the Middle Eastern context because, as an ambitious Bahraini woman, I have a personal inclination towards the issue of gender and leadership in the Arab Middle East. Fundamentally, research in management and organisations is a rarity in the Arab world³ (e.g. Ali 1992; 1995; 1999; Al-Lamki 1999; 2000; Rice 1999; Robertson et al. 2002; Tayeb 1997; Weir 2000). Early studies have focused on applying Western models to the study of organisations in the Arab Middle East; however, as Metcalfe (2006:107) points out '[t]here is a need to acknowledge...that dominant western paradigms and western managerial research may not be

³ Robertson et al. (2001) point out that less than 1 per cent of the 236 articles published in the ten-year period between 1990 and 1999 in a prestigious international journal focused on an Arab country in the Middle East.

the most useful lens through which to explore cultural and global diversity'– in this case within Middle Eastern business organisations.

What possibly makes the Middle Eastern context a unique one in the field of gender, leadership and language is the strong effect of Islamic discourses in these countries on every aspect of individual's life and formation of their identities⁴ both in public and private spheres (Ali 1995; Ali et al. 2003; Metcalfe 2007). For this reason, I believe that this study will be a valuable contribution to this area of research as it will explore gender, language and leadership in such an organizational context that is yet to be investigated in any depth (Davidson and Burke 2004; Metcalfe 2006). Therefore, through this small-scale research, I hope to draw the attention and raise the concern over the possibility of Arab Middle Eastern women achieving equal status with men in the workplace.

To sum up, the overall aim of this research is to offer insights on the field of gender, leadership and language by exploring the Arab Middle Eastern context. However, it has three further aims. The first is to offer examples of good practice by investigating the language of effective leaders who might potentially serve as role models to other women in pre-dominantly patriarchal, male-dominated Arab Middle Eastern corporations. In that regard, Metcalfe (2007: 68) argues that there is a need for women's mentoring and role models in Bahrain. He notes '[a] key HR development is to create formal mentoring systems within organisation frameworks, although a limitation may be the lack of female professionals and role models to act as mentors and advisors'. The second is to examine the ways by which these senior women enact leadership in their contexts, and the third aim is to examine the unique role of the competing discourses in the context in shaping the women's leadership language in this study.

⁴For definition of identity(ies), see Definition of Key Terms below.

The Study

My research integrates a range of different sociolinguistics approaches: Butler's (1990) performativity theory, Foucault's (1972) theory of 'discourse' and 'power', and the 'community of practice' framework (CofP), concepts which I will explain fully in chapter one.

Above, I conduct my language and gender research within the social constructionist framework with its view of identity (including one's gender) as performed, constructed, maintained, and negotiated through language (e.g. Butler 1990; Crawford 1995; Holmes 2006; Mullany 2007).

One social constructionist view of gender is Butler's (1990) notion of performativity, influenced by Foucault's notion of discourse(s) as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972: 49). Butler (1990) perceives gender as a process or a performative social construct. Accordingly, individuals 'do' or 'perform' being a 'man' or a 'woman' by displaying language and behaviour which conform to/or resist the 'perfect model' perpetuated by the dominant gendered discourses in the particular organisation.

Additionally, I conduct my analysis within the CofP framework. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992:464) define CofP as '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'. According to Holmes and Stubbe (2003), using the CofP framework is essential in studying how individuals' gender identities are enacted and perceived against the norms of different workplaces.

Therefore, I use the CofP framework to examine the language of three Bahraini senior women working at three different departments in the company of Bahrainco (a pseudonym).

Approach

I use case study research because, as Mabry (2008) notes, it is mostly compatible with localised studies seeking to provide a rich description of the subjects and a deep understanding of the complexity of any given context.

My research study incorporates multiple methods of qualitative data collection (observation, interviews, and shadowing) in order to gather detailed information about how the three women leaders perform leadership, and produce a rich description of their use of language in and out of meeting contexts. For analysis, I utilise principles of Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) and Feminist Post Structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA) (see chapter three) to manage the data and produce a multi-faceted analysis of the subjects, their leadership language, power relations, and competing discourses in the context.

Before I begin this thesis, I will present definitions of key terminology which I consistently use and which I believe to be contested terms. Also, I use several potentially binary terms such as sex and gender, male and female, public and private spheres, institutional and ordinary language. According to sociolinguistic researchers (e.g. Mullany 2007; Talbot 1998), these binary terms are problematic and should be abandoned or deconstructed because they maintain social inequalities and stereotypes. In this study, I continue to use the terms themselves while taking a critical stance to such divisions. Therefore, I use them for pragmatic reasons; this is because I recognise that they are, in fact, used in everyday life. However, I shall bear in mind their interrelatedness and ideological implications (see Baxter 2006).

Definitions of Key terms

Here I provide brief definitions of how I understand some of the key terms used in this study. These terms and others are explored in more depth in Chapter one.

The gender system

In this thesis I adhere to Ridgeway & Correl's (2004) definition which considers that 'gender is an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, men and women, and organizing social relations of inequality on that basis of that difference'. They suggest that 'gender system involves core components such as 'widely shared, hegemonic cultural beliefs about gender and their effects in social relational contexts'.

Identity(ies)

According to Cameron (1996:47), in social research, there has been a shift from the essentialist view of identity (singular) as equal to 'who you are', to the more dynamic social constructionist view of identity(ies) as multiple and constantly shifting. Based on this perspective, an individual's identity –including one's gender– is performed, constructed, maintained, and negotiated through language (e.g. Butler 1990; Crawford 1995; Holmes 2006; Mullany 2007). The latter plural definition is based on Butler's (1990) performativity theory. Butler notes (1990:25) '[i]dentity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results'.

In this paper, I use the term 'identity(ies)' in the plural form to refer to the range of performed, unfixed, constantly shifting and contextually- based subject positions individuals take. I also follow Coates (2007), Mullany (2007), and others who suggest that one's gender identity should be viewed as a pluralised concept –femininities and masculinities. In that regard, Mullany (2007:23) notes '[m]asculinity and femininity are effects we perform by the activities in which we partake, not predetermined traits we possess'⁵.

Ideology and Discourse(s)

⁵For further discussion, see chapter one.

In my study, I make a distinction between the terms 'ideology' and 'discourse'. To start with, Mullany (2007:39) points out that the 'Marxist-laden' view of ideology was based on 'the assumption that all ideas and thoughts were a reflection of social reality, and especially the economic interests of a dominant group or class of people'. However, in this research study, I adopt Mullany's (2007) and Heller's (2001) definitions of ideology(ies). Heller (2001:120) notes that ideology(ies) are 'means of structuring and orienting domains of activity'.

In addition, I use the term 'discourse(s)' within a Foucauldian perspective to refer to the wider circle of cultural practices, value systems and beliefs of a certain society (Fairclough 1992)⁶. In this sense, Sunderland (2004:6) notes discourse is viewed as 'carrying ideology'.

Following Mullany (2007), Mills (1997), Sunderland (2004), and many others, I do not use the term 'ideology' in the Marxist manner, but rather as a concept within discourse theory. As Heller (2001:120) suggests, ideologies 'inform discursive production and content'.

I use other distinctions such as sex and gender, institutional and ordinary language. These will be discussed in details in the next chapter. This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first one (Literature Review) constitutes research literature on the context of my study—women's positioning in the Arab Middle East and Bahrain— as well as a review of research literature in the overarching fields of language, gender, and leadership. In the second chapter (Methodology) I outline the process and methods of data collection and data analysis, and I also provide essential information about the participants of the study. Chapters three, four, and five analyse the three case studies of the women leaders (Badria's, Hanan's, and Fatima's). These chapters are structured to answer my inquiries and research questions about the senior women's leadership language and the discourses that shape their linguistic practices. In chapter six (Discussion), I carry out a comparative analysis of the three leaders in order to draw general

⁶For an explanation of the distinction between the singular form (discourse) and the plural form (discourses), see chapter one.

insights from my study. For each research question, I review and assess the main findings in relation to past research literature, and examine the ways in which this study can contribute to the fields of leadership, language, and gender in the workplace.

Chapter One

Literature Review

1. Introduction

The literature review chapter comprises two major sections. The first one (section 2) constitutes research literature on the context of my study, most specifically women's positioning in the Arab Middle East in general and Bahrain in particular. The second one (section 3) is a review of research literature in the overarching fields of language, gender, and leadership as they relate to my study.

2. Background/Context of the Study

This section will contextualise my study of women leaders in Bahrain. I will start by briefly introducing the Arab Middle East with particular emphasis on women's position in this context, taking in consideration different political, economic, religious and cultural factors. This will be followed by an investigation of Arab Middle Eastern women in the workplace.

The immediate context will be explored next as I will provide essential background information about Bahrain, working women in Bahrain, and finally the field site: Bahrainco. This will provide a better understanding of the women leaders in my study, their language choices, practices, and the challenges they face in the workplace.

2.1 The Arab Middle East

The Middle East is a term used to refer to a region comprising a number of Muslim countries including Arab and non-Arab states (Roberston, Al-Khateeb and Al-Habib 2002). Since Bahrain is an Arabic speaking country, the focus of this study will be the Arab Middle East. In that regard, Weir (2003:4) states '[t]he Arab Middle East comprises a wide variety of states and economies, and a diverse terrain, containing some of the richest and poorest peoples of the world. No simple formula can possibly do justice to its diversity'. Therefore, in my study of

women in Bahrain, I intend to refer mostly to the field research undertaken in Arab Middle Eastern countries and especially the Gulf States (Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar), because they share a somewhat homogenous history, economy, culture, linguistic features and location on the Arabian Peninsula (Weir 2003).

When compared to other Arab countries, the Gulf States are known for their oil-based rich economy and still existing tribal system. The variation in the economies of Arab Middle Eastern countries has significant implications for women. The rich economy of the Gulf States has limited the need for female labour and has restricted women's participation in the workplace (Moghadam 2005). On the other hand, countries like Algeria and Egypt, out of economic necessity, provided opportunities for women to join the workplace and initiated new changes by means of legislation to women's education and employment opportunities, which in turn affected gender ideologies in these countries (Baden 1992; Ghoussoub 1987; Graham-Brown 2001).

In contrast, the gender system in the Gulf States is still moulded around Islamic teachings and ideologies. Metcalfe (2011:131) points out that all Gulf countries, including Bahrain, are Islamic states, where 'state and religious authorities are intertwined'. Although this varies from one state to another, Islamic Sharia⁷ is the basis for a significant part of the laws in these countries.

2.1.1 Islam

The essence of Islam is in its name, which denotes 'submission' and 'surrender' the whole self to one God⁸ (Abou El Azayem and Hedayat-Diba 1994; Mernissi 2004). It is a religion of practice; to be a Muslim is to believe in one God and his Prophet (Mohammed), to pray five

⁷The meaning of "Sharia" in Islam is diverse and complex but it mainly denotes a set of rules based on the interpretation of divine laws as expressed in the Quran and by the Prophet (Vikør 1998).

⁸In this regard, Mernissi (2004:22) notes '[t]raditional society produced Muslims who were literally "submissive" to the will of the group'.

times a day, to undertake a pilgrimage to the holy place of Mecca, and to share your wealth with your fellow human beings (Weir 2003).

Yet, most will argue that Islam is much more than the above fundamentals. As Weir (2003:6) puts it 'Islam is a religion which claims universal applicability'. Indeed, it is a way of life. It is a system that governs all aspects of the 'well-being' of men and women (Metcalf 2007; Ali 1995; Ali et al. 2003). The Quran and Hadith⁹ are the main sources from which Muslims extract the political, economic, and social rules, and strive to apply them in their daily lives. These Sharia-governed readings are variable and especially deferential with regard to women's role in society (Mernissi 2001; Metcalf 2010, 2011; Roald 2001). In order to examine the implications for women in this context, I will review the literature which addresses the questions: what constitutes an Arab Middle Eastern society? How does Islam shape and constitute the value system in the Arab Middle East culture? And finally, how does such a value system affect women in general and working women in particular? This will be reviewed next.

2.1.2 The Arab-Islamic Culture and Value System

'There is no moment from the past that we can point to as a time in which Arab (or Arab-Islamic) culture was fixed' (Joseph & Slyomovices 2001:1). Ali (1993) and Barkat (2004) problematise research that seeks to draw generalisations about the Arab world due to the complex, contradictory and changing nature of Arab societies. In fact, through processes of globalisation, modernisation and exposure to the Western value system, traditional Arab values underwent major changes during the 20th Century (Amin 1993; Al-Suwaidi 2008; Mostafa 2005).

However, Muna (1980) and others argue that, despite the differences in economic and political conditions, Arab societies share relatively similar ideologies and value systems stemming from the shared history and religion of their respective countries. To illustrate, Arab societies are

⁹Hadith refers to the genre of Islamic literature which documents the sayings and instructions of the Prophet Mohammed (Esposito 1998)

known to be more collectively oriented than Western societies (Ali, Taqi and Krishnan 1997; Al-Suwaidi 2008; Birenbaum-Carmeli 1992; Mikulincer et al. 1993; Mostafa 2005; Weir 2003). Schwartz (1990:140) defines collectivism as 'giving the priority to in-group goals over personal goals'. According to Hofstede's (1980; 2001) correlational studies, Arab societies range in a continuum of collectivism with the Gulf States being highly collectivist communities with a long-term commitment to the group (e.g. family, tribe, organisation or authority). This collectivist orientation is constructed and reproduced through socialisation processes (Joseph and Slyomovices 2001:6-7) where individuals are encouraged to associate themselves with family and relatives rather than live as 'autonomous separate selves'. Such collectivist values and practices have several manifestations in society (e.g. the family is obligated to provide financial security for its members; also, individuals' actions, acceptable or not, reflect on the family as a whole¹⁰).

Yet perhaps the most notable characteristic of Arab-Islamic society lies in its patriarchal practices. Generally, the patriarchal system in the Arab world privileges the male and elder. Therefore, the most powerful individuals in society are often the eldest males; yet, both men and women acquire more power and authority as they age (Barakat 1993, 2004; Ghoussoub 1987; Mustafa 2005; Joseph 1996; Joseph & Slyomovices 2001; Sabbagh 2005; Segal et al. 1990). These patriarchal relations, Ahmed (1989) argues, are a product of Arabic traditions or '*urf*' (custom) rather than Islamic principles.

It is important to note that, in the Arab world, the distinction between the public and private spheres is somewhat blurred; the private sphere is a much more contested space than it is in the West due to the significance of family and kinship in the society structure. Joseph and Slyomovices (2001:12) state '[c]laims of kin and community precede those of state and civil

¹⁰ Joseph and Slyomovices (2001:6) further note '[t]he reputation of the family as a whole is borne by each of its members'.

society. Citizens may not separate public and private spheres. The boundaries in this triangulation of state, civil society and kinship or private domain are highly fluid’.

2.1.3 Women in the Arab Middle East

The question of women is perhaps the most controversial issue in the Arab Middle East. Kandiyoti (1991:52) explains that women in post- colonial Muslim societies are ‘part-being caught between contradictions of universalist constitutions defining them as citizens, of Sharia’- derived Personal Status laws¹¹ limiting their rights in the family, and of a postcolonial malaise burdening them with being the privileged bearers of national authenticity’.

2.1.3.1 The Gender System: between Religion and Culture

The traditional association of men with the public sphere and women with the private is still governing the prevailing gender system in Arab Islamic states (Abdalli 1996; El-Jardawi 1986; El-Rahmony 2002; Orabi 1999). This, to a large extent, is due to the predominant Islamic traditions of gender difference that restrict women’s role in the public sphere (Al-Lail 1996). Metcalfe (2007:60) argues ‘The Quran, although it promotes equality, does emphasise difference’.

The traditional gender system in Islam is grounded on the principle of biological difference between men and women. According to this principle, men and women are assigned different but complementary roles, rights and responsibilities in society (Metcalfe 2011). Therefore, Islamic scholars make a distinction between equality and *equity* (Badawi 2002; Sabbagh 2005; Tohmé-Tabet 2001; Weiss 2003). Equality refers to the notion of the sameness of treatment, roles and expectations regardless of the sex. Equity, however, is based on the essentialist view that men and women are naturally capable of playing different roles in society and carrying out different responsibilities, and therefore, should be provided with the resources to help them

¹¹See next section.

perform their duties. Based on that perspective, in Islamic Sharia laws, men inherit twice as much as women because they are the breadwinners and the ones responsible for providing for the whole family.

Another manifestation of the gender difference principle prevailing in many Arab Islamic societies is the concept of 'qiwama' (protection), which denotes a relationship of dependency between men and women. It is where men are responsible for protecting women's dignity and honour (Roland 2001; Metcalfe 2007). In practice, the concept of 'male protection' is used to disguise unequal power relations where men acquire the right to control all aspects of women's lives (Metcalfe 2011).

Moreover, Sharabi (1988) and Barakat (1993; 2004) argue that the prevailing gender system in the Middle East and North Africa creates and reinforces inequality between men and women in society; it is constantly constructed and reproduced by patriarchal institutions such as the family. Equally, reports by the United Nations and World Bank (UNDP 2003; 2005) conclude that gender and social relations in the Middle Eastern states are governed by patriarchal structures in the family involving an unequal balance of power in the private sphere, which is legitimised and enforced by Islamic Sharia law (Personal Status Law). In Arabic Islamic countries, there are no definite boundaries between state and religion, especially in the question of women and family. Therefore, Personal Status Law or so-called 'Family law' (e.g. marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody, and so on) is placed in the hands of religious institutions, which, many people would argue, are hierarchal, patriarchal, and gender biased¹² (Baden 1992; Joseph & Slyomovices 2001; Metcalfe 2007; Ottaway 2004; Sabbagh 2005). What is the nature

¹² For instance, family law legitimises polygamy. Islamic sharia allows a man to marry up to four wives provided he guarantees equal treatment. Many researchers and historians argue that in Islam, polygamy was allowed only after the Battle of Uhud (in 625 C.E) in which many men died leaving behind dependent wives and children. However, patriarchal governments and authorities have interpreted this permission differently and carried this practice on ever since (Muñoz 1999).

of patriarchal relationships in the family and how do they shape the wider gender system?

These issues will be discussed further below.

2.1.3.2 Family in the Arab Middle East

The family is the most important and strongest state institution in Arabic societies. It is the core unit of political, economic, and social systems (Moghadam 1992; Joseph & Slyomovices 2001; Sabbagh 2005). In politics, the family is considered a key resource where politicians 'turn family relationships into powerful political tools' (e.g. when leaders and politicians are assigning positions and posts, they often favour their own family members). Joseph and Slyomovices (2001:5) state that '[s]ince family is patriarchal, politics also privileges patriarchy'. In the Arab Middle East, politicians assign themselves as heads of family or patriarchs (metaphorically), often using family idioms to justify their use of power over people (Joseph and Slyomovices 2001). To understand this relationship better, I will explain briefly the nature of power relationships between the father, mother, and children in the traditional Arab family.

According to Barakat (1993)¹³, the traditional Arab family is a patriarchal one, where the father has the utmost authority as well as the responsibility of protecting the well-being of '*his*' family. It is *his* family because the children take *his* name and are expected to obey *his* orders and instructions without question. The father is the sole bread-winner in the traditional Arab family and he is the one who makes the rules of the house and makes sure that everyone, including 'the wife', complies with his orders and supports him in his endeavours.

The wife is the father's delegate in the house. She carries out *his* orders and acts as a mediator between him and the children. Therefore, I believe, just like middle management, the wife has to strike a balance between her different roles of being a subordinate to the husband (supporting him and carrying out his rules in the house), her other comparatively powerful position as a

¹³Also see A-Krenawi (1999) and Ginat (1987).

'manager' or 'leader' of the household, and finally that of a mother (who is expected to provide love and security as well as training and life skills to her children).

Children in the Arab world, Barakat (1993) claims, owing to political and socio-economic reasons, are traditionally raised in a manner that encourages dependency on the parents and discourages individualism and undertaking any challenges or difficulties¹⁴.

I explained earlier that in such a collectivist society, there is a pressure to conform and sacrifice one's personal wishes for the interest of the whole family. Arab values rest in loyalty to one's family. Notions of personal autonomy and independence are often regarded negatively by traditional Arabs (Whitaker 2009).

Combined with patriarchy, traditional Arabic values (collectivism, loyalty, dependency) have significant effects on women, as they are always expected to identify themselves as some man's daughter, sister, wife, etc. (Joseph and Slyomovices 2001; Mernissi 2004). Therefore, Islamic ideology (i.e. legitimising different gender roles) and traditional Arab culture co-construct women's position as inferior in the private sphere and restrict their participation in the public spheres of politics and the workplace.

It is established that Arab Middle Eastern workplaces differ significantly from Western models (Al Habshi 1993; Hofstede 1980; Tayeb 1992; Weir 2003). Therefore, it is important to explore the major cultural practices of 'typical Arab Middle Eastern organisations' (Weir 2003) in order to enhance our understanding of Bahrainco's¹⁵ corporate culture and provide significant insights

¹⁴ There are notable variations in the ways girls and boys are raised (e.g. girls are taught to be modest and submissive to male authority and boys are taught to be strong and authoritarian). This is in order to fulfil the culturally prescribed gender roles (girls as mothers and wives and boys as fathers and guardians (Al Krenawi & Graham 1999)).

¹⁵ Bahrainco is the context of my study. It is a pseudonym for the name of the company where the leaders of my three case studies work.

on the women seniors, their language choices, and leadership practices. In the next section, I will review the limited literature on Arab Middle Eastern workplaces.

2.1.3.3 Arab Middle Eastern Workplaces

Research in management and organisations is a rarity in the Arab world (e.g. Ali 1992; 1995; 1999; Al-Lamki 1999; 2000; Rice 1999; Robertson et al. 2002; Tayeb 1997; Weir 2000). While early studies have focused on applying Western models to the study of organisations in the Arab Middle East; recently, this approach has appeared inadequate. Weir (2003:10) explains that 'the very texture and processes of management in this region remained different from their Western models'.

Islamic and Arabic values permeate all aspects of the private and public spheres. Beside segregation between men and women's jobs in the workplace, Islamic teachings and values have profound effects on working ideologies and individuals' commitment to their work. For instance, there is a so-called 'Islamic work ethic' (Ali 1992). Originally rooted in the Quran, this concept attaches divinity and holiness to hard work, by promising hard workers purification from sins.

Other Quranic principles that have had significant effects on Arab organisational and cultural practices are 'shura' or 'diwan' which basically denotes consultation (Tayeb 1997:360-1). Based on the Quran, Metcalfe (2007:57) further explains 'those who conduct their affairs through consultation are among the ones on whom God's mercy and heavenly reward will be bestowed'. Also, concepts such as 'ithad' (unity), 'adala' (justice, balance) and 'khilafah' (trusteeship) are considered pillars of relationships in the public sphere (Rice 1999). Therefore, in an organisational context, there is emphasis on humility, respect, team work, collaboration, and consulting colleagues.

Consequently, typical Arab firms are network-based (Weir 2003). Perhaps unlike traditional Western organisations, building relationships based on trust (including family or non-family, employer-employee, employee-employee, etc.) is the most important goal of business besides maintaining a wide network (Rice 1999).

How do these values and work ethics apply to working women in the Arab Middle East, and how do they shape their experiences in the workplace? The place of Arab women in the workplace will be explored next.

2.1.3.4 Arab Women in the Workplace

The dominant ideology of different gender roles has established Arab women as the core unit of the family. It is in the private sphere of the family where women perform their sacred duty of mothering children¹⁶, the 'building blocks' of society. Therefore, women's work in the Arab Middle East has always been considered secondary and less necessary (El-Rahmony 2002; Metcalfe 2007; Orabi 1999; Sabbagh 2005; Tohmé-Tabet 2001; UNDP 2003).

There is limited literature in management, gender, and Islamic scholarship (Metcalfe 2007).

There are very few studies researching women in Arab Middle Eastern workplaces. El-Azhary (2003) maintains that while women are granted the right to work, labour laws are often shaped by 'urf' (custom) and Sharia. Metcalfe (2007:64) argues further that human resource policies maintain labour market segregation¹⁷, which in turn 'reflects the equal but different philosophy underpinning Islam'. Also, while governments are making tremendous efforts to promote women in the public spheres of politics and the workplace, it is still in the context of the 'Islamic gender regime' (Metcalfe 2011:133). Equally, management and gender studies in the Middle East (e.g.

¹⁶ Many Arabic people would argue that women's role is even greater and more important than men's, and that by assigning them to the household, they are privileged rather than disadvantaged (Joseph 2001).

¹⁷ e.g. women occupy jobs associated with stereotypical feminine traits such as teaching and nursing, and men occupy jobs associated with stereotypical masculine traits (Powell 1999)

Al-Lamki 2000, 1999; Ozbilgin and Healy 2003) reveal that even when women 'shatter the glass ceiling' and become leaders and managers, they are often 'constituted along patriarchal lines with women's role as Mother emphasized' (Metcalfe 2007:58). 'The glass ceiling' is a term coined by Morrison et al. (1987) to refer to the invisible barrier which restricts women's careers and prevents them from reaching senior positions in a company's hierarchy.

However, due to various changes at the political, economic and social levels in the Arab Middle Eastern countries, significant transformation of gender ideologies has taken place. This will be discussed next.

2.1.3.5 Women and Change

In recent history, there has been a revival of the 1980s fundamentalist movements which emphasise men's superiority and strive to maintain and strengthen the already existing patriarchal system in Arab Islamic societies (Ghoussoub 1987; Graham-Brown 2001; Nazir and Tommpert 2005). In contrast, women's rights' movements have also been active in other parts of the region (especially Egypt). But although Middle Eastern women activists found it difficult to identify with early Western feminism¹⁸, they tried to find some common ground between the Western notion of equality and the Islamic gender ideologies through reinterpreting Sharia laws in a more positive light and 'attempting a progressive reading of the Quran, the Hadith and of early Islamic history' (Kandiyoti 1991:1). They believe that Islam has great potential for women and is, in fact, held back by the conservative interpretations of the fundamentalist movement¹⁹ (Baden 1992; Badran 2005; El-Saadawi 1980; Ghoussoub 1987; Graham-Brown 2001; Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies 2004; Mernissi 2004; Ronald 2001).

¹⁸ There is a strong belief that the principles of Muslims and feminists are not compatible (e.g. Moghadam 2005)

¹⁹ Feminists argue that sexist practices such as polygamy, incest, and child marriage existed long before Islam (Time of Ignorance), and that Islam actually condemned and placed limits and restrictions on these practices because total repudiation of the patriarchal practices would have been too extreme for Arabs at the time (Muñoz 1999; Rodgers-Miller 2005)

In fact, many argue that patriarchy is not a product of Islam at all; it is rather a product of culture which existed long before Islam, and which has been maintained by the highly tribal and hierarchical system in the Arab World²⁰ (Ahmed 1998; Keddie 2006; Metcalfe 2007; Muñoz 1999). These claims are often supported by examples of Arabic Muslim women leaders throughout Islamic history. Among these is Khadija, the Prophet's first wife who was the main benefactor and patron of Islam at the time. She was actually an entrepreneur and the Prophet had been working for her before she proposed to him. When she died in AD 619, the year of her death was known as 'Year of Sorrow'. Another interesting example is the Prophet's other wife, Aisha, who led one of the most important battles in Islamic history right after the death of the Prophet. Other examples from the Prophet's life were his daughter, Fatima, and his granddaughter, Zainab, both known for their great oratory skills and outstanding speeches (Keddie 2006). These arguments and many similar others constitute a great deal of Arabic feminist research and literature that aim at raising consciousness of the gender inequalities taking place in the name of Islam (Metcalfe 2007).

A big shift in the history of women in the Arab Islamic world took place in 1995, when a UN convention (Beijing Platform for Women) created a global action plan known as the millennium development goals (MDGs) seeking to achieve eight anti-poverty outcomes by 2015. The most important objective was to end gender inequality and empower women²¹ (Metcalfe 2011). All Arab Gulf States signed the UNMDG declaration, which entailed commitment to implement national gender plans to aid and monitor women's progress²². However, reform plans have faced

²⁰Muñoz (1999) claims that patriarchy had existed in the pre-Islamic era, and the Quran introduced values that weakened patriarchal practices and the whole tribal system at the time. However, the Bedouin Arabs, while they accepted Islam as a religion, they managed to keep the patriarchal practices by interpreting the Quran in a way that preserves the prevailing societal structures.

²¹The main aim of the MDGs is to change the traditional outlook on the role of women both in society and in the workforce by 2015. The sub-goals are many: e.g. to eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education, widen women's share of the nation's workforce, eliminate discrimination against job seeking women, and so on (Linden, Hak-Su, Hafiz Pasha 2006).

²² Reports by UN and World Economic Forum (WEF) emphasise the importance of empowering Arab Gulf women for the future development of the region (UNDP 2009).

significant resistance to women's equality (Freedom House 2010; Walby 2009). In fact, research has found that women themselves are not challenging the Islamic gender regime (Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies 2004; Metcalfe 2011; Ramadan 2009). This is because of the prevailing patriarchal and traditional masculinist attitudes in the Gulf countries, and despite the on-going debate on the interpretation of Islamic Sharia law with regard to women's role in the public sphere (Badran 2005; Metcalfe 2006, 2007; Ramadan 2009). Indeed, in the Gulf States in particular, the distinction between cultural practices and Islamic laws is unclear. This is due to the Bedouin inhabitants of the Gulf States and their long history as traditionally male-dominated communities and tribes (Abu Bakr 2002).

My research takes place in Bahrain, the smallest Gulf State. In the next section, I will introduce necessary background information about Bahrain, as it relates to my study of female leadership.

2.1.4 Women in Bahrain

Bahrain is a small country comprising a series of islands in the Persian Gulf. It is considered a highly progressive state hosting a mixture of cultures and religious backgrounds, and an exemplar in women empowerment in the region (Al Gharaibeh 2011).

Bahrain was the first Gulf country to introduce girls' schooling in 1928. Currently, 60-70 % of Bahraini women hold university degrees, and the female illiteracy rate was down to 11.7 % in 2006 (ABEGS 2010; Al Gharaibeh 2011). Also, over 34 % of Bahraini women are economically active; they can be found at the highest levels of government, as ministers, ambassadors and members of Parliament. They are also found in prominent positions in the private sector—as entrepreneurs, bank directors, presidents of large corporations, senior partners in law firms, and as corporate directors of finance, public relations, and human resources (Al Gharaibeh 2011; LMRA 2010; Nazir and Tommpert 2005).

In 2001, the current leadership initiated the Bahrain National Charter, a programme aiming at economic and political transformation. Essentially, the national charter is embedded in Islamic values and committed to Sharia as a guiding principle (e.g. emphasising the importance of family in the Bahraini society and role of women in the family, different gender roles, the concept of 'qiwama' (section 2.1.3.1) and so on (Metcalf 2007). Therefore, according to the Kingdom of Bahrain and International Labour Organisation's (ILO) report (2002), while corporations were encouraged to recruit women, workplaces remained gender-segregated to a large extent, and women were mostly recruited to 'women friendly' jobs such as healthcare and social relations and were kept away from traditionally 'male jobs' such as architecture, engineering and other technical fields (see also Al Gharaibeh 2011; Metcalf 2007; Moghadam 2005; UNDP 2003).

However, as Metcalf (2007) argues, ever since the changes in the National Charter in 2002, Bahrain has been considered a leading example for female empowerment in the region. Metcalf (2011:135) defines empowerment as 'an interactive process through which less powerful individuals experience social change, enabling them to actively change their lives and communities'. Female empowerment denotes overall change, development, and better opportunities, especially in the fields of education and the workplace (Moghadam 2005; Farah 2006; Walby 2009; Syed 2010). But above all, it indicates women's financial and social independence through processes of awareness raising or 'Conscientization'²³ (Metcalf 2011:136; UNDP 2005).

The changes of the National Charter have granted women, for the first time in the region, significant and considerable political rights such as the right to vote, to participate in the municipal and parliamentary elections, and to benefit from newly formed legislations that aims at protecting women from economic and political discrimination (Al Gharaibeh 2011; CEDAW

²³ Metcalf (2011: 136) notes '[c]onscientization is a process through which women realize their relative lack of status to men, and so involves the development of individual agency. Underpinning agency is a woman's ability to mobilize and organize collectively to facilitate social change'

2002; Metcalfe 2007; Nazir and Tommpert 2005; United Nations Development for Women 2007). The government has also shown commitment to women's rights through supporting a newly established women's organisation, the 'Supreme Council for Women' (SCW), which is under the leadership of the king's wife and directly reports to the king (Metcalfe 2011).

According to the decree of Bahrain's National Charter, SCW's goals are: 'to equip women to take up their rightful role in the society, establishing constitutional and civil mechanisms for the development and empowerment of women in Bahrain' (Kingdom of Bahrain and United Nations 2003).

To empower Bahraini women in the workplace, the government (represented by the SWC) has been supporting and monitoring women's progress in all public and private companies in Bahrain. Ever since, perhaps for political reasons, empowering women has been a major concern for most, if not all, small and large corporations in Bahrain, including Bahrainco.

2.2 Context of the Study: Bahrainco

My case study of female leadership takes place in one of the largest companies in the region. Bahrainco plays a major role in developing the country in all aspects, especially employment and training as it employs over 3200 people. The management claims that their main goal is to empower the people of Bahrain; therefore, they not only provide professional training in technical and workplace skills for the company's employees but offer training for outsiders through setting up programmes in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour (Bahrainco's website; Bahrainco Annual Review 2007). For research confidentiality purposes, the nature of Bahrainco's business will not be revealed in this work.

I have chosen Bahrainco as a context for this study for several reasons. First of all, it is partly because of my personal connection as well as easy access to the company, as both my husband and my father work as senior employees with considerable amount of influence at

Bahrainco. Secondly, this corporation has had a significant transformative effect on the social life structure of the Bahraini community. According to Bahrainco's Annual Review (2007:2011), the company, having been originally established by Western expatriates, generated the new modern culture at a time when average Bahrainis had no exposure to Western civilisation and value systems. While this doesn't make Bahrainco a representative or a typical corporation in Bahrain, it indicates its importance, not only in contributing to Bahrain's economy, but also in forming Bahrain's social history and 'setting the bar' for other major corporations to follow.

Thirdly, Bahrainco was established by Westerners (who applied Western organisational structures, value systems, work ethics, and so on), and later on was 'Bahrainised' (totally owned by the Bahraini government and managed by Bahrainis (Bahrainco Annual Review 2007)). This has had tremendous effect on shaping Bahrainco as a unique and hybrid corporation constituting a mixture of Western and Arabic workplace cultures.²⁴

Unfortunately, there is not much literature written about 'Bahrainco culture' or the effect of Bahrainco on the personal and social lives of its employees and Bahraini society in general. Therefore, the information in this section is going to be mainly based on my own experience as a daughter and a wife of senior Bahrainco employees.

To start with, Bahrainco is a huge hierarchical company. While the same hierarchical structure can be found in all sections (e.g. Business planning, Engineering, Human Resources, Public Relations, and many others), each department/section differs in its specialisation, gender composition, and so on (Bahrainco's website). Employees hold positions ranging from grades 1 (for manual jobs, e.g. janitors, messengers, etc.) to 12 (e.g. specialists, head of projects, etc.)

²⁴ Organisational culture is a huge and controversial topic, and out of the scope of this work. Therefore, as an applied linguist, I will be referring more to notions of discourse and communities of practice (sections 3.1 and 3.1.3 respectively) than to notions of culture.

for non-managerial posts. Managerial positions, on the other hand, start from grade 12 and above for managers and GMs (general managers) (Bahrainco's website).

Moreover, in my view, one of the most notable characteristics of Bahrainco is the male-dominated and traditionally masculine culture. I believe that the circumstances of its establishment (the hybrid culture) and the nature of its business have contributed a great deal to its having the characteristics of a 'male-dominated organisation' (Baxter 2010:23), with a strong patriarchal culture (where men hold most, if not all, decision making positions).

Consequently, women have always held subordinate roles rather than senior ones. Recently, in order to support SCW's plan to empower women, Bahrainco appointed two women as managers of sections and a number of other women were given supervisory positions. This is arguably part of the company's bigger plan towards providing equal opportunities to all employees (Bahrainco's website; Bahrain's News Agency Website 2007).

In my view, the hybrid culture of Bahrainco has contributed greatly to the formation of its members' personal and professional identities as well as their interactional practices, especially women as I hope to explore in this study.

Since my research is concerned with examining the language of women's leadership, reviewing research in the fields of language, gender and leadership is indispensable to this study.

3. Language, gender and leadership

This is an interdisciplinary research revolving around a sociolinguistic investigation of the language of women leaders in the workplace. According to Leeuwen (2005), there are three types of interdisciplinary research: 1. Centralist: Research which revolves around a single discipline but still relates to other fields of knowledge. 2. Pluralist: Research which places particular issues and problems at the centre and refers to other disciplines as they relate to the issue of investigation and 3. Integrationist: Research which integrates all disciplines equally in

order to address the problem of investigation. Accordingly, my research belongs to the centralist model where sociolinguistics is at the core of my study with variable influences from other disciplines where I will be drawing heavily on the interrelated fields of language, gender, and leadership.

Underlying the whole study is the complex concept of discourse. Hence, the literature review section starts by introducing this important notion, followed by sections on gender and leadership as they relate to language and discourse. Also, since this is a study about women leaders in Bahrain, I provide a section on leadership with specific reference to leadership research in the Arab Middle East. I organise the three concepts into discrete categories for the purpose of clarity and cohesion. However, I recognise that, naturally, there are overlaps and merging between the headings with the concept of power infusing them all.

Additionally, in my research study, I adopt the CofP frame-work, which allows me to analyse the language and leadership practices of women in their various communities and workplaces. The CofP framework will be introduced in section 3.1.3. The concept of discourse will be discussed next.

3.1 Language and Discourse

Linguists use the term 'discourse' to denote a variety of meanings and functions, ranging from a traditional linguistics view of language as de-contextualised forms to the view of discourse as a set of social practices. According to Cameron (2001), there are three working definitions of 'discourse':

First, there is the structural view of discourse as 'language above the sentence'. According to this view, discourse involves any text which is constituted by a coherent sequence of related sentences.

Second, Cameron (2001) refers to the functional view of discourse as 'language in use'. Discourse in this sense refers to the actual language used in different contexts to serve a variety of functions. Researchers adopting this definition are often interested in investigating interlocutors' use of certain language patterns (e.g. speech acts) to fulfil conversational goals and create social interactions. An example of discourse of this type is institutional discourse. This is the type of goal-oriented language found in institutions and corporations such as classrooms, workplaces, and so on. According to Drew and Heritage (1992), institutional discourse is distinct from ordinary language in the sense that it is governed by asymmetrical relationships and prescribed roles and identities.²⁵

Finally, according to Cameron (2001), discourse in the third sense is used in the plural form 'discourses' to refer to the post-structuralist and post-modernist view of language as a set of 'social practices'. According to Thornborrow (2002), post-structuralist and post-modernist theorists view social reality as discursively and ideologically constituted where individuals constantly shift, change, construct and reconstruct their identities.

Equally in Linguistics, Litosseliti (2006:9) points out that there has been 'a shift from the view that we use language in certain ways because of who we are to the view that who we are is partly because of the way we use language'. In this sense, Cameron (2001) argues that people do not only draw upon discourse(s) to express their identities and ideologies, but they are actually shaped by the available discourses in their specific contexts.

The third definition of discourse is based on the Foucauldian notion of discourse(s) as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972: 49). This is a much broader conception of discourse(s) which has informed a great deal of feminist linguistics research (e.g. Baxter 2003; 2010; Mullany 2007; Sunderland 2004)

²⁵ According to Mullany (2007), the binary distinction between institutional versus ordinary language is imprecise, and there are indeed occurrences of ordinary language taking place within institutional settings.

In this research study, I occasionally draw on the second definition of discourse when I analyse the women leaders' use of language and leadership practices with colleagues and subordinates. However, my emphasis will be on the third, Foucauldian, definition of discourse as a social practice. Foucault's theory of discourse will be discussed next.

3.1.1 Discourse Theory

Discourse theory is fundamentally influenced by the philosopher and cultural historian Michel Foucault (1972). Under the premise of this theory, discourses reflect the wider circle of cultural practices, value systems and beliefs of a certain society (Fairclough 1992). Holmes (2006:12) argues that the principles of discourse theory resonate with the social constructionist's view of language as a social practice (Butler 1990; Cameron 2001; Crawford 1995), through which 'individuals engage in constructing aspects of their interpersonal and intergroup identity'.

Drawing on Foucault (1972), Mills (1997:17) explains the process of identifying discourses in any context of study:

A discursive structure can be detected because of the systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context, and because of the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving.

Equally, Brewis (2001) maintains that discourses become dominant through a process of naturalising certain ways of life, beliefs, behaviours, etc. and making them common sense to people in their different communities. These discourses are then emphasised and maintained by talking and writing about them through the mass media and other channels. People are encouraged to adhere to these discourses, which then may become mainstream thinking, and when they do, are rewarded and recognised for it. Others, however, choose to resist and may eventually trigger a 'competing discourse'. Competing discourses are conceptualised by Kamada (2010:27) as opposing discourses which come into conflict. Consequently, the more

powerful discourse will maintain its 'hegemonic position' until other powerful discourses surface. Drawing on Gramsci's (1971) 'theory of hegemony', Mullany (2007:38) explains that hegemony is 'based on how power is enacted in society through means of gaining consent'. Also, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003:43) point out that 'the most effective form of domination is the assimilation of the wider population to one's worldview'.

Additionally, Baxter (2003) points out that competing discourses provide us with a range of subject positions among which we could shift and change according to the situation and interlocutors. Baxter here stresses the essential notion of individuals' agency, which lies in the core of discourse theory. Rather than viewing individuals as passive bodies, this theory supposes that people have some degree of ability to conform or resist any given discourse in their context.²⁶ Fairclough (1999; 2001) suggests that sometimes when individuals resist dominant discourses in their communities, they create new discourses that may bring about social change forever.²⁷

Moreover, Foucault (1980) argues that discourses are constituted through a combination of knowledge and power relations.²⁸ Also, Fairclough (1995) claims that competing discourses shape power structures in any given society. The relationship between discourse and power will be discussed next.

3.1.1.1 Discourse and Power

One of the most influential and inspiring accounts of power is that of Foucault (1972; 1975; 1980). According to the Foucauldian perspective, power is 'omnipresent'; it exists everywhere and governs all kinds of relationships and interactions in society. Power is not entirely

²⁶Foucault's theorisation in regard to agency has been found problematic by a number of feminist theorists (e.g. Mills 1997; Bucholtz 2001). Bucholtz (2001:173) problematises Foucault's presupposition that 'agency resides both everywhere and nowhere', which restrains research aiming at changing social conditions.

²⁷The notion of agency will be discussed again in section 3.2.1 as it relates to language and gender.

²⁸ See also Fairclough (1992) and Sunderland (2004).

repressive or violent; in fact, it is productive, positive, and a major source of discipline and conformity in societies. Also, as Foucault argues, power is embodied in knowledge and discourse.²⁹

Indeed, Foucault's dynamic theory of power supposes that knowledge and discursive practices are produced through complex and multi-layered power networks in any society.³⁰ He rejects the view of power as monolithic—in contrast, he perceives it as dispersed across ever-changing social networks. It is exercised through language and discourse, and individuals are considered to be empty entities who exist in the intersection of a number of discourses in particular contexts.

On the relationship between discourse and power, Foucault (1978:101) argues that '[d]iscourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it'.

Furthermore, Foucault's view of power transcends politics and the wider societal norms; he argues that it is an everyday phenomenon which resides in all conversations. Similarly, Baxter (2003:9) points out that '[s]peakers in public settings are constantly negotiating for positions of power'. She further maintains that '[i]t is possible for a speaker to be positioned as relatively powerful within one discourse but as relatively powerless within another, perhaps competing discourse'.

²⁹Foucault (1980) uses the term 'power/knowledge' to refer to power as it is constituted by accepted forms of knowledge and understandings of the truth.

³⁰ According to Foucault (1972), certain types of discourse (e.g. political, social, and religious, etc.) enable some individuals to have degrees of social and political power (or not). For example, in some communities, religious discourses influence all aspects of individuals' social and political organisations, basically, their way of life and the formation of their worldview. Therefore, in such societies, religious authorities often acquire a tremendous amount of power over the social and political lives of individuals and the mass production of knowledge.

In the next sections I provide several examples of discourses as identified in workplace literature.

3.1.1.2 Discourses: Examples from the workplace

Scholars have identified various discourses which operate in different workplaces. Brewis (2001), for instance, refers to the discourse of 'Scientific modernism' found in organisations with particular emphasis on objectivity and rationality³¹.

Moreover, in her management research, Baxter (2003:139-150) identifies four major competing discourses at play in her context of study: 'Historical Legacy' (it involves being part of the traditions and customs that have developed in this company), 'Open Dialogue' (an essential part of the company's ethos), 'Competing Specialisms' (managers with different specialisms- compete to have ascendancy) and 'Masculinisation' (which promotes a traditionally masculine interactional style in business comprising aggressiveness and competitiveness).

Also, Allender, Colquhoun and Kelly (2006) identified two competing discourses in their study of a workplace health program: a 'Health as Safety' discourse and a 'Health as Lifestyle' discourse. While the 'Health as Safety' discourse is concerned with the relationship between the employees with the physical working environment, the 'Health as Lifestyle' discourse links the employees' working lives with their private lives.

Next, I will provide a brief review of the following discourses as they relate to my study 'Family discourse' and its 'sub-discourse of Loyalty', and 'discourse of Professionalism'.

3.1.1.2.1 Discourses of Family and Loyalty

According to Alakavuklar (2009:5), 'Family discourse' refers to 'a set of language and practices employed in an organization in order to construct a social family-like atmosphere that is expected to be experienced by all the members'.

³¹See the discourse of Gender difference in section 3.2.1.1.

The use of family metaphor and practices in corporations has been explored in various studies (e.g. Barker 1993; Goodman 1986; Ouchi 1981; Peters and Waterman 1984; Safizadeh 1991; Kunda 1992; Tjosvold 1991). Casey argues (1999: 156) that 'many companies, from manufacturing, operations and supermarket chains, to hospitals and airline companies, promote themselves in the market place and to employees as caring, familial communities'.

According to Casey (1999) and Legge (1999), what distinguishes organisations with a dominant Family discourse is an emphasis on members' emotional well-being, bonding, social relationships, and commitment and loyalty to each other and the organisation. Therefore, collaborative, facilitative, and sometimes emotionally charged language is highly encouraged by the management. Also, a family-like organisational model is considered paternalistic in the sense that the management can be perceived as parents (working for the greater good of the family) and employees as children. Consequently, through this discourse, higher management can have power and control over the employees in exchange for job security and various other privileges and rewards.

Various researchers (e.g. Casey 1999; Ryan 2011; Western 2008) consider loyalty as an element of Family discourse, as it denotes commitment and devotion to one's family, team, or organisation. Very few studies recognise loyalty as a discourse on its own. For example, Johnson (2003:27) identifies a 'Loyalty discourse' in his study of corporate law. He defines the Loyalty discourse as a concept of devotion that is 'grounded in widely-shared cultural norms'. Demands and requirements of loyalty are likely to be context-sensitive and differ from one organisation to another.

3.1.1.2.2 Discourse of Professionalism

Warning (2009: 346) maintains that a 'discourse of Professionalism' defines what it means to be a 'professional' in an organisation. It constructs, maintains, and reproduces 'the occupational

characteristics to which workers are compelled to conform in the pursuit of professional identity and status' (see also Evetts 2005; 2006). These characteristics are subjected to various economic and social factors and vary from one organisation to the other. Values promoted by a discourse of Professionalism often reflect wider organisational and societal practices. For example, in some corporations, to be a 'professional' is to acquire certain language practices and work behaviour such as competitiveness, entrepreneurship and commerciality (Fournier 1999).

To explain the notion of competing discourses, I provide examples from the Arab Middle East.

3.1.2 Competing Discourses: Examples from the Arab Middle East

As I have illustrated in section 2.1.2, in the Arab Middle East, traditional Islamic and cultural discourses are the dominant generator of meaning and identity in both the private and public domains (Ali 1995; Ali et al. 2003; Metcalfe 2007). People are often caught between dominant traditional Islamic and cultural discourses that are constantly competing with more Western, progressive and liberal discourses which come about through various channels such as education, exposure to media, travelling, social networking and so on.

Perhaps the most obvious example of competing discourses in the Arab Middle East can be found in the conflict between the values of collectivism and individualism (Hofstede 1980) with Arab Middle Eastern societies being highly collectivist (Ali, Taqi, and Krishman, 1997; Al-Suwaidi, 2008; Birenbaum-Carmeli 1992; Mikulincer et al. 1993; Mostafa 2005; Weir 2003). This collectivist orientation is manifested through various practices such as preference for extended families, strong family ties, flourishing of family businesses, importance of networking, persistence of hierarchy and patriarchy, and so on. Yet, this 'discourse of Collectivism' is in constant struggle with a Western 'discourse of Individualism'. Black (2003:20) notes that in many Middle Eastern countries, there has been a growing tendency towards acquiring

individualist values such as 'standing out from the crowd, independent enterprise, and personal accomplishment'. For example, in Bahrain, since the discovery of oil, the Bahraini family has gone through a dramatic shift from the extended and traditional family to the nuclear and modern family, which has had a significant effect on the emergence of relatively individualistic values (Amin 1993).

Currently, the two potentially competing discourses of Collectivism and Individualism, with their social manifestations and changing value systems, co-exist in Bahrain and people appeal to one or the other depending on the context. Sometimes this competition is brought to the surface by public and private debates. For instance, an article entitled 'Why a small family is a happier one' (Gulf Daily News 2009) argues that in smaller families, there is a greater sense of individualism and a motivation for achieving things for one's self rather than for the welfare of others. The article ends with the claim that it is time for Bahrainis to start to value themselves for who they are, not where they come from. Yet, as the author argues, this strong urge towards individualism is often resisted by more traditional views which call for 'authenticity' and a 'return to roots'.

Examining discourses in the Arab Middle Eastern context requires an understanding of the patterns and speech norms as well as diversity in these communities, which according to Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999), could be achieved by adopting a community of practice framework (CofP) in research. I introduce the concept of CofP next.

3.1.3 Community of Practice (CofP)

In the discipline of sociolinguistics, the community of practice (CofP) is a fluid and interactive concept defined by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464) as '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’.

The term was first coined by social theorists Lave and Wenger (1991) to refer to any group of people who get together because they have a shared enterprise. Accordingly, any community of practice consists of a group of people who share a ‘domain’ of interest and constitute a ‘community’ in which members have some sort of relationships and interact regularly over a shared ‘practice’. Wenger (1998:76) notes that what constitutes a ‘practice’ are ‘mutual engagement’, a ‘joint enterprise’ and a ‘shared repertoire’ between members who are either peripheral members or core members³². This practice is what distinguishes a CofP from a traditional community.

According to Handford (2010), the form of a community of practice can vary widely. In the business context, a company or a part of the company (department/section) involving regular meetings and shared goals and practices may constitute a CofP. Also, it may take other forms such as a regular board meeting, an interview context, and so on (Baxter 2010; Holmes and Marra 2004). I utilise this concept in this case study of women leaders from three different departments within Bahrainco: Business Planning, Engineering, and Human Resources. Based on this perspective, I consider each department a community of practice in its own right.

Additionally, the CofP framework has proved to be very useful and has later been applied to different fields, including that of language and gender (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992) and language and gender in the workplace (Holmes and Marra 2004; Holmes and Schnurr 2005; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Holmes 2006). Holmes and Stubbe (2003) emphasise the importance of using the CofP framework to study how individuals’ gender identities are enacted and perceived against the norms in different workplaces.

³² Peripheral and core members differ in their degree of assimilation to the group, for example, acquisition of the shared goals and practice of the CofP. Peripheral members are the less assimilated and core members are the ones who successfully acquired the established patterns (Holmes 1999)

In this research study, examining the language and interaction of the women leaders in their communities of practice requires a closer look, not only at the language codes and behaviours, but also at politeness norms and conventions of such communities. Most research in politeness strategies is based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987), which was hugely influenced by Goffman's (1967) facework theory. This will be touched upon very briefly next.

3.1.4 Politeness Theory and the Concept of Face

Goffman's (1967) notion of 'face' refers to interactants' public image which they construct throughout their regular social interactions. Following Goffman, Metts and Cupach (2008: 206) note that '[O]ur face is a type of performance, in that we present an image of our 'self' through our appearance, our message, and our actions that we believe will give the impression that we are competent and worthy social interactants'.

Goffman (1967) also suggests that individuals use strategies (verbal and non-verbal such as justifications, humour, avoidance, aggressive actions, etc.) to construct, negotiate and maintain their face or public image, especially in 'face threatening situations' where interactants are in a position to 'lose face'.

Brown and Levinson (1987) later expanded Goffman's work by refining the concept of face and focusing on the politeness strategies which individuals use to manage and mostly mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs). They distinguish between positive and negative face. While the positive face refers the positive, appreciated and approved self-image claimed by the interactants, the negative face indicates people's rights to non-distraction, freedom of action, freedom from imposition and so on.

In this research paper, I follow Mills (2003) and Mullany's (2007) conceptualisation which incorporate the concepts of politeness theory and the CofP framework by analysing interactants' strategies to negotiate and maintain their 'face' by considering the norms and conventions of the

communities of practice in which the interactions take place. I believe that what is considered appropriate and polite (or not) could vary greatly from one company to the other, and even from one department to the other. These norms could also vary according to the gender of the interactants; Mills (2003) suggest that the very notion of politeness is 'gendered' feminine. In the next section I examine the notion of gender and 'gendered'.

3.2 Gender

The notion of 'gender' differs from the term 'sex'.³³ While people often use the two terms interchangeably, sociolinguists distinguish between the biological categories of 'male sex' versus 'female sex' and the socio-cultural notion of 'gender'³⁴ (Holmes 2001; Trudgill 2000). The term 'gender' denotes a relative set of cultural associations with being 'male' or 'female' depending on the context (e.g. country, culture, time, etc.). There are distinct beliefs, assumptions, and expectations of what constitutes being a 'male' or a 'female' such as language, appearance, code of dress, behaviour and many other characteristics that could be in some ways different or similar depending on the culture and community of practice (Baxter 2010; Litosseliti 2006). For example, in most Muslim communities,³⁵ females are often obliged to keep a dress code (the head scarf³⁶) while males are not (Sadiqi 2003).

The distinction between 'sex' and 'gender' is still controversial amongst researchers (e.g. Bergvall 1995; Butler 1990; Cameron 2003). Coates (2007:67) suggests that gender should be viewed as a pluralised concept taking into consideration other factors in individuals' lives. She points out that 'at any point in time, there will be a range of femininities and masculinities extant

³³ For a comprehensive discussion on 'sex' versus 'gender', see Wodak and Benke (1997).

³⁴ This is still a controversial topic as many argue that both 'sex' and 'gender' are socio-cultural constructs denoting ranges of femininities and masculinities along a continuum rather than polarised categories (e.g. Bergvall 1995; Butler 1990; Cameron 2003).

³⁵ In the Middle Eastern culture, 'gender' and 'sex' strictly fall under the same polarised categories of 'male' and 'female'; any other theory is not tolerated (Sadiqi 2003).

³⁶ The head scarf is compulsory in some Arab Muslim countries and optional in others (Sadiqi 2003)

in a culture, which differ in terms of class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and age, as well as intersecting in complex ways’.

Any research in language must consider the significant role that gender plays in all human interactions taking place in the private and public spheres. Weatherall (2000:287) calls gender a ‘pervasive social category’, and Holmes (2006:2) argues that ‘[g]ender is always there – a latent, omnipresent, background factor in every communicative encounter, with the potential to move into the foreground at any moment’. Ground-breaking research undertaken in the field of language and gender will be explored next.

3.2.1 Language and Gender Research

Before the field of language and gender emerged, folk linguistics—rather than research—had dominated people’s perception of men and women’s language, their roles and identity formation (Litosseliti 2006). In the early twentieth century, the linguist Jepsen (1922) argued that women’s language was lacking in authority. This was followed by the variationist trend in language and gender research (e.g. Trudgill 1974; Labov 1966), which used the biological category of ‘sex’ rather than the socio-cultural construct of ‘gender’ as a core variable and indicator of individual language use. However, over the past three decades, research in the field of language and gender has been primarily conducted within the following frameworks: deficit, dominance, gender difference, and social constructionist.

To start with, the deficit perspective in language and gender represented and maintained the early view of women’s language as uncertain and lacking in authority. Within this framework, women are viewed as disadvantaged language users whose linguistic practices reflect their social powerlessness and lack of confidence (Talbot 1998). Lakoff’s (1975) classic monograph ‘Language and the women’s place’ identifies various characteristics of women’s language that distinguish it from the presumed norm (men’s language): the use of hedges to mitigate the effect

of their utterances, boosters and empty adjectives for emphasis, rising intonations and tag questions to indicate uncertainty, hypercorrect grammar, and generally highly polite language.³⁷

In the early 1980s, research in language and gender took a turn into the dominance perspective. This framework marked the beginning of (consciousness raising) feminist research regarding prevailing gender inequalities and the division of power between men and women. These inequalities were perceived as having been constructed and maintained by men and women's distinctive use of language. Men were thought to use a range of dominance strategies (e.g. display talk, interruptions, banter and teasing, boasting, verbal harassment, accusations, insults, putdowns). In contrast, women were thought to use supportive strategies (e.g. listening, tag questions, use of minimal responses) (Cameron 1992). Within the dominance perspective, research in language and gender (e.g. the classic work of Spender 1980, and Fishman 1978) sought to expose language bias by investigating the use of sexist language (e.g. the generic use of the pronoun 'he' for men and women).

The third and perhaps the most popular (among non-linguists) perspective is the view of language as a polarised set of characteristics and speech styles denoting men's and women's language; or what linguists refer to as the 'gender difference' perspective. Research within the gender difference perspective (e.g. Coates 2004; Holmes 1990; Tannen 1990) perceived the distinction between men and women's linguistic practices as resulting from different socialisation processes and/or cultural dispositions. According to Tannen (1990), men and women display different but complementary speech styles. While men use goal-oriented, direct and assertive 'report talk', women use process-oriented, indirect and cooperative 'rapport talk'.³⁸

³⁷ This era (the 1970s) also witnessed the emergence of the assertiveness movement in the 1970s, which mainly aimed at developing women's communication skills and training them to use direct and assertive language (Crawford 1995).

³⁸ Despite the popularity of the difference framework, it was hugely criticised for its role in perpetuating gender stereotypes and discrimination against women (Crawford 1995).

Finally, and most recently, language and gender research has been mainly conducted within the social constructionist framework with its view of identity (including one's gender) as performed, constructed, maintained, and negotiated through language (e.g. Butler 1990; Crawford 1995; Holmes 2006; Mullany 2007). This perspective is based on the post-structuralist notion of the multiplicity and multi-dimensionality of identities; a person's gender is just one of many elements which he/she enacts through written and spoken language. According to Mullany (2007), the social constructionist approach to gender has been widely embraced by feminist linguistics, which reflects the high level of dissatisfaction with the dominance and difference paradigms.

Moreover, fundamental to the social constructionist view of gender is Butler's (1990) notion of performativity, influenced by Foucault's discourse theory. Butler (1990) perceives gender as a process or a performative social construct. Based on this view, individuals 'do' or 'perform' being a 'man' or a 'woman' by displaying language and behaviour which conform to/or resist the 'perfect model' perpetuated by the dominant gendered discourses in the particular organisation or community of practice. Mullany (2007:23) further explains that '[m]asculinity and femininity are effects we perform by the activities in which we partake, not predetermined traits we possess'.

Many language and gender researchers (e.g. Baxter 2010, Mullany 2007, Sunderland 2004, Litosseliti 2006; Wodak and Benke 1997) adopt Butler's view of gender as a set of performative social constructs because this theory allows for some degree of speakers' agency. Women are no longer viewed as victims trapped by societal norms; they can conform to or resist their subject positioning. However, Butler (1990:33) claims that every interaction takes place within 'rigid regulatory frames'³⁹ where certain gender-related discourses impose various expectations, attitudes, ways of talking, and so on upon men and women (Sunderland 2004). Yet Holmes

³⁹ Ehrlich (2003) and McElhinny (2003) discuss how Butler's 'rigid regulatory frames' are critiqued for being too abstract.

(1997) argues that speakers can always transgress and subvert gender stereotypes through resisting these discourses.⁴⁰ Sunderland (2004) refers to such gender-related discourses as 'gendered'. This will be discussed next.

3.2.1.1 Gendered Discourses

According to Sunderland (2004:6) discourses are 'ways of seeing the world'. She argues that gender-related discourses should be described as 'gendered' because 'gender is already a part of "the thing" which gendered describes' (2004:20-21). Various dominant gendered discourses are identified in the research literature. Drawing on Walsh (2001), Mullany argues that there are persistent 'hegemonic discourses' of masculinity and femininity that are embedded in the discursive practices of any community. For example, the discourse of 'Gender Difference' is considered a 'masculinist hegemonic discourse' where differences between men and women in society are emphasised (Sunderland 2004). Further, Mullany (2007:35) points out '[the] dominant discourse of gender difference seeks to emphasize *homogeneity* within *singular* categories of femininity and masculinity, stressing instead the differences *between* women and men, as opposed to the differences *within* groups of women and groups of men'.

Also, the discourse of Masculinisation identified by Baxter (2003) in her management study (see section 3.1.1.2) shows that both discourses of Gender Difference⁴¹ and Masculinisation promote stereotypical constructs of masculinity such as hierarchy, order, structure, competitiveness, rivalry, aggression and goal-oriented action as the unmarked normative characteristics of the language and interactional practices of men in society.

There are many other gendered discourses identified in literature, especially in language and gender research in Western organisations. For example, Mullany and Litosseliti (2006) identify a

⁴⁰ Mills (2002) and Mullany (2007) and many others adopt a modified version of the performativity theory where they acknowledge the effect of stereotyping and moulding on individuals but equally believe that these stereotypes can be challenged and altered.

⁴¹Baxter (2003) calls this discourse of Gender differentiation.

discourse of female emotionality/irrationality in which women are perceived as emotional and incapable of making logical judgments or decisions.⁴² According to Mullany (2007), this is a sub-discourse of gender difference along with other hegemonic discourses of femininity such as the discourse of Image and sexuality, which emphasises the perception of successful working women as physically slim and attractive.

Here, the notion of communities of practice is essential. Cameron (1996) relates gendered discourses to the notion of communities of practice. She suggests that different communities operate under a different set of 'prevailing gendered norms', which inform and determine individuals' choices of language and behaviour. Cameron (1996:45) states:

Throughout our lives we go on entering new communities of practice: We must constantly produce our gendered identities by performing what are taken to be the appropriate acts in the communities we belong to – or else challenge prevailing gender norms by refusing to perform those acts.

Holmes (2006) notes that in any community of practice, gender and gendered discourses are constantly produced, reproduced, contested and negotiated as members interact with each other. In interactions, individuals may behave in ways indexing⁴³ masculine or feminine 'styles' of speaking depending on the norms of the community of practice they belong to, or they could also resist and challenge these norms.

Furthermore, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) argue that communities of practice can be labelled as 'gendered' constituting and constituted by multiple masculinities and femininities.

Equally, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) point out that CofP is a dynamic concept and is

⁴²Mullany and Litosseliti (2006) point out that this discourse could be damaging for women, especially those seeking management positions, because it contrasts with this discourse of scientific modernism which requires managers and leaders to be rational and unemotional. This ultimately leads to women's exclusion from leadership positions and the boardroom in corporations.

⁴³Ochs's (1992) indexicality model will be discussed in section 3.3.1.1.

compatible with the social constructionist view of gender as a set of constantly changing social constructs. In this research study, I adopt Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) dynamic concept of gendered CofP to study the ways in which senior women enact leadership in their gendered communities.

In the next section, I preview the vast field of leadership research from a language and gender perspective.

3.3 Leadership

Leadership is a specialist field with a massive body of research that is beyond the scope of this study (see Grint 1997 for an overview). In this section of leadership I will be focusing on sub-fields of leadership research such as language and gender in the workplace, gendered workplaces, the language of leadership, language of female leadership, and other related issues, mainly presented from a social constructionist stand-point. I will also preview literature on leadership research in the Middle East in order to enhance the understanding of the professional context of the women leaders taking part in this research.

3.3.1 Language and Gender in the workplace

'Men know the rules of business because they wrote them', according to CNN executive vice-president Gail Evans (Ellis 2002:63). Over the years, men have dominated the public domain of the workplace, setting the rules of interactions and reinforcing an exclusively traditionally masculine culture and language code (Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006; Olsson 2006).⁴⁴ Holmes (1992:143) notes '[m]ost cross-gender communication problems in public contexts are women's problems, because the interactional rules in such situations are men's rules'. Also, Peck (2006:52), among others, argue that miscommunication between men and women in the workplace, has always been attributed to women's failure to conform to the professional

⁴⁴ See Mullany and Litosseliti (2006) for an overview of language and gender research in the workplace.

normative model, the masculine model. She points out that '[n]ot only are the problem women's, but women themselves can be constructed as the problem'.

According to Holmes (2006), it is essential for language and gender researchers to examine the gendered norms of workplace talk, because it plays a major role in excluding women from leadership and powerful positions in business corporations.⁴⁵

3.3.1.1 Normatively Masculine vs. Normatively Feminine language

Holmes and Stubbe (2003:1) suggest that in every interaction, men and women are able to select from 'a very wide and varied discursive repertoire' of normatively masculine and normatively feminine 'ways of talking', made available by the discourses in any given CofP. They further argue that these linguistic practices can be conceptualised as a continuum of conventionally masculine linguistic strategies at one end, and conventionally feminine strategies at the other end. In an organisational context, predominant use of normatively masculine language practices (e.g. direct, authoritarian, face-threatening linguistic strategies) reflects a tendency to prioritise the transactional goals of an organisation. In contrast, the use of normatively feminine language practices (e.g. indirect, cooperative, face saving linguistic strategies) denotes an orientation to relational aspects of the workplace, which Fletcher (1999:9) calls 'relational practice'.

Compatible with Holmes 'interactional styles' is Ochs's (1992) theory of indexicality. Drawing on Ochs, McElhinny (2003) argues that speech can index a person's gender. Ochs's basic idea is that beside pronouns and other particles (e.g. he, she, Mrs, Mr), people's gender is often indexed indirectly in their speech. McElhinny (2003:35) explains that while the same linguistic features and strategies can be used by men and women equally, people's perception,

⁴⁵ Holmes and her colleagues carried out the largest scale project in language and gender research. It was called 'Language in the workplace'. The study was conducted in various New Zealand workplaces and run by Janet Holmes and colleagues (e.g. Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Holmes and Marra 2004; Holmes and Schnurr 2005; Holmes 2006).

assessment, and preference for certain interactional practices are still influenced by the 'linguistic and cultural ideological expectations' of the perceived language of masculinity and femininity. In interactions, Ochs (1992:343) distinguishes between 'marked' and 'unmarked' linguistic practices. Unmarked language refers to the instances when individuals use language that conforms to the expectation and norms of gender in their communities. In contrast, marked language is used by individuals who resist the norms and use linguistic strategies associated with the other gender.⁴⁶

In business contexts, Holmes (2005:57) argues that gender always works to influence 'people's unconscious interpretation of what is considered appropriate in workplace interaction'. Also, Holmes and Stubbe (2003:4) note that 'people's ways of talking are typically strongly influenced by specific features of their workplaces, and by the type of interaction in which they are involved'. Therefore, in an organisation, individuals' choice of linguistic practices will largely depend on the norms and expectations of the CofP they belong to. I have illustrated in section 3.2.1.1 how communities of practice can be characterised as 'gendered', operating under wide-ranging sets of competing masculinised and feminised discourses. In this research study, rather than viewing workplaces as polarised communities of practice (masculine and feminine), I adopt a social constructionist perspective which views workplace interactions as emerging, constantly shifting social practices rather than fixed notions of gendered language. In the next section, I will develop the notion of gendered workplaces and provide examples from two different types of workplaces reviewed in the research literature: Engineering and Human Resources.

3.3.1.2 Gendered Workplaces

Marra, Schnurr and Holmes (2006:243) suggest that workplaces can be conceptualised as 'gendered'. They argue 'the gendered labels refer to practices' rather than 'gender composition

⁴⁶The constraining norms here are similar to Butler's (1990:33) notion of 'rigid regulatory frame'.

of the group'. Masculinised workplaces are marked by hierarchy, task and result-orientation, competitiveness, adversarial relations, and other traditionally masculine practices. In contrast, feminised workplaces are characterised by egalitarian, supportive, democratic and non-hierarchical culture with a focus on relationships and integration between members (Maier 1997; Olsson 2006).

In management literature, the variations between workplaces are often explored from an organisational culture perspective. Research in engineering workplaces (e.g. Faulkner 2009; McIlwee and Robertson 1992), for instance, asserts that in the engineering profession there is a prevailing 'masculine culture' where women have to adjust their language and behaviour in order to fit in. Faulkner (2009) observes that engineering workplaces are male-dominated communities accommodating a range of hegemonic masculinities, in which men engineers fit and adjust more easily than women do. She also notes that the dominant 'style of interaction' is highly direct, confrontational, and work-focused, with minimal social and relational exchange. Employees, both men and women, use masculine generic language such as 'he', and 'men', 'boys' and 'guys' to refer to a group. Language used between employees of different genders is also marked by the use of swear words and highly technical terminology⁴⁷. McIlwee and Robertson (1992:139) define engineering as a culture in which male engineers engage in 'ritualistic displays of hands-on technical competence'. This, she believes, can be a hindrance to women engineers' career progression.

In contrast, Human Resource (HR) organisations provide a different picture of the workplace. There is a strong claim that, on a global level, HR workplaces are 'staffed by women' (Metcalf 2007: 448; see also Bierema 2001; Howell, Carter, and Scheid 2002). While this may reflect gender stereotyping in societies (since the nature of the HR profession requires interpersonal

⁴⁷ There are many other predominantly masculine professions, such as Information Technology (IT) which is perceived as 'men's work' (Trauth 2002:101).

skills and use of relational practices), it reinforces the already existing division of labour between men and women (Acker and Dillabough 2007; Hughes, Cotterill, and Letherby 2006). I believe that since HR based organisations have a higher percentage of women employees internationally, they are less likely to have traditionally masculine language practices.⁴⁸

In business contexts, corporations have always adopted, preferred, and trained their employees to use the conventionally masculine model of interaction, in order to maintain a 'professional' working environment (Bass 1998; Berryman-Fink 1997; Hearn & Parkin 1988; Martin 1993; Still 1996). Equally, according to Holmes and Stubbe (2003), the masculinised organisational model has always been considered the professional model in workplace research. Recently, with the emergence of the 'new wave' management model⁴⁹(Burton and Ryall 1995; Rosener 1990; Wajcman 1999), there has been a shift in organisational cultures: a preference for non-hierarchical, team-based, participative organisations. Consequently, expertise in relational and interpersonal language use has become more of a requirement, especially for leaders (Rosener 1990). Research on the language of leadership will be explored next.

3.3.2 The Language of leadership

Studies of leadership and management (e.g. Bennis & Thomas 2002; Case 1994; Dwyer 1993; Gardner 1990; Gardner et al. 1996; O'Connor 1997; Parry 1998) have found that most managerial work revolves around communication. In fact, as Lyons and O' Mealy (1998: IX) note '[i]magine leadership outside of language is all but impossible'. On a daily basis, leaders need to perform various linguistic activities with their subordinates such as informing,

⁴⁸I explore this matter further in my research which examines senior women's leadership practices in three departmental sections in Bahrainco: Engineering, Human Resources, and Business Planning.

⁴⁹ According to the British institute of Management (1994), the 'new wave' management model is a new approach to leadership which is considered the future for Western organisations in order to succeed in international business markets. It is based on the participative, conciliatory and people-oriented approach to leadership (Burton and Ryall 1995; Rosener 1990, Wajcman 1999). According to Burton and Ryall (1995:8), this model is described as 'feminine'. Also, Rosener (1990) and Wajcman (1999) anticipate that since this model requires normatively feminine leadership language, it constitutes a unique opportunity for women in the workplace.

negotiating, arguing, commanding, instructing, guiding, encouraging, motivating, and so on. Also, leadership is considered an 'inherently masculine concept' (e.g. Eagly and Carli 2003; Martin Rojo and Esteban 2003; Sinclair 1998), therefore the language of leadership is conceptualised by many as gendered (Hearn and Parkin 1988; Sinclair 1998).

3.3.2.1 The Language of Leadership and Gender

Historically, most leaders have been men. Therefore, the 'language of leadership often equates with the language of masculinity' (Hearn and Parkin 1988: 21). The notion of 'think leadership, think male' (Schein 1975) has dominated Western corporate business cultures (Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006; Olsson 2006). Effective leaders have always been expected to use stereotypically masculine language characterised by assertiveness, competitiveness, task-orientation, and display of power (Bass 1998; Berryman-Fink 1997; Hearn & Parkin 1988; Martin 1993; Still 1996). Stereotypically feminine language, on the other hand, has been perceived as deviant and alien to the practice of leadership (Trauth 2002; Ely 1988; Heilman et al. 1989).

Early research on leadership⁵⁰ (e.g. Bales 1951; 1958; Eagly and Johnson 1990; Eskilon and Wiley 1976) mostly considered two polarised leader types: the task-oriented leader (the one who focuses on achieving goals and transactions of the group), and the socio-emotional leader (the one who focuses on the emotional well-being of individuals). Many studies (e.g. Eagly and Johnson 1990; Eskilon and Wiley 1976) found that men and women leaders showed expertise in both task-orientation and socio-emotionality⁵¹. Korabik (1982; 1990) has established that people's orientation towards certain leadership styles (task oriented or socio-emotional) does not depend on their biological sex.

⁵⁰Early studies in leadership were mostly conducted in laboratories (Baxter 2010)

⁵¹The studies of Eagly and Johnson (1990) and Eskilon and Wiley (1976) found that, in single-sex groups, men and women showed the same tendency to use socio-emotional expertise and task-oriented expertise. However, in mixed-sex groups women tended to draw from socio-emotional practices while men used task-oriented practices.

Conversely, in leadership and gender research, women leaders have always been associated with socio-emotional expertise, and men leaders with task-oriented expertise (Halford and Leonard 2001; Still 2006; Vinnicombe and Singh 2002). These concepts were later reconceptualised as 'transactional leadership' versus 'relational leadership' (Holmes 2006).

3.3.2.1.1 Transactional versus Relational Leadership

Transactional and relational are 'overarching' categories covering a wide range of values and behaviours within organisational cultures (Baxter 2010: 106). According to Holmes (2006), a transactional 'style' of leadership can be identified in leaders who focus on achieving task-related goals, avoiding and correcting mistakes, solving problems, and so on. In contrast, a relational approach to leadership is mostly obvious in leaders who prioritise building cohesive workplace relationships, often showing personal consideration to employees' feelings and face needs. These 'styles', having common features with gender dichotomies (male and female), were adopted by language and gender researchers (Holmes 2006). Therefore, men were associated with a 'transactional leadership style' and women with a 'relational leadership style'. Men leaders were found to be competitive, confrontational, direct, autonomous, aggressive, and task oriented while women leaders were found to be cooperative, facilitative, supportive, indirect, and effectively-oriented (Kendall & Tannen 1997; Coates 1998).

However, with the emergence of the discourse approach, researchers have started to view leadership as a 'discursive performance' through which leaders achieve organisational objectives (transactions) while maintaining cohesiveness and harmony with the group (Holmes 2006; Holmes et al. 2003; Holmes and Schnurr 2005). Based on the the social constructionist framework, leadership is performed, constructed, and negotiated through language. When leaders, men or women, interact with colleagues and subordinates at work, they select from

arepertoire of conventionally masculine and conventionally feminine linguistic strategies to enact power and authority (Holmes 2006).⁵²

According to Holmes (2006) and Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes (2006), effective leaders, regardless of their biological sex, are skilled at deploying the range of transactional and relational language strategies at their disposal, in order to achieve the various goals of leadership. However, feminist research has shown that when women adopt traditionally masculine practices, they are negatively evaluated as unfeminine. Similarly, when they utilise stereotypically feminine leadership practices, they are judged as 'unprofessional'. Therefore, women leaders often find themselves caught in the 'double bind' (Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Case 1994; Peck 2000; Still 1996) between being 'unfeminine' and 'unprofessional'; in both cases, they are evaluated as less competent leaders (Alvesson and Billing 1997; Brewis 2001; Chase 1988:276; Coates 1998:295; Kendall and Tannen 1997: 92; Lakoff 1990: 206 ; Wodak 1995). In that regard, Jones (2000: 196) notes of a woman leader that 'if she talks like a manager she is transgressing the boundaries of femininity: If she talks like a woman she no longer represents herself as a manager'.

3.3.2.1.2 Female Leadership

Interest in female leadership is a recent phenomenon; research in leadership and language has been carried out almost exclusively on male subjects. According to Korabik (1990), this has reinforced the widely held stereotype that women are inherently alien to leadership and they lack the essential characteristics required in effective leaders.

In the past three decades, research concerning women and leadership has focused on three major areas of interest: the question of women as effective leaders, the differences between

⁵² Critical discourse analysts (e.g. Fairclough 1992) categorise power enacted by leaders as either 'oppressive' or 'repressive' depending on the way it is enacted in spoken and written discourse. Use of politeness and face-saving strategies by leaders, for example, is a way to exercise their power oppressively.

men and women's leadership and language practices⁵³, and finally models of female leadership (Still 2006).

In leadership research (e.g. Helgesen 1990; Troemel-Ploetz 1994; West 1995; 1998), women's leadership language is characterised by the following stereotypical properties: saving subordinates' face, conversational generosity (showing support to the speaker by using minimal responses, compliments and commendations, and so on), sharing power, hedging and camouflaging dominant speech acts, establishing equality, closeness and symmetry in interactions, dealing with subordinates in an egalitarian and democratic manner, and so on.

Rosener (1990) was one of the first researchers to investigate women leadership and draw attention to its great potential in maintaining better personal and professional relationships in workplace interactions. Her predictions came true with the emergence of the 'new wave' management model (Burton and Ryall 1995) that recognises the importance of team-based frameworks, diversity and shared visions and therefore requires managers to have more traditionally feminine traits such as empathy, people orientation, and so on.

Also, Fletcher's (1999) work on 'relational practice' (RP) as characteristic of women leaders' language has also reaffirmed the potential of stereotypically feminine practices in management. Fletcher (1999:2) defines relational practice as 'the ability to work effectively with others, understanding the emotional contexts in which work gets done'. Performing RP involves paying attention to subordinates' face needs and aiming at advancing workplace objectives. Fletcher (1999:48) identifies four ways of doing RP: preserving,⁵⁴ creating a team, empowerment, and

⁵³ Across both the dominance and difference perspectives, women's language is characterised as less direct than men's language. In informal conversations between couples, Fishman (1978) describes women's contributions as 'interactional shitwork', which refers to women's use of discourse strategies (e.g. minimal responses and interrogative forms) to facilitate conversations.

⁵⁴ 'Preserving' refers to working to advance workplace objectives by reducing conflicts and avoiding disputes through preserving people's dignity and face needs. For that, leaders would use strategies such as hedges, humour, expressing approval, showing appreciation, and so on (Holmes 2006).

self-achieving. While doing RP is an invaluable process, this type of work often goes unnoticed in many workplace contexts (Holmes 2006).⁵⁵ Fletcher (1999:15) argues 'relational skills are typically associated with women and hence devalued'.

While this 'female advantage' (Eagly and Carli 2003) should provide a unique opportunity for women seeking management positions, women leaders nowadays are still subject to the double bind (Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Case, 1994; Peck 2000; Still 1996; see section 3.3.2.1.1).

According to Fournier & Kelmen (2001:267), in order to survive and gain appreciation in the workplace, women leaders have learnt to police and adjust their styles depending on the context, and they have gained a wide range of 'individual and collectivistic coping strategies' (see also Baxter 2010).

A case study by Wodak (1997)⁵⁶ of women in management revealed that many female managers break the traditional stereotype and adopt a rather controlling and authoritarian-masculine style in order to survive in institutions dominated by hierarchy and power networks. In fact, this 'authoritarian style' or what Kanter (1977) calls 'the Iron maiden', is arguably one of the very limited available leadership models for women. According to Kanter (1977), leadership positions for women are restricted to the following subject positions or 'gender traps: the Iron maiden, the mother, the pet, and the seductress. I review these positions here because I believe it would be highly insightful to explore female leadership in the Middle East against these Western models:

⁵⁵ Holmes (2006:95) appropriates the concept of RP to fit the feminine-masculine style and CoffP continuum. She notes '[w]hile some communities of practice, and especially those identified as overall more feminine in interactional style, tend to favour a pre-dominantly supportive and collaborative humour for doing RP, other more masculine communities of practice appear to prefer more contestive, challenging and even jocularly insulting humour for this purpose'.

⁵⁶ Several studies document women leaders' use of stereotypically masculine behaviours and language practices in an attempt to 'blend in as one of the boys' (Ford 2006: 81; see also Calas & Smircich 1996; Holmes 2006).

1. The Iron Maiden: This refers to the woman leader who adopts traditionally masculine, authoritarian, aggressive, and assertive ways, defying traditional gendered discourses and attracting the contempt of both men and women colleagues and subordinates.
2. The mother: This refers to the leader or 'maternal boss'⁵⁷ who often maintains a combination of care-giving qualities and an authoritarian decisive but mild manner. A 'mother' leader adopts predominantly collaborative, consultative, indirect discourse strategies, but is also able to use power and authority when needed (Holmes 2000; Holmes and Stubbe 2003, 2004). Various gender and leadership studies (e.g. Fletcher 1999, Martin Rojo and Esteban 2003) have found that the 'mother' role is one of the very limited- and limiting- positions for women in leadership. According to Kanter (1977), a female leader might not be taken seriously when 'trapped' in the role of 'mother' because this role is not dependent on professional expertise, but rather on socio-emotional capacities. Baxter (2012:8) notes 'this position is fundamentally limiting for senior women because the Mother is expected to provide a service to peers rather than to be respected for her independent, professional and critical abilities'.
3. The Pet: Kanter (1977:235) conceptualises the 'pet' as a leader who is not viewed equally by her colleagues, but rather as 'a cute amusing little thing'. Also, Halford and Leonard (2001: 109) note that a woman taking this position is usually not taken seriously as a leader; in contrast, she often elicits the reaction of 'a kind of look-what-she-did-and-she's-only-a-woman' attitude. According to Baxter (2010, 2003), women leaders taking a 'pet' position are usually tokenised; they are chosen for the boards to disguise dominant gendered discriminatory practices. This positioning is problematic for women leaders because it is disempowering and serves to reaffirm the subordination of women leaders.
4. The Seductress: This is a highly sexualised role, where women leaders are assessed according to their physical appearance and attractiveness rather than expertise in their field

⁵⁷ See Holmes (2000)

and experience. Drawing on Kanter (1977), Baxter (2010) points out that this positioning is derogatory for a woman leader in the workplace and constitutes her as a 'threat' to both men and women peers.

Recently, rather than perceiving the four positions as 'traps', Baxter (2012) suggests that these could be perceived as part of the linguistic repertoire or 'gendered resources' available to women leaders, from which they could select language and behaviour most appropriate to their specific context.

Since leadership practices vary across cultures (Clyne 1994; Thomas 2001), it is essential to review the norms of leadership in the Arab Middle Eastern workplace context.

3.3.2.2 Language of Leadership in the Arab Middle East

Although traditional Arab values have undergone major changes in the 20th century (as discussed in section 2.1.2), the dominant Islamic discourses of humility and benevolence still influence the language and leadership practices of the Arab Middle Eastern manager (Ali 1989; Al-Suwaidi 2008). Stereotypical feminine language which prioritises personal relationships and collaboration is highly encouraged and rewarded for both men and women in the public and private domains. Equally, Arab managers are found to place more emphasis on personal contact than tasks (e.g. Badawy 1980; Bodur and Kabasakal 2002; Rice 2003; Weir 2002). Indeed, as Weir (2002) maintains, Arab workplaces could be considered stereotypically 'feminine' by Western standards. According to management research in the Arab Middle East, the participative and consultative tradition has its roots in the Islamic teachings and Bedouin culture (Ali 1989, 1993; Badawy 1980; Yousef 1998; see also section 2.1.3.3).

In fact, decision-making process and leadership behaviour is largely influenced and governed by a relative number of cultural notions and values, most important of which is the concept of 'face' (Ali 1989; Bodur and Kabasakal 2002). Arabs tend to have a high sense of pride;

therefore, Arab managers are expected to accommodate that by using highly indirect language⁵⁸ and avoiding assertion, direct questioning, and interruptions. Also, should a problem arise, they are more likely to use a mediator in order to prevent confrontations, and avoid causing any party to lose face.

However, Weir (2002:16) notes, unlike Western management models of 'democratic' versus 'authoritarian', in Arab workplaces, decisions are always referred upwards, to a higher authority. The formal hierarchical structures and the concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals inevitably cause delays to decision-making processes and dis-empower managers in any organisation (Al-Rasheed 2001). Moreover, the established formal hierarchal structures and relationships in organisations are clearly manifested in the Arabic language (e.g. use of honorifics and other terms of respect to define and distinguish people's status) and other practices such as the lack of delegation of authority (Al-Rasheed 2001).

Another factor is the Arabs' polychronous and multi-linear perception of time and their orientation towards short-term planning⁵⁹. Arabs tend to place more value on the past than the present, and they distrust the future; therefore, Arab managers often lack clear planning for future goals⁶⁰ (Al-Rasheed 2001; Kassam 1989; Weir 2003).

Finally, decision making processes in Arab organisations are likely to be governed by the tradition of nepotism inherent in the Arab Bedouin culture. The traditional practice of favouring

⁵⁸ Arab managers tend to use a wide range of indirect language strategies such as hedges and vague language. For example, a manager would try to avoid saying 'no' and would use the word 'enshalla' instead. This is a vague word which literally means 'if God wills'. It could be interpreted 'yes', 'no', or 'maybe' depending on the context (Al-Suwaidi 2008; Weir 2003)

⁵⁹ This, however, is not consistent in all Arab countries. Muna (1980) found some Arab countries tend to be future oriented and more structured and organised in their planning.

⁶⁰ This is often manifested linguistically in Arabs' use of the term 'bukrah', which literally mean 'tomorrow'. However, Weir (2003) notes that while 'tomorrow' is a definite concept in the West, in the Arab World it is a vague and indefinite notion, especially when repeated more than once (which in this case means that nothing will probably happen)

relatives and family members especially affects decisions regarding recruiting processes and endeavours of certain interest to family members⁶¹(Al-Suwaidi 2008).

While management practices in the Arab world did not fit the Western professional models in the past, Weir (2003) suggests that it is time the 'Arab management system' is reassessed because many of its basic features and properties which are rather compatible with the global change in management towards participative and consultative leadership.

4. Conclusion

Researching language and gender in the workplace in the Arab Middle Eastern context is, in my view, crucial to women's empowerment in the area as it brings insight to the context with all the complexity of the social, economic and political changes. It can also help identify the factors that hinder women's professional development in the Arabic and Islamic countries and offer examples of role models to all professional women seeking leadership positions.

In this section, I have reviewed the abundant amount of research in language, leadership and gender, and the rather limited research in the Arab Middle Eastern context. Based on this review, I narrow my general enquiries into specific research questions.

⁶¹ The practice of nepotism and favouritism opposes essential Islamic values of equality through appointing people based on competency (Al-Suwaidi 2008)

5. Research Questions

1. What are the leadership language practices that Bahraini senior women use with colleagues and subordinates within the context of corporate meetings?
2. How do senior women perceive their own leadership language practices? How do their colleagues and subordinates perceive these practices?
3. What are the significant interacting discourses at play in the context? How do they shape the leadership and language practices of the three senior women in their communities of practice?
4. What insights do we gain by comparing the leadership language practices of the senior women from the three different communities of practice within Bahrainco?

Chapter Two

Methodology

1. Introduction

My research of female leadership takes a social constructionist perspective which regards workplace interaction as a social practice in action (Holmes and Marra 2004). Based on the view that context is 'potentially infinite' and that 'a strictly top down, externally imposed, static understanding of context wouldn't be able to effectively account for the shifts and dynamisms of meeting events' (Handford 2010: 26), my aim is to acquire an insider's knowledge of context and gain a deeper understanding from the point of view of the participants. Therefore, I utilise an ethnographic case study approach which incorporates various qualitative data collection methods in order to analyse the ranges of ways the participants of my study use language with colleagues and subordinates to accomplish their business agenda and get the work done in the context of corporate meetings.

Moreover, I analyse the data using Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) and Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA) while incorporating various methods of discourse analysis necessary to explore the language women leaders use to enact leadership and unveil the broader, perhaps 'competing discourses', that shape the women leaders' language and leadership practices.

In this chapter, I outline the process and methods of data collection and data analysis, and I also provide essential information about the participants in the study. I start by contextualising the research study and defining the theoretical framework in section 2, and then I briefly discuss ethical guidelines in sections 3. In section 4, I illustrate my choices of data collection methods and how I apply them to each case study. Finally, I discuss the different approaches of data analysis in section 5 followed by the conclusion in section 6.

2. Ethnographic Approach

Ethnography has been the basis for a great deal of sociolinguistic research (e.g. Brown 1980; Bucholtz et al. 1999; Eckert 2000; Gal 1979; Milroy 1987). Traditionally, it has been associated with Hymes' (1974) ethnography of communication as well as interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1974; 1982). On the significance of using ethnography in research, Cameron notes (2001:54) '[p]erhaps the most important distinguishing feature of ethnographic approaches— the aim is not just to collect 'objective' factual data about the group's way of life, but to understand that way of life as group members understand it themselves'. Also, according to Sarangi and Roberts (1999), ethnography enables the researcher to get a unique understanding of discourse and interactions from the perspective of the group members or participants themselves.

In ethnography, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:1) note, researchers should immerse themselves in the context through participating 'overtly or covertly' in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions - in fact, collecting whatever data is available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research .

This 'extended period of time' is quite controversial; very few researchers actually manage to live and experience the lives of the individuals they observe in the anthropological sense (Swann and Maybin 2008). Therefore, as a sociolinguist with rather limited access to the field site (workplace), I do not use ethnography in the traditional sense; rather, I follow an ethnographic 'perspective' where I use ethnographic methods of data collection such as observation, interviews and shadowing. This is because using ethnography is essential for gaining a 'thick description' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) of all the contextual factors shaping the social and professional identities of the women leaders in their specific context and

CofP. For this purpose, I incorporate ethnography with case study research. This will be discussed next.

2.1. Qualitative Case Study

Case study research has been adopted by several researchers from various disciplines (e.g. Merriam, 1998; 2009; Shaw 1978; Stake 1995; 1981; Wolcott 1992; Yin 1984; 1994; 2003). Fundamentally, researchers often use qualitative case studies when enquiring about the 'how' and 'why' of real-life phenomena. Shaw (1978:2) notes that case studies 'concentrate attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation'.

However, many researchers have focused on different aspects of case studies defining them in various ways. For example, while Yin (1994:23) defines case study in terms of research context as 'an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real-life context; especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident', Wolcott (1992:36) views case study as 'an end-product of field oriented research' rather than a method of enquiry. Other researchers, however, view case studies in terms of the 'process' of enquiry (where the focus is on the process. e.g. studying or monitoring a certain situation or implementing a certain program) (Merriam 1998).

On the other hand, Stake (1995:2) focuses on defining the unit (the case), which he views as an 'integrated system', or an entity which must be bounded and not infinite. He notes '[T]he case could be a child. It could be a classroom of children or a particular mobilization of professionals to study a childhood condition...the case is a specific functioning thing'. Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994:25) define the case as 'a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context'.

According to Mabry (2008), qualitative case studies are not generalisable to an entire population; they are often localised and utilised to provide a thick description of the subjects and a deep understanding of the complexity of any given context.

Merriam (1998; 2009) characterises case study research as: particularistic (examining a specific instance of a bigger problem), descriptive (illustrating the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the situation), and heuristic (describing the phenomenon thoroughly to the reader by explaining the 'why' and 'what' of the situation as well as evaluating and summarising)

Additionally, as Merriam (1998) points out, qualitative case study can be categorised and identified according to one or a combination of the following: their disciplinary orientation (e.g. law, medicine, historical, social work, etc.), and their overall intent (e.g. descriptive, interpretative, evaluative, theory building, etc.).

In regard to design, Yin (1984) notes that case study can be single or multiple; and multiple case studies are stronger than single ones. In multiple case studies, a researcher often gathers data from a number of sub-cases separately, and then conducts analysis across the cases.

The use of various methods is also an important issue in case study research. Yin (1984) states that case studies are used with 'distinctive situations in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence'.

Although case study generally allows for any number or type of data collection and data analysis methods, qualitative case study research that seeks to explore and gain insight into a certain context often relies on qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, shadowing; documents and record analysis, and so on.

2.2. Validity and Reflexivity in Social Research

Another crucial aspect in conducting a case study approach, or any qualitative methodology, is the notion of validity (Mabry 2008). The concept of validity in social research has changed dramatically with the advent of social constructionism (Aguinaldo 2004; Kvale 1996; Rampton et al. 2004; Scheurich 1996). According to Aguinaldo (2004), modernism viewed knowledge as one definable truth or one objective social reality, therefore, modernist research sought to identify a set of 'truths' about the social world. In this sense, producing valid research results required reducing 'systematic bias' (Patton 1990). Therefore, a researcher needed to use 'triangulation' of data analysis (Sarangi and Roberts 1999) in order to increase the validity of the findings.

However, post-modernist research perceives knowledge as socially constructed. Aguinaldo (2004:127) notes that within social constructionism, research findings are perceived as always partial, situated and 'conceptualized as representations and should be scrutinized for their realist, critical, deconstructive, and reflexive narrative function'; therefore, 'assessing qualitative research entails multiple and contradictory readings of its representational failures and successes'. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:19), validity should be treated as 'an expression of craftsmanship, with an emphasis on quality of research by checking, questioning, and theorizing on the nature of the phenomena investigated'; hence, researchers must become highly reflexive and sensitive about their own prejudices and subjectivities.

Reflexivity is a widely used term which basically refers to the acknowledgment and awareness of the effect of the researchers' own bias, subjectivities, uncertainties, cultural inclinations, etc. on the research process. It is based on the assumption that theory building is, in fact, a culturally embedded social activity (Haraway 1988; 1991); and since researchers are an inherent part of the social world, their research is, to a large extent, a representation of their view of the

world. In that regard, Denzin (1994: 503) notes '[R]epresentation ... is always self-presentation ... the other's presence is directly connected to the writer's self-presence in the text'. Therefore, researchers are urged to reflect on their choice of context, participants, methods of data collection, data analysis, presentation of research findings, and so on (Atkinson 1992; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Geertz 1973; Rampton et al. 2004).

My study

In my study of female leadership in Bahrain, I use case study research mainly because it is compatible with the exploratory nature of my investigation. As Gillham (2000) suggests, case study design allows for the emergence of the data rather than having a priori theoretical notions. Additionally, I follow the social constructionist perspective on validity as a social construction (Kvale 1996). Therefore, I use several data collection methods (observation, interviews, and shadowing) in order to gain a multi-dimensional perspective on the data and thus a greater understanding and ability to connect, compare, and expose the often complex and contradictory findings yielded in any qualitative research.

In regard to reflexivity, I have worked to monitor and observe my own prejudices and subjectivities while acknowledging the effect they may have on the research process, starting with the choice of context to the writing of findings. As a Bahraini woman, I understand that I am a part of the linguistic and cultural texture of the society I am investigating. Also, due to the fact that my husband and father work in the company, I have great resource of information and insider knowledge about many details about the company and the participants. Therefore, it is quite challenging to take an outsider's position and present a purely neutral view of the context. In many situations, I find myself having bias towards certain explanations and/or jumping into conclusions based on my knowledge of the society/context, of the women, and of the language. To avoid falling in that trap, I have taken many precautions starting with acknowledging my own

'self' or 'presence' in the analysis. So whenever applicable, I would explain the possible effects of my previous knowledge on the situation or the analysis. Also, I try to avoid using evaluative language that reflects my own interpretation and, instead, offer a number of different explanations and propose various ways of approaching the text. Finally, I constantly consult others such as my supervisor who has always presented an outsider's point of view and has consistently urged me to explain the reasons behind my choices throughout the research process.

Before I elaborate on my choice and process of data collection methods, I will discuss briefly the ethical guidelines of qualitative research.

3. Research Ethics

Ethical dilemmas differ from one culture to another, one situation to another and one research paradigm to another. In fact, according to social constructionist research (e.g. Ryen 2004), the whole concept of ethics is socially situated and constituted. Therefore, Punch (1994) argues, there are no ethical rules and codes in research; there are only guidelines which can be adjusted and adapted to different localities, situations, and paradigms.⁶²

Guidelines provided by western ethical research often consider two essential matters: codes and consents, and confidentiality.

3.1. Codes and Consents

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) and Ryen (2004), 'informed consent' in research revolves around participants' right to know the following: that they are being researched, the overall purpose and process of the research, the main features of the project design, any

⁶² For example, the effect of applying the rule of 'informed consent' in research differs from one to another. Participants affiliated with oral cultures or cultures with low degrees of trust do not necessarily appreciate the concept of 'consent' the way people belonging to Western cultures do (Ryen 2004).

possible risks or benefits from participating in the research, the outcomes and findings of the study, and finally the right to withdraw at any time.

3.2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality in research is equivalent to 'nonmaleficence' (Thorne 1998), which is the researcher's obligation to do no harm and protect the identities of the participants in the research. This is usually done through a process of 'anonymisation'⁶³ of all the names of participants, places, institutions, and anything that could be identified by the readers (unless the participants themselves agree to the release or publishing of identifiable information) (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009; Ryen 2004).⁶⁴

In my research, I have followed the guidelines required by the 'Ethics Committee' at Aston University where all participants in the study signed letters of consent which contained explanation of the nature of the research, the process of data collection, the handling and publishing of the information, and other guidelines such as their right to know any details, their right to withdraw at any time, and so on.

Negotiating access to the company was indeed a lengthy process which presented a huge obstacle at the beginning. It is important to note that if it was not for my husband's influence and his pressure on top management personnel, it would have been almost impossible to get any access beyond interviews in Bahrainco.

Upon receiving a general approval letter from Bahrainco's management allowing me to conduct research in the company, I contacted a number of seniorwomen individually and arranged

⁶³Hudson and Finell (2000:1) define anonymisation as the 'systematic alteration of the original text with an aim to protect all parties involved: speakers, people referred to, corpus compilers and researchers'.

⁶⁴ There are exceptions; sometimes researchers, especially those using case studies, do not have a clear purpose from the start and would rather let the data guide them. Also, in some research topics, participants' knowledge of the subject of the research might lead to bias or alteration of their behaviour (Ryen 2004).

for preliminary meetings where I would explain the purpose and process of my research hoping to leave a good impression and encourage them to participate in the study.

Indeed, I spent the first year of research approaching and pleading with the senior women in the company and most of them turned me down. Some of them were not convinced of the research itself; some claimed they were too busy; others rejected the offer on the basis that their job as well as their meetings were too confidential to share. By the end of the year, I managed to obtain the personal approval of three senior women to attend and record one meeting, and conduct and record interviews with them and a number of their staff. However, throughout the research process, I found that I occasionally needed to renegotiate access as well as my position as a researcher in the meetings. In one meeting (Badria's case study), some participants were suspicious at first and asked many questions about the nature of the study and how I would use the information I gained in the meeting ; this is despite my reassurance of the confidentiality of the research.

4. Data Collection

The ultimate purpose of my research is to answer four specific enquiries or research questions (see chapter one, section 5). For that, I use several methods of data collection: observing and recording corporate meetings, interviews, and shadowing. This section is divided into two main parts. In the first part (section 4.1) I discuss each method of data collection briefly, illustrating the purpose and rationale behind my choice. In the second part (4.2) I demonstrate the process of data collection for each case study.

4.1. Methods of Data collection

I conduct data collection using the following methods:

4.1.1. Observing and Recording Corporate Meetings

4.1.1.1. Participant Observation

Participant observation is an essential method in conducting any case study research.

'Participant observation' and 'field work' are used interchangeably, with ethnography being the most inclusive term⁶⁵ (Delamont 2004).

Duranti (1997:99) distinguishes between types of observation, ranging from 'passive participation' to 'complete observation'. He warns researchers against taking a complete participant's role because it distracts them from their main task and enquiry. Instead, he recommends that researchers should take the role of a 'professional overhearer' (1997:101). In my own research study, although the degree of my participation in the three meetings varied, it mainly took the form of 'passive' observant. Occasionally, I had to introduce myself and my role as a researcher and even participate in small talk at the beginning or end of the meetings.

Finally, one established drawback to the processes of observing and recording meetings is the so-called 'observer's paradox' (Labov 1972), which presumes that the recorder may constrain and alter the behaviour and language of people being observed.⁶⁶ However, Handford (2010:5) argues that despite these constraints, 'it is necessary for the researcher to systematically observe the unfolding discourse in order to understand it'. He further claims that participants in business meetings are often too occupied with the goal-driven institutional discourse that they become oblivious to the existence of the recorder.

⁶⁵Delamont (2004) distinguishes between 'fieldwork' and 'participant observation'. While 'fieldwork' most precisely refers to the data collection phase of the research process, 'participant observation' involves a mixture of observation and interviewing practices. Participant observation here refers to the process of interaction with the observants and not necessarily mimicking what they do.

⁶⁶ Cameron (2001:20) notes that '[c]onversely, it is widely acknowledged that the act of recording talk, whether in a lab or somewhere else, has the potential to affect participants' behaviour and make the talk something different from what it would have been otherwise. All talk is shaped by context in which it is produced, and where talk is being observed and recorded that becomes part of the context'.

4.1.1.2. Corporate Meetings

The decision to observe corporate meetings lies in their significance as 'one of the most important and visible sites of organisational power' (Mumby 1998:68). Meetings are where business gets done; and it is done through communication. Boden (1994:8) asserts that talk, especially talk in meetings, is 'the lifeblood of organizations'.

Business meetings are sites for the most important activities in organisations, such as making announcements, decision making, negotiation, and all kinds of interactions. While talk in meetings usually revolves around transactional objectives of the organisation, it features a significant amount of relational exchange (Boden 1994). Boden (1994:84) defines a corporate meeting as a 'planned gathering' (internal or external to the organisation), which has 'some purpose or reason, a time, a place, in some general sense, an organizational function'. Also, participants often have perceived roles and some type of 'forewarning of the event'.

Many researchers (e.g. Baxter 2010; Holmes and Marra 2002) argue that any corporate meeting can be regarded as a community of practice on its own. Based on this view, in my research, I consider the meeting in Badria's case study as a community of practice on its own because, while it takes place outside the community of practice of Badria's section, it has a specific function/goal/endeavour which all members meet regularly to achieve.

According to Holmes and Stubbe (2003), meetings differ in the 'practice' and endeavour of the participants. They can be forward-oriented (e.g. planning, prospective meetings), backward-oriented (e.g. reporting, retrospective meetings), or present-oriented (e.g. task oriented, problem solving meetings).

Additionally, meetings in organisations could be formal or informal. Formal meetings are usually more structured events, with a nominated chair, designated place, and fixed agenda. In

contrast, informal meetings are more spontaneous, loosely conducted, and often take place in the chair's office (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997:207-209)

Handford (2010) suggests that business meetings usually have the following elements: a set of participants, evidence of an agenda or topic, a purpose or a goal, turn-taking modes, recognisable beginnings and endings, degrees of 'intertextuality',⁶⁷ and influence upon practices of institutional, professional and/or national culture.⁶⁸ In that regard, Weir (2003) notes that meetings in the Arab Middle East are often conducted according to a different set of norms and worldviews. For example, Weir (2003:10) argues that meetings tend to be flexible and loosely structured because of Arabs' the synchronous rather than monochronous concept of time. He further explains that 'more than one event or type of event can take place in parallel, so a meeting, apparently on one topic, can transmute into another type of encounter, and back again, be curtailed or postponed without stated objectives apparently attained, without any offence being intended'.

The data of my research is mainly obtained through observing and audio-taping one corporate meeting for each woman leader. The overall purpose of observing and recording the meetings is to answer the first research question: What leadership and language practices do senior Bahraini women use with colleagues and subordinates within the context of corporate meetings? Also, observing meetings for the three leaders should enable me to compare and contrast their leadership and language practices (the second research question). Moreover, by analysing the interaction and language practices of the participants in the meetings, I can also gain insights into the interacting discourses at play in the context of each case study (the third research question).

⁶⁷ 'Intertextuality' takes place when participants make references to previous meetings, future meetings, or any other events or texts (Bhatia 2004).

⁶⁸ See also Boden (1994), Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996), and Bhatia (2004).

In each case study, the nature and type of meetings was determined by the leaders themselves. The meetings differed in the degree of formality, number of participants (as well as the composition of the group in terms of gender and ethnicity), purpose and goal of the meeting, use of language, and so on.

Working with meeting data from the three case studies proved challenging in some ways and I had to make decisions, especially in regard to the intercultural element— with participants from a different ethnicity (Indians) partaking in Badria's and Hanan's meetings. In my analysis, I do not focus on the intercultural elements since they are beyond the scope of this study.

The other challenging aspect was the language used in the meetings, which differed across the three case studies. In Badria's and Hanan's cases, the meetings took place mainly in English with instances of code-switching to Arabic. In Fatima's case study, however, the meeting took place in Arabic with few code-switching instances to English. Although I touch upon translation issues and provide a brief analysis of the possible reasons and effects of such instances in each case study, I do not particularly focus on the issues of translation and code-switching because of the limitation of space and time in my small scale PhD research. Next, I provide a preview of the vast field of 'translation studies' and a brief discussion of some key issues concerning translation from one language to another:

Translation

Although the practice of translation has been going on for hundreds of years, it has only recently been regarded as a field of study in its own right. Where in the past translation in academia was considered a language learning activity, translation studies was first introduced as an academic discipline by Holmes (1998; 2004:181) defining it as 'the complex of problems clustered round the phenomenon of translating and translations'. In its inception, translation studies was

associated with comparative literature and contrastive analysis, however, the field expanded greatly in recent years.

While translation usually refers to dealing with the written text, 'interpreting' indicates working with spoken discourse. Generally, translation or interpreting refers to the rendering of the source language text into the target language while maintaining the meaning and, if possible, the structure of the source language. Many problems arise when translating texts from one language to another, Catford (1965) discusses the problem of linguistic untranslatability claiming that translation does not mean transference or implantation of source language meanings into target language; it is rather a process of substitution of meanings.

Throughout the years, researchers have taken up many approaches to studying translation and have focused on different issues, most importantly the notion of 'equivalence' (e.g. Broeck 1981; Neubert 1985; Nida 1964; Popovič 1976). Equivalence does not necessarily mean sameness, for languages differ greatly in many aspects. In her book, Baker (1992) offers a comprehensive account of key translation issues and problems of non-equivalence between languages. She illustrates the possible problems arising from lack of equivalence at various levels: word level, above the word level (idioms, collocations, fixed expressions, etc.), grammatical level, textual level, and finally pragmatic level.

She notes, for example, that the common types of non-equivalence at word include:

- Cultural-specific concepts in the source language which are non-existent and therefore untranslatable to the target language
- Source language concepts which are not lexicalised in the target language; in this case the notion may exist in the culture but there are no allocated wordings to express it.
- Differences in form where there are certain features and language structures in the source language (e.g. suffixes, prefixes, etc.) which do not exist in the target language.

She also suggests that translators can apply certain strategies such as: translating a more general word; substituting with a word that has the same impact in the target culture, using a loan word with explanation (especially with culture specific items or modern concepts), paraphrasing using unrelated words, and so on.

In my research. I have used all the above techniques especially when working with data from Fatima's case study. Indeed, I have found translating Fatima's meeting particularly challenging because her language is full of Arabic expressions which have no equivalent meaning in English. Therefore, when transcribing, I would usually provide both the literal translation as well as substitution with words which have similar impact in English (for approach to transcription, see Appendices section 1).

Interviews constitute the second main source of data in my research project. These will be discussed next.

4.1.2 Interviews

I have chosen to use interviews because they are an appropriate way of capturing participants' perception of their own leadership language, and others (see the second research question). I also believe that interview data offers valuable insights into the participants of my study, the operating discourses in the context as well as the norms of the communities of practice in each case study.

The concept, purpose, and procedures of interviewing as a research method have changed alongside changes in the perception of knowledge throughout research history. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:148) note '[w]hereas factual interviews are typically in accordance with a modernist conception of knowledge as pre-existing elements to be unearthed from the depths of the respondents, discursive and most forms of narrative interviews are in line with a postmodern conception of knowledge as constructed through social interaction, discourses and narratives'.

In the social constructionist paradigm, rather than considering interview data as a source for interviewees' reality, interviews are treated as discursive events where talk is co-constructed and collaboratively produced between the interviewer and the interviewees (Rapley 2004).

Based on this perspective, the joint talk is perceived as reflective of the two parties' experiences, emotions, and knowledge, as well as the wider discourses in their cultures and the shared context of the interview. Therefore, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:156) suggest that the researcher should consider interview data as revelatory of 'the perspectives and discursive practices of those who produced them'. Researchers should also examine their own role in constructing the realities, identities, and discourses produced within the interview context.

Moreover, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), Rapley (2004), and others consider that the process of reporting interview data is in itself a social construction. They claim that researchers produce their own understanding of the subjects' experiences through choosing a certain writing style, expressions, narratives, and so on. Therefore, when writing the interview report, researchers should be alert and self-reflexive about their own subjectivities and prejudices.

Generally, interviews differ in their types and structures. Gilliam (2000) and Rapley (2004) list various types of interviews such as structured, unstructured, semi-structured, biographical, collaborative, conversational, in-depth, dialogical, focused, guided, informal, life-history, non-directed, open-ended, oral history, reflexive, and so on.

In my research study, I use semi-structured interviews in order to allow the participants to take the floor and express their own understanding of the important concepts of leadership, language, and gender as well as the motives behind their language choices without me imposing certain ideas or prompting their answers. To achieve this purpose, I use some closed, but mostly open questions, to interview each of the three women leaders and a varying number of their staff members. During the interview, I engage in a more active role as an interviewer,

because in many instances I find that I need to negotiate meaning and give examples even from my personal life.

Before the data collection process, I prepared two versions of the interview questions, one for the women leaders, and one for the other participants (see section 2 in Appendices for interview questions templates). Both versions consisted of three parts:

- Questions about the meeting.⁶⁹
- Questions about the perception of the language and leadership practices of the women leaders.⁷⁰
- Questions about the leadership and gendered norms of the Arab Islamic Bahraini culture in general and the community of practice of Bahrainco in particular.

4.1.3. Shadowing

McDonald (2005:4) notes that shadowing is an important method because it enables the researcher to have a 'rich, dense and comprehensive data set which gives a detailed, first hand and multidimensional picture of the role, approach, philosophy and tasks of the person being studied'. In my research I utilise shadowing as a supplementary method because it offers valuable insights into the context, as it allows me to observe the leaders and other participants outside the constraints of the meeting and beyond the possible effects of the tape recorder.

Shadowing as a research methodology refers to the process of following the participant(s) of one's research for an extended period of time for the purpose of investigating certain aspects of

⁶⁹Only for the participants who attended the meetings under investigation.

⁷⁰Women leaders describe their perceptions of their own leadership language practices.

the subjects' behaviour, language or any other issue related to the study⁷¹. McDonald (2005:3) notes '[s]hadowing can be done over consecutive or non-consecutive days for anything from a single day or shift, up to a whole month. Studies can be focused on a single role (such as new recruit or purchasing manager) in several companies or on a number of roles within the same company'.⁷²

On the role of the shadower/researcher, Macdonald (2005:358) argues that she/he is no longer 'perspective making' but rather 'perspective taking through their shadowing in that they hope to appreciate and articulate the distinct roles, views and contributions of those they study'.

Although the use of shadowing as a research method appears to be rather limited in management research (Macdonald 2005), it is widely used in other fields such as education (Polite et al. 1997), social work (Stanley et al. 1998), information studies (Hirsh 1999; Orton, Marcella & Baxter 2000) and nursing (Vukic and Keddy 2002). Normally, shadowing is used in conjunction with other methods such as interviews (e.g. Polite et al. 1997; Stewart, Smith, Blake and Wingate 1982; Walker, Guest and Turner 1956) and observation (e.g. Bonazzi 1998; Perlow 1998; 1999) in order to get a rich and pluralistic view of the context.

Macdonald (2005) suggests that shadowing as a research technique is highly compatible with investigating managerial work because it allows the researcher to observe the manager enacting the complex process of leadership in different situations. He notes that shadowing can help the researcher 'capture the paradoxes that lie within the speed, brevity, variety and inter-related fragmentation of this kind of work' (2005:22).

In my study, I spend a varying length of time shadowing each woman in her own community of practice and observing the language she uses with subordinates and colleagues outside the

⁷¹ For a detailed discussion of the differences between shadowing, interviewing, and participant observation, see McDonald (2004).

⁷² The effect of the researcher in the shadowing situation is called the Hawthorne (Shipman 1997:99) or observer's effect (McDonald 2005).

meeting context according to the amount of access I was granted. During the shadowing process, I take notes, which I use later in my analysis to verify, juxtapose and compare with the data I have obtained through observation and interviews.

In the next section, I will elaborate more on the process of observation, interviews, and shadowing in each case study.

4.2. The Data Collection Process

The process of data collection differed between the three case studies. For each case study, I will provide information about the nature of the data collection process in the meeting, the interviews, and the shadowing. As I have illustrated in the research ethics section, names of the participants, places, institutions, and information that can be identifiable will be anonymised for the purpose of maintaining participants' privacy⁷³.

4.2.1. The Case of Badria

At the time of the data collection, Badria worked as a manager in the Business and Planning Department at Bahrainco; she was one of only two senior women managers. Working in the same company for over twenty years, she was the first women to be appointed manager in the history of Bahrainco. She had worked there all her professional life, and she had been managing the Business Planning department since 2007 (Bahrainco website 2009, Bahrain News Agency Website 2007).

Data collected in Badria's case study consists of the following:

- One meeting between Badria and seven other participants (five females and two males; one hour and thirty minutes of transcribed data)

⁷³I have decided not to change the real names of the three main departments under analysis (Business Planning, Engineering, and Human Resources) because of the importance of their nature of business contexts to my study.

- Interview with Badria (45 minutes of transcribed data)
- Interview with Samah (female colleague; 50 minutes of transcribed data)
- Interview with Fahad (male subordinate; 30 minutes of transcribed data)
- Interview with Nadeem (female subordinate; 50 minutes of transcribed data)
- Shadowing (shadowing notes are based on attendance of two other meetings and three informal visits to Badria's office)

4.2.1.1. The Meeting

The meeting under analysis did not take place in Badria's own section with her own subordinates; rather, with participants from different departments in Bahrainco and two other institutions.

Bahrainco and the University of Design (UOD) were working to organise a joint conference. The meeting is one of many which took place between Bahrainco and UOD, and Badria had been chosen by the higher management to represent Bahrainco and lead the project. Since Bahrainco is part of a larger organisation (SATCO), the latter is formally involved in the process of organising the conference. Participants from the three institutions attended a series of organisational meetings. However, there are three key participants –all women: Badria (representing Bahrainco), Amal (a senior female employee representing SATCO), and Dr Sara (a senior female employee of Indian origin representing UOD).

Both Bahrainco and UOD have definite roles in this project. Bahrainco is the main sponsor and host, and UOD is the sole organiser of the conference. Badria's main job as chair is to oversee and facilitate the organisation process. Dr Sara's main job is to supervise the organisation and negotiate important decisions with Bahrainco. However, SATCO's role is slightly vague and

appears to be more based on its hierarchical relationship with Bahrainco than on specific transactions.

The language used in the meeting was mostly English because Dr Sara and a few other participants did not speak Arabic. However, there were many instances where Badria and other participants code-switched to Arabic during the meeting. I include a discussion of the code-switching instances in Badria's analysis chapter where I see it as relevant to my research question (see Chapter three).

4.2.1.2. Interviews

In this case study, I conducted several interviews (see above) starting with Badria, then Samah (a senior female employee from a different department and a participant in the meeting). I also interviewed two of Badria's subordinates who were not participants in the meeting: Nadeem (female employee and Badria's assistant) and Fahad (male subordinate).

4.2.1.3. Shadowing

I attended three meetings with Badria, only one of which I have recorded for this study.⁷⁴ During my data collection period, I would go to Badria's office and observe her leadership language and informal communication with her own team members, and then we would walk together to the other building to attend the meeting and back to her office. This shadowing process has given me an opportunity to observe Badria in and out of meetings, dealing with different people in different contexts. Also, attending several meetings has given me a better understanding of the meeting under study and has assisted my data analysis.

⁷⁴I have decided to use only one meeting for the research so that all three case studies are relatively compatible.

4.2.2 The Case of Hanan

Hanan is a senior support engineer in the Engineering division who has been working in Bahrainco for over twenty years. According to Bahrainco's website (2007), she is known for her competence and keenness to 'identify business goals and achieve them with high levels of professionalism and skills'. Throughout her work experience, she has successfully managed and completed major and critical projects for the company. Recently, she has been assigned to lead a team of engineers and technicians in a major nationwide project.

Data collected in Hanan's case study consists of the following:

- One meeting between Hanan and three team members (all males; one hour and thirty minutes of transcribed data)
- Interview with Hanan (one hour of transcribed data)
- Interview with Amir (male colleague; 30 minutes of transcribed data)
- Shadowing (I attended a company- wide event with Hanan)

4.2.2.1 The Meeting

The meeting took place between Hanan and her team members for the purpose of discussing activities and action plans for the project they had been working on for a while. The team consisted of three male engineers: one Bahraini engineer (Amir) from Bahrainco and two other engineers of Indian origin (P1 and P2). They worked for a foreign contractor that was collaborating with Bahrainco in this project. Although none of the participants was the direct subordinate of Hanan, she was the one managing the project and they were all expected to comply with her orders and follow her instructions.

The meeting I attended was a regular meeting for the team and its general purpose was to check and follow up work progress, solve problems, assign tasks, and so on. Therefore, throughout the meeting, Hanan went through a check-list of action points.

The meeting took place wholly in English with very few instances of code-switching from Amir. Working with this particular meeting has been a challenge for me because of the mainly technical jargon used, which made most of the conversation unintelligible to me. Another difficulty I encountered in transcribing the meeting was the incomprehensibility of Hanan's talk as her voice is very low and toned down. This, from my observation, is characteristic of Hanan and not peculiar to this meeting as she is known to be a quiet person.

4.2.2.2. Interviews

In this case study, I only managed to interview Hanan and one of her team members in the project (Ameer). The other two contractor engineers were too busy.

4.2.2.3. Shadowing

After the interview, Hanan invited me to a gathering that took place in Bahrainco's Club for an annual company's event. This proved to be a very good opportunity to get a feeling for and perspective of Bahrainco's community as I got to meet and chat with the Chief Executive as well as other key people and important managers in the company. Yet, most importantly, I had the chance to observe Hanan outside the meeting setting, dealing with colleagues and superiors informally.

4.2.3 The Case of Fatima

Fatima is a senior employee in the HR department. She has worked in the same department for over twenty years 'climbing up the professional ladder' until she was promoted to a supervisory position three years prior to this study.

Data collected in Fatima's case study consists of the following:

- One meeting between Fatima and seven team members (three females and four males; 40 minutes of transcribed data)
- Interview and shadowing with Fatima (selected data transcription of informal visit to Fatima's office lasting over three hours)
- Interview with Salem (male subordinate; 30 minutes of transcribed data)
- Interview with Huda (female subordinate; 30 minutes of transcribed data)

4.2.3.1. The Meeting

The background of the meeting is that Fatima was going in a business trip to Japan; therefore she had called in a quick meeting to discuss some important issues with her staff and inform them of the latest changes. It is important to note that, shortly prior to the meeting, I learnt that Fatima's father and self-declared role model had just died, so this was an emotional time for her. Therefore, this meeting could be viewed as a special, one-off occasion where her team members were trying to cheer her up.

As I explain in chapter 4.1.1.2, Fatima's meeting took place in Arabic with few instances of code-switching to English. I have found translating the transcript of the meeting particularly challenging because Fatima's language is full of Arabic expressions which have no equivalent meaning in English.

4.2.3.2. Interviews and Shadowing

My interview with Fatima was in no way conventional or structured; it started very casually. Fatima was very busy and it was the last day before her vacation. She invited me to her office and started chatting informally. Although I tried several times to explain the purpose of the

research, it seemed that she had her own expectations of what our meeting would be about so she took control of the topics despite my attempts to contain and direct the conversation. Our encounter took more than three hours during which she made several phone calls, and various people popped in and out of her office. Later on, Fatima walked me through other people's offices introducing me to everybody and carrying out small talk throughout. This gave me an opportunity to observe her leadership practices in a different light as she engaged in both formal and informal conversations with subordinates and co-workers.

I also conducted thirty-minute interviews with two of Fatima's direct subordinates: Salem and Huda. They were both young, well-liked by everybody and, most importantly, they both worked closely with Fatima. Data analysis methods will be discussed next.

5. Data Analysis

The overall purpose of my study is to produce a multi-layered analysis of the language of women leaders in Bahrain. For this, a wide range of interpretations is needed to uncover the complexities and underlying attitudes and discourses behind women's positioning in society and the workplace. I utilise qualitative data analysis (QDA) as the main method, and feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA). Following Baxter (2003), within FPDA, I will be employing basic principles of interactional sociolinguistics (IS) and conversational analysis (CA) as sub-methods in order to analyse the leaders' language on a micro-linguistic level. In the following sections, I provide a brief description of each method and how I utilise it in my research:

5.1. Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA)

I have chosen QDA as a principal data analysis method because I believe it is compatible with case study research as it allows the codes and themes to emerge from the data rather than the researcher imposing some external categorization upon the data. Indeed, in my research, I am

dealing with a rather new context in the field of language, gender, and leadership, and my interest is to explore and learn the ways women enact leadership in this part of the world rather than impose findings from literature written about women leaders in Western contexts.

Jorgensen (1989:107) summarises QDA analysis as:

Breaking up, separating, or disassembling of research materials into pieces, parts, elements, or units. With facts broken down into manageable pieces, the researcher sorts and sifts them, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns or wholes. The aim of this process is to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion.

For the purpose of explaining the basic process of qualitative data analysis, Seidel (1998) developed a useful model consisting of three interlinked and cyclical processes: noticing, collecting, and thinking about interesting things in the data (see Figure 1 on the relationship between the three processes).



Figure 1: Relationship between the basic process of QDA (Seidel 1998)

- a. Noticing and Coding:

According to Seidel (1998), noticing operates in two levels. The first level of noticing is the general observation a researcher makes while collecting data such as making notes, recording, gathering documents.

The second level is looking for themes across the data and coding them. Developing codes involves a process of reading through the data record (e.g. transcripts, documents, etc.), identifying interesting moments in the data, and finally labeling them according to some thematic idea. The process of coding enables the researcher to collect and retrieve all the data associated with the thematic organisation.

b. Collecting and Sorting:

This is the process of collecting and retrieving further data associated with the thematic organisation, and sorting them according to the already identified codes.

c. Thinking about data:

This is the process of making sense of the data in which the researcher starts examining the data, looking for patterns and relationships within and across the collection and making general discoveries.

In my research, I use QDA as a tool to organise the data and sort it into coherent categories, and most importantly to identify revelatory moments in the data as well as to choose the extracts which express these key moments. An example of a key moment would be in the interview data of Hanan's case (see chapter four); when asked about her use of relational language in the interview, Hanan responds:

H I mean you have really to give t- because er (.) I feel at the end (.) you don't need really very bright people (0.1) to (.) to do the job (.) just you have to have good relation with people (.) and that will maintain er good productivity

In her response, Hanan establishes a cause and effect relationship between the use of language and maintaining good productivity. This indicates Hanan's tendency to focus on tasks, and her conscious planning to use relational language strategies for that purpose.

For in-depth descriptive analysis of the extracts, I use feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA) as a main method. This will be discussed next.

5.2 Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA)

I have chosen FPDA as a method of analysis primarily because it is a 'multi-perspectival' approach and, as Baxter (2008) points out, it is more compatible with small-scale case study research as it offers a fine-grained, localised linguistic analysis of the data along with a Foucauldian macro-level investigation.

Fundamentally, FPDA is a self-reflexive method with a deconstructionist approach to discourse and gender. It is based on the premise that speakers do not exist outside discourse, and that ideas, concepts, identities, relationships and so on are never fixed, so that their meaning is constantly changing (Baxter 2003). Also, FPDA views gender as a 'site of struggle'; therefore, FPDA research always has a specific feminist focus. It supposes that women can be both powerful and controlling or powerless and marginalised in the same interaction or event.

According to Baxter (2003, 2008), FPDA does not have emancipatory goals, but rather transformative ones. It has no political agenda or theoretical mission. Rather, it supports social transformations in small-scale, localised contexts. It is mainly interested in studying the interplay of discourses and exposing power relations in any given context. Baxter (2003: 46) explains 'FPDA in particular specialises in the business of identifying the range of discourses at play within varying social contexts in order to ascertain the interwoven yet competing ways in which such discourses structure speakers' experiences of power relations'.

FPDA analysis takes place in two levels. At the micro-linguistic level, FPDA can help the researcher identify moments in discourse where speakers shift between powerful and powerless positions. At the macro-discoursal level, FPDA can help the researcher explain the shifts in power through examining the interplay between discourses in the context.

According to Baxter (2003:73-79), any textual analysis using FPDA should involve the following elements and processes:

- The synchronic-diachronic dimension:

Baxter (2008:251) defines the synchronic dimension as a 'detailed micro-analysis of stretches of text'. It involves identifying critical moments in conversation where a power shift may occur. In contrast, the diachronic dimension is concerned with analysing and observing the change of the language of individuals and norms within communities of practice over a long period of time. This could be achieved by using ethnographic methods.

It is important to note that in my research, I am unable to achieve analysis on the diachronic level because of the limit of access to the company, as well as the restriction of time in any PhD research.

- Denotation-connotation of the text:

This involves analysing the text at two levels. On the denotative level, the researcher conducts descriptive and non-evaluative micro-analysis on the text through the use of discourse analysis tools like CA and IS. The connotative level, however, is deduced from the denotative analysis. It is where the analyst examines issues at the macro-discursive level such as identifying key discourses, speakers' positioning, the process of negotiating power, and the interplay between the competing and intertextualised discourses in the context.

- Elements of intertextuality or inter-discursivity

This indicates that FPDA researchers must recognise that discourses are always interwoven, and analyse the ways in which every discourse can have traces of one or more different discourses.

- Self-reflexivity:

This refers to the need for FPDA researchers to constantly reevaluate their position and question their own values and assumptions and how they affect the process of analysis.

In my own case study research, I use FPDA because it provides me with the necessary tools to answer my four research questions. First of all, I conduct FPDA analysis (denotative and connotative) on both the meeting and the interview data (see chapters three, four, and five). The denotative analysis of the meeting data has enabled me to identify the linguistic practices the women leaders use in context (question 1). Also, the denotative analysis of the interview data has enabled me to examine the women leaders' perception of their own leadership and language practices as well as others' perception of these practices (question 2).

On the macro-level, conducting connotative analysis on the meeting and interview data has allowed me to identify the interwoven discourses that affect women leaders in different departments in Bahrainco, and examine the ways in which they are variously positioned as powerful and powerless in the context (question 3). Also, studying the competing discourses in each of the three communities of practice has enabled me to offer various explanations and possibilities of why the women in my study speak or behave in certain ways. All of this provides the basis on which I can compare and contrast the leadership and language practices of the three senior women in their different communities of practice (question 4).

5.35.3. Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) and Conversational Analysis (CA)

Interactional sociolinguistics is a qualitative, interpretive, and interdisciplinary approach incorporating the work of prominent researchers from various disciplines and methodological perspectives such as: Garfinkel and Goffman from sociology, Hymes from anthropology, Searle and Grice from philosophy, and Lakoff, Tannen, and Holmes from linguistics (Gordon 2011). It has been adopted by qualitative researchers to study various contexts including workplaces (e.g., Kendall 2003; Holmes and Stubbe 2004). According to Gordon (2011:78) '[s]uch studies reveal the various linguistic means by which identities are constructed, make efforts at linking linguistic features with broader ideologies, and in general contribute to our understanding of how individuals use language to accomplish social goals'.

Originally, interactional sociolinguistics was founded by the linguistic anthropologist Gumperz (1982) as an attempt to help researchers understand how people use language to achieve interactional goals and negotiate identities in interaction. Therefore, it focuses on all aspects of conversations such as turn-taking, 'contextualisation cues' like prosody (e.g. intonation, pitch, and stress), paralinguistic cues (e.g. hesitation, pausing, simultaneous speech), code-switching, and so on (Cameron 2001:109).

According to Gordon (2011:73), IS is often used side by side with conversational analysis (CA). They are both discourse analysis methods used to investigate 'the micro features of conversation'.

Conversational analysis⁷⁵ is an ethno-methodological approach which is mainly concerned with studying how speakers create their social realities through their use of turn-taking and interactions with other speakers. Researchers should not approach the data with predefined categories, therefore, they are encouraged to analyse conversations while avoiding the bigger

⁷⁵CA was developed by Sacks in the 1960s and later expanded by Schegloff (1997), Wetherell (1998) and others.

context. Similar to IS, CA analysts study the observable sequential patterns and regularities in the interlocutors' language through analysing the use of conversational mechanisms such as: openings and closings, turn-taking, overlapping, agreeing and disagreeing, floor holding, etc. (Bloomer et. al. 2005).⁷⁶

Gordon (2011:73) notes that both IS and CA complement each other and bring different perspectives on interactions. While CA focuses on the structure of the interaction regardless of the socio-cultural implications of the context such as speakers' background, gender, ethnicity, etc., 'IS scholars consider such aspects to be central to how interaction unfolds'. In other words, while both methods focus on the micro-features of conversations, IS puts more emphasis on the social and cultural dimensions of the speakers and contexts.

In this study, I have combined techniques of IS and CA in order to conduct a systematic, denotative analysis of the transcribed data through examining the women leaders' language patterns and leadership practices (e.g. holding or sharing the floor, allocating turns, interrupting, listening, negotiating, expressing approval, issuing orders and instructions, criticising, warning, challenging, suggesting, and so on (Holmes and Stubbe 2003)) in the context of organisational meetings. I have also examined the cultural and social aspects of the contexts by utilising interviews and shadowing methods.

⁷⁶ While this could a very useful tool, CA in its 'purist' version has been widely criticised, especially by language and gender researchers, because for CA purists 'gender and gender hierarchy are only relevant to the analysis of a piece of data if the participants make it relevant in some way' (Cameron 2001:88). Therefore, traditionally, CA did not study power in discourse in institutional settings because the analyst must not appeal to any evidence outside the talk itself. Instead, the term 'asymmetries' was widely used to refer to the different verbal abilities of the participants, which in the view of Thornborrow (2002), disguise the inequalities and hierarchies taking place in interactions.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained the purpose and process of using a number of qualitative data collection and data analysis methods. For data collection, I have utilised three methods: observation and recording of corporate meetings, interviews, and shadowing procedures. For data analysis, I have used three main processes of the qualitative data analysis to identify significant revelatory moments in the data. I have also used basic principles of feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis in order to unravel the interwoven and competing discourses in the context. Following the principles of FPDA, I have provided denotative and connotative analysis for each data extract. In the denotative analysis, I have conducted an in-depth micro-analysis on the data using a combination of two methods: interactional sociolinguistics and conversational analysis.

In the next chapter I reveal the processes of analysis using the aforementioned methods. The analysis chapter is divided into three chapters: Badria's Analysis, Hanan's Analysis, and Fatima's Analysis.

Chapter Three

Badria's Case Study

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses my first case study of female leadership language. I start the chapter with an introduction about Badria's case study. This is followed by the presentation of two sets of data in section 2.1: the enactment of leadership (meeting data) and perception of leadership (interview data). Data extracts are further discussed in the connotative analysis in section 2.2 for the purpose of deducing Badria's leadership language (section 2.2.1) and the discourses at work in the context (section 2.2.2). Each discourse will be introduced in a separate section followed by a final section on the interacting discourses. Finally, the conclusion (section 3) will summarise the significant and major findings in Badria's case.

2. Badria's Case Study

As explained in the Methodology chapter (section 3.2.1), Badria is a manager at the Business and Planning department in Bahrainco. Badria's case study is based on data from one recorded meeting, four recorded interviews with Badria and other participants as well as shadowing notes (attending two similar meetings). Following the principles of qualitative data analysis (QDA), I have chosen the extracts which I found interesting and possibly relevant to my research inquiries. Adopting a feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis, I conduct two levels of analysis on the data: denotative and connotative (see chapter two, section 4.2). The denotative analysis will be presented next.

2.1. Denotative Analysis

This section is divided into two parts. The first one consists of selective extracts from the meeting data, where Badria enacts leadership. Perceptions of Badria's leadership language are revealed in the second part which consists of extracts from interview data with Badria and three

other participants. It is important to note that the selection of extracts is based on their relevance and significance to my core enquiry.

2.1.1. Enactment of Leadership: Meeting Data

As explained in the Methodology chapter (section 3.2.1), this meeting takes place between Badria and other participants from Bahrainco and SATCO (Amal) with representatives from the University of Design (Dr Sara) in order to organise a conference. This is one of a series of meetings which Badria chairs.

Extract (1)

This extract signals the official start of the meeting. While waiting for other participants to arrive, Badria and others engage in small talk. In the meanwhile, Dr Sara makes a phone call to her colleague at UOD who was supposed to attend the meeting with her:

⁷⁷Key: B=Badria, D=Dr Sara (F), O=Omar (M)⁷⁸

D Some er somebody has passed away so he had to go there (.) and then he had a meeting with the Ministry of Labour at 10 so he said just let me know and next meeting I will be coming

B ah ok ok (.) we are just waiting for Ahmed Rahimi he is in his way

O Ahmed Rahimi is coming↑

(0.2)

B because Mohamed said that the registration (.) it's better to give it to the training department

⁷⁷For Transcription key see Appendices section 1

O mm

((Small talk continues between participants for around 5 minutes))

B I think er it's time to start (.) and er everybody↑ ((eye contact with all the participants to signal the beginning of the meeting)) Ah (.) I did the er a follow up in the progress er meeting (.) in our er last meeting we left with er certain action items (.) and I think the designs is one of them (.) er have you looked at it from PR side↑

Denotative Analysis:

The extract begins with Dr Sara informing Badria that her colleague from UOD has other obligations and commitments and therefore will not be coming to the meeting (lines 1-3). Since they are all waiting for the late-comers to arrive, Dr Sara is perhaps indirectly indicating to Badria that they can start the meeting now. However, Badria responds with discourse markers: 'ah ok' followed by an explanatory statement that they are actually waiting for Ahmed Rahimi (the Training department manager) to arrive and not Dr Sara's colleague. Omar, who seems surprised at the news, issues an exclamatory statement: '*Ahmed Rahimi is coming*'↑

Badria pauses for two seconds before issuing an explanation to Omar for the Training department's sudden involvement in the project (lines 7-8). Distancing herself from the decision, she attributes it to Mohamed (the general manager/her boss). With that, she clearly defers to the dominant hierarchical system in the company with the general manager having the utmost authority. Omar's minimal response 'mm' signifies his unquestioning compliance with this hierarchy.

When five minutes pass and Ahmed Rahimi doesn't arrive, Badria decides to officially begin the meeting. While keeping steady eye contact with participants, she uses the meta-discoursal phrase '*it's time to start*' (line 11). Then, she reminds everybody of the resolutions and action

plans of the previous meeting, starts with the first agenda item: 'designs', and finally assigns the floor to PR representatives using a questioning strategy (about whether they have studied the design proposal as they were asked to in the previous meeting) (lines 12-14).

Extract (2)

Ahmed Rahimi (the Training department manager) has finally arrived and announced at the start that he was not going to stay long. Prior to his leaving, he asks whether he is required to do anything additional. In the extract below, Dr Sara has a final request for him, which is to encourage people from other training departments in key companies to attend the conference.

Key: AR=Ahmed Rahimi (M), B=Badria, D= Dr Sara (F)

D I have er I have a question (.) like we are (--) we are mobilising people from Bahrainco maybe you have contacts from other organisations around and we can invite the er training people from (X company) from (-) whatever

AR I have no problem with that but you want us to do list↑

B er yes Ahmed it will be good if you can contact them (.) we did (.) we did spoke to them but er somebody [else also at your level talking to them [it will er encourage them

AR [we will I will [ok I will I will personally talk to them=

B =ok that would be excellent

Denotative Analysis:

Dr Sara issues a highly hedged request to Ahmed Rahimi using various mitigating devices. First of all, she states that she has a question, then she uses the language particle 'like' and inclusive pronoun 'we' (referring to everybody in the meeting) to talk about the team's action plan,

followed by an adverbial '*maybe*' to indirectly ask him to mediate between them and other training professionals from key companies (lines 15-17).

Ahmed Rahimi directly shows his personal cooperation: '*I have no problem*' but enquires further about the task using a statement with a rising intonation '*but you want us to do list*'[†]. Perhaps this could be an indirect request for 'them' to do the list instead of his department. Ahmed Rahimi uses language which distinguishes him and his department from the assembly and their project in his use of the pronouns: '*you*' (participants in the meeting) versus '*us*' (the Training department).

Badria ceases the opportunity to persuade him to comply with their request by using various hedging devices and other linguistic techniques such as '*er*' and evaluative '*good*' in the conditional clause stressing the importance of his influence in the matter (line 19). Also, emphasising the joint endeavour and collaborative work of her team, Badria uses the inclusive pronoun '*we*' to build on Dr Sara's contribution and inform Ahmed Rahimi that they have already invited the companies but they need him to encourage them to send their people to attend the conference. For persuasion purposes, she appropriately uses compliments referring to his high status in the company '*somebody at your level...*'(line 20). Interestingly, during Badria's turn, Ahmed Rahimi interrupts her to show his willingness to collaborate using the inclusive '*we*'. However, the moment she relates to his high status (positioning him powerfully in the company and in the meeting), he directly shifts to the personal pronoun '*I*' promising to oversee the process himself. Badria, who has seemingly succeeded in persuading him to help, follows up with an evaluative adjective '*that would be excellent*'.

Extract (3)

Below, Badria is discussing conference invitation lists and norms with her team. Dr Sara has already made a suggestion:

Key: B=Badria, D=Dr Sara (F)

B but how do they know they are invited only for the er (.) is that the norm? Or er I don't know

D normally it's the norm (.) like inviting people it is for the inaugural session they do the inaugural session they have their (-) then they leave=

B =then leave it=

D =and rest of the things are technical sessions one technical session technical session two technical session three (.) but normally the people who register or work there are attending the whole of [the conference (.) unless we invite them otherwise er=

B [yeah = then
leave it (.) leave it at the back

Denotative Analysis:

Badria, new to the business of conference planning, acknowledges her lack of expertise in this area and seeks expert opinion from Dr Sara by issuing two consecutive questions '*how do they know...*', '*is that the norm*' followed by the meta-linguistic phrase '*I don't know*', perhaps to indicate that her questions reflect genuine lack of knowledge rather than doubting Dr Sara's previous suggestion.

Upon listening to Dr Sara's response, Badria makes an instant decision and issues a bold unmitigated imperative: '*then leave it*'. Dr Sara simultaneously carries on her turn by adding detailed description of how the invitation and attendance processes normally work. Badria, having already made her decision, waits for the first mitigation from Dr Sara: '*er*' and repeats her command (lines 32-33).

Extract (4)

Dr Sara is illustrating the layout of the invitation cards. This leads to a discussion on the position of the logos of the three main organisations (SATCO, Bahrainco, and UOD):

Key: A=Amal (F), B=Badria, D= Dr Sara (F), M=Ameena (F), O=Omar (M), S= Sonia (F)

D so this is the backdrop (.) the main backdrop that we have (.) this is fairly nice (.) and the logos can be made a little bigger (.) but we have done the designing with er you know with the screen is down [(--)

B [°when ⁷⁹**the minister attends he complained about SATCO's logo**° ((whispering to Amal))

A (---)↑

B °yeah (.) **did you see the (---) he made us take it off and put the SATCO's logo**°

A emm

B °so I don't know at least er °

A °yeah yeah (.) **is he coming**↑°

B °maybe (.) I don't know we sent him a letter so I don't know°

A °is he comin- **is it going to be under his patronage**↑°

B °we are asking that it is under his patronage°

((Undecipherable talk between Badria, Amal, and Sonia))

D tell us tell us please

⁷⁹Bold indicates code-switching from English to Arabic (See transcription key in the Appendices section 1)

B sorry↑

D tell us whatever that [(-)]

(((laughter from everyone)))

B £we are discussing it and we will tell you£ er you know (.) SATCO (.) is the mother company (.) ok↑

D ok

B usua[lly (.) we use SATCO (.) if you [see the (-) it is always always SATCO then

D [SATCO↑ [yes it is national-

B Bahrainco so since it might be under the patronage of His Excellency (.) er it will be (0.1)

D the first logo will be SATCO and then Bahrainco

B yes

D ok (0.1) just give us the logo copy of the logo

B **Dear Ameen you have it right↑**

M yes we have

O **we have**

D send it across to us then we can incorporate it

Denotative Analysis:

Dr Sara takes the floor to illustrate her proposed layout of the invitation cards (lines 34-36), but when she brings up the problematic issue of the positioning of the logos (lines 35-36). Badria

interrupts her turn issuing a comment in Arabic to Amal. Then, she issues a whispering comment in which she reminds Amal of a similar incident where the Minister (who is also Chairman of SATCO) complained about the position of SATCO's logo in a previous event (lines 37-38).

This part of the conversation between Badria and Amal is hard to decipher since they are both whispering. Other participants can hear them, but not clearly, therefore they are obviously not included in the discussion. In line 40, Badria explains further to Amal how the Minister forced them to replace Bahrainco's logo with SATCO's.

Badria's decision to recall this incident and share it with Amal may have the purpose of contesting the (equal) positioning of the logos suggested by Dr Sara in line 35. The contestation is evident in her next utterance: '*so I don't know at least er*' (line 42). Amal responds with the affirmative '*yeah yeah*' followed by a question about whether the Minister is actually coming to the conference (line 43). Badria expresses her uncertainty about his attendance, first with the modal verb '*maybe*' then the repetitive use of the linguistic marker for uncertainty '*I don't know*' (line 44). Amal continues her questioning about whether the event is going to be under the Minister's patronage, to which Badria answers that the plan is to be under his patronage but they haven't received the confirmation yet (lines 45-46). This is followed by a private discussion between Badria, Amal and Sonia (the most senior people in the meeting).

After having been excluded from the discussion, Dr Sara interrupts Badria and Amal using the imperative '*tell us tell us*' softened by the politeness marker: '*please*' (line 48). Use of the inclusive pronoun '*us*' instead of the first person pronoun '*me*' perhaps indicates her attempts to disguise that she was, in fact, negotiating power for herself.

Badria's exclamatory response '*sorry*'↑ indicates her surprise at Dr Sara's forceful interruption. Dr Sara uses the imperative again and demands to be included in the private discussion: '*tell us*

whatever that...'. Her forcefulness and persistence evokes laughter from everyone, even Badria, who responds back with a humorous, yet reassuring tone: '*we are discussing it and we will tell you*'. Apparently, her response is meant as a repair for the misunderstanding that Dr Sara is being excluded. She follows it up with the discourse marker '*you know*' and explanation of the hierarchical system in the context '*SATCO...is the mother company*' (lines 53-54), '*It's always SATCO then Bahrainco*' (lines 55-56). In the meanwhile, Dr Sara is attentively listening to Badria using back channelling, repetition and rephrasing (lines 54 and 57).

In her explanation, Badria relates the background information to the immediate context of the meeting where the Minister is expected to attend the conference. Her use of the honorifics such as '*His Excellency*' is an indication of her attempts to maintain traditional Arabic (verbal) norms of status and hierarchy (see Literature Review chapter, section 3.3.2.2). At this point, Dr Sara seems to comprehend the bigger context as well as norms (unofficial/unsaid rules), and she demonstrates her understanding in her next turn: '*the first logo will be SATCO and then Bahrainco*'. When Badria confirms, Dr Sara immediately shows her appreciation and compliance with SATCO's norms (line 60). Again, Badria code-switches to Arabic and issues a question to a junior female employee (Ameena) using the politeness marker/adjective '*dear*'. Both Ameena and Omar (from the PR department) respond with the affirmative. Then, Badria issues a direct unmitigated order to Ameena to send the logo across to everybody. Badria's use of inclusive pronouns such as: '*us*' and '*we*' emphasises team work and joint endeavour.

Extract (5)

Here, the team is still discussing the placement of the three logos in the invitation cards, advertisements, posters and so on.

Key: A=Amal (F), B=Badria, D=Dr Sara (F), O=Omar (M), S= Sonia (F)

D see (.) er what we are doing here is that Bahrainco and UOD are doing it but supported by (.) or something by (.) we can write SATCO (.) it is like putting it down (.)

O in here↑

D I don't [know

B [hehehe

A **down** you put the logo↑

O **it's** [it's

A **[And Amal in the committee**↑

((laughter from Badria and others))

B see (.) I I think at least (.) whatever is going to show =

A = at that day=

B = at that day (.) it has to have SATCO's logo on it

D ok (.) fine (.) just give us the thing and we'll put it on the backdrop and all the things on that day (0.2) but it it's like again it's like er you know [we are talking about the seminar]

[(Several people are responding)

50 lines later

D [what happens is that usually the main people are er on top (.) and the ones who're supporting or something come at the base

B we don't accept this

A [no

O [no

D [(wha-)

B [for example in the opening of the Centre (.) it was always SATCO then Bahrainco (.) but that was an event between Bah- in Bahrainco=or

A yeah this is what I am saying (.) that er in similar [er events] like this

B [in the GPC (name of an event)]

A GPC (.) it happened before (.) so we ar- I [know we know (.) similar to this case

O [usually we put all of them on the bottom (.) here

A at the bottom

D £we can put UOD on top and [we can£

B [nono ((laughter from everyone))

B £ Do you want these guys to lose their jobs£ ((laughter from everyone))

Denotative Analysis:

Half way through the discussion of how and where to place the logos, Dr Sara makes a suggestion to put Bahrainco and UOD's logos on top and SATCO's logo on bottom (which is not acceptable according Bahrainco's norms as Badria has already explained to her earlier) (lines 65-66). Badria keeps silent while Omar exclaims, clearly shocked: '*in here*'[↑]. Dr Sara's tone immediately changes as she senses the outrageousness of her suggestion: '*I don't know*' and that evokes laughter from Badria. At this point, Amal issues an exclamatory/rhetorical

question in Arabic to emphasise the gravity of the proposal: '**down you put the logo**'[†]. Omar tries to build on Amal's comment using Arabic as well, but she interrupts him to continue her objection with the same tone: '**And Amal in the Committee**'. Her comment evokes laughter from all the participants because it implies the impossibility of implementing such a suggestion, and had it been carried out, it will have dire consequences (especially on Amal, as a representative of SATCO).

After allowing Omar and Amal the opportunity to react to Dr Sara's proposal, Badria uses the imperative (functioning as discourse marker) 'see' to assert her decision/opinion as well as draw Dr Sara's attention. Then she expresses her opinion using the personal pronoun 'I' combined with the hypothetical phrase '*I think whatever is going to show*'. Amal joins Badria to construct the refusal and build on her comment to specify the finality of this decision (line 75). Badria simultaneously echoes Amal '*at that day*' then ends it with an assertive statement using the modal '*has to*': '*it has to have SATCO's logo on it*'.

Dr Sara responds compliantly with Badria's assertive order to include SATCO's logo in everything (lines 77-78). However, she retreats again and opens the subject for negotiation using various hedges: '*it's like*', '*er*', '*you know*' (line 78).

50 lines later

After a long heated discussion on the same issue, Dr Sara insists on her position to prioritise Bahrainco and UOD over SATCO by sharing her expert knowledge of the norms of the meeting (lines 80-81). Badria issues an unmitigated bold refusal using the corporate '*we*': '*we don't accept this*'. Amal and Omar cooperatively emulate Badria's refusal with direct negation '*no*' (lines 83-84). When Dr Sara tries to comment, Badria interrupts her to explain the reason behind this blunt refusal; she recounts an incident of a previous event where such hierarchical norms had to be implemented (lines 86-87). Later, Amal and Badria cooperate to

construct/narrate their experiences of previous events where they had to enforce the same norms (lines 88-92). Dr Sara, using humour, teases them further by suggesting that UOD's logo should be on top (line 93). Obviously a joke, everybody laughs and Badria issues a direct negation 'no no' followed by a humorous remark: '*do you want these guys to lose their job*'.

Extract (6)

Towards the end of the meeting, the team is discussing the room booking. PR representative (Omar) and his colleagues are responsible for providing the venue for the conference.

Key: A=Amal (F), B=Badria, D=Dr Sara (F), O=Omar (M), S= Sonia (F)

O have you booked the er room for the 22nd↑

B [mmm

A [mmm

D [mmm

O you have↑

B [the day before 22nd

D [day before the 22nd

O you have already booked↑

A **yeah** [yeah hehehe

B [hehehe

O because I have another (-) on the 22nd

B is it↑ (.) can [you check please↑

A [you can er

O **it's for** (--)

B [hehehehe

A [on the 22nd↑

B **for what**↑ (.) **for what**↑

O (--)

D you can come to our (-) ((refers to a hall they have in the university))

A maybe you can yeah maybe you can (--)

O [(--)

D [we shifted the dates from 15th to the 22nd because that hall was not available on the 15th

(0.3) that is the third time we decided to do you know (.) have the seminar on the 22nd

B ok Dr Sara (.) so the last one (.) the backdrops right ↑

Denotative Analysis:

The extract begins with Omar, the PR representative, asking the organisers about whether or not they have contacted PR and booked the room. Badria, Amal and Dr Sara all respond at the same time with the affirmative using the minimal response 'mmm' (lines 97-99). Omar issues a rhetorical tag question: 'you have↑' to indicate his surprise that they have already booked the room. Both Badria and Dr Sara specify the date on which the room is supposedly booked: '*the day before the 22nd*'. Omar repeats his question for the third time (slightly rephrased every time), perhaps to indicate a problematic situation. Amal switches to Arabic when she responds to him with the affirmative followed by laughter. In the meanwhile, Badria recognises the problem and

reacts with laughter as well. At this point, Omar explains the reason behind his repetitive questions; it seems that the conference room is double-booked. Badria first issues a tag question: *'is it↑'*, followed by a hedged request for Omar to double check with his department: *'can you check please↑'* and Amal overlapping Badria and echoing her question (lines 107-108).

Omar at this point code-switches to Arabic and tries to explain the misunderstanding, to which Badria responds with further laughter (lines 109-110). Amal seeks further confirmation: *'on the 22nd↑'* and Badria seeks further information. Possibly out of frustration, she raises her voice and asks Omar in Arabic: ***'for what↑ (.) for what↑'***. Interestingly, this is her last contribution to the issue. The next time she speaks, she totally shifts the topic and redirects the conversation (line 119). Dr Sara, who has been silent the whole time, finally participates and offers the University Hall as a possible alternative venue for the conference (line 114). Amal immediately agrees with Dr Sara (line 115) and Dr Sara then takes the floor to explain to Omar why the situation is so frustrating and how they had to change the conference date several times just to get the room booking (lines 117-118).

2.1.2. Perceptions of Leadership: Interview Data

In this section, I present denotative analysis of selected extracts from interviews with Badria, Sonia (a senior woman from a different department, participant in the meetings), Nadeem (Badria's direct subordinate), and Fahad (Badria's direct subordinate).⁸⁰

Interview with Badria

Extract (7)

In this extract, I ask Badria about the type of language she uses in the workplace. She answered this question over a lengthy discussion, from which I selected the following extracts **(A, B, C)**.

⁸⁰For interview questions see Appendices section 2.

Part A

B well it depends (.) for example if you see me sitting in a meeting with executives I will be more forceful you see I have been sitting in many meetings (.) I will be completely a different person (.) I will be more forceful I will er I will let them see that (.) I will make it obvious that I am here (0.1) **I mean** you have to listen to me you have to respect my (0.2) people sometimes get surprised you know (0.2) I had Hamed Al Qassab the other day in one of the meetings I insulted him and hehehe but at the same time he said that he liked my way of presenting my ideas and from that time he said this lady is going to reach places (0.2) OK? I am more forceful in in (.)

HA what do you mean by more forceful↑

BA if I have an idea I will make sure that they listen to me they (.) they (.) that I pass my (.) pass my idea and make sure that they understand it (.) and I will not be as lean (0.2) ok↑

Part B

B with my team (.) it depends (.) when I want to pass a message to them ok? for example if I am guiding them ok? I will be leaner (.) I will have them be at comfort (.) I want them to listen (.1) I will deal with them the way I deal with my children (.) If I want to give an advice to my boy (.) if I want them to be the recipient yes I will do that (0.2) but if we are discussing for example a project (.) ok↑ And (0.1) I will allow them to talk but (.1) if things are not going the way it want it I will be (.) I will be (.) I will be more forceful (.) I will be more demanding

Part C

B like with my team although I do allow them to express their opinion but at the end i do what I think is right or what I feel is right but with this team it's not my project (.) I mean if

you see they are contributing most of the things (.) **I mean** it's not fair to impose Bahrainco's way of doing things on them (.) it's unfair it's unfair

Denotative Analysis:

Part A

Badria explains that she consciously shifts her leadership language depending on the setting and (the status of) the interlocutors. Indeed, she claims she becomes '*a totally different person*' (line 122), which indicates that she perceives this shift to be not restricted to language, but to include all aspects of her identity.

The setting is exemplified by '*meetings*': '*if you see me sitting in a meeting*', '*I have been sitting in many meetings (.) I will be completely a different person*' (lines 120 and 121 respectively).

The status of the people here is explicitly referred to as '*executives*' who are further specified as '*Hamed Al Qassab*', a high ranking personage and a General Manager in Bahrainco (line 124).

Interestingly, Badria admits her conscious planning in choosing her leadership language. She repeatedly uses the first person pronoun and the modal verb of certainty '*I will*' to reposition herself with her superiors through shifting towards a more '*forceful*' language: '*I will let them see that (.) I will make it obvious to them*' (line 122). Then she refers the '*executives*' in the second person pronoun '*you*' directing several imperatives at them: '*you have to listen to me you have to respect my*' (line 125). According to Badria, being forceful equally means being noticed, heard and respected.

Then, she narrates an incident where she insulted her superior in a formal corporate meeting (line 126). Reporting her superior's words, she recounts that instead of being offended, he was surprised and rather delighted to see the aggressive side in her. He also predicted she would

have a successful career in Bahrainco with this attitude: *'this lady is going to reach places'* (line127). The use of the reference *'lady'* serves to emphasise Badria's gender.

When I specifically ask her to explain further the implication of using *'forceful'* language, she gives an example using the conditional *'if'* and the modal verb *'will'*: *'if I have an idea I will...'* (lines 129-130). Here, Badria implies that using forceful language makes her more visible, gives her a voice which enables her to transfer her knowledge and expertise, and establishes her as a strong person who deserves other people's respect.

Part B

Here, Badria explains the language she uses with her subordinate and team members. According to Badria, this also differs depending on the purpose of the interaction. For certain purposes such as imparting expertise and moral lessons, she evokes the image of a mother, care-taker and a mentor: *'when I want to pass a message to them...'* (lines 131-134) The type of language she refers to is relational and maternal; this is indicated by her use lexis such as: *'leaner'*, *'comfort'*, *'advice'*. Badria establishes herself as a powerful figure who imposes her own agenda on her subordinates: *'if I want them to be the recipient yes I will do that'*. She also uses the gendered referent *'boy'* to refer to her subordinate(s).

On the other hand, Badria asserts that for transactional purposes and getting the job done, she often draws on more conventionally masculine language strategies such as directness, forcefulness and so on (lines 134-137).

Part C

In the third part, Badria is contrasting her use of leadership language with her own team in the Business and Planning department with the language practices she uses to chair the conference planning meetings. She states that with her team, she is much more powerful and has the authority to manage her subordinates and make the final decisions (lines 138-139).

However, she establishes herself as an outsider to the CofP of the meeting and to the project: *'but with this team it's not my project'* (line 139). There is a downplaying of power from Badria's side as she expresses her disapproval of the way Bahrainco and SATCO is taking over the project: *'I mean it's not fair to impose Bahrainco way of doing things on them'*. For that, she repeatedly uses the evaluative adjective: *'unfair'* to emphasise and criticise the perceived unjust hierarchical relationship between the three institutions.

Extract (8)

Below, Badria is answering my question about whether or not the meeting was a success:

B **The** objective of the meeting was met (0.1) it is a progress meeting and er whatever came forward was er it's not a hundred per cent but its (--) I think (.) I was not happy with PR **first of all their** attendance **and then** (---) but to me this is not a surprise because that's the way they are (.) we are used to them ok↑ (.) and that's the reason why we brought them at the end **because** usually their productivity is very low (0.2) if they were involved from the beginning we couldn't have achieved what we achieved

HA yeah (.) and training (.) it's er

BA training **of course training the manager** came late which is very (0.1) hehe very which is very negative indication (.) and he didn't attend the whole meeting **but** er (0.2)

Denotative Analysis:

When asked about how successful the meeting was, Badria immediately starts with the overall transactional objective, which is following up the progress of the conference organisation. For Badria, the overall objective was met but not quite perfectly: *'whatever came forward was er it's not a hundred percent'* (line 143). Then, she blames this lack of efficiency on the PR people. According to her, PR attendance was very low (line 144). This, she describes as typical of the laid back unprofessional working culture of PR: *'because that's the way they are (.) we are used*

to them' (line 145). Interestingly, Badria first issues this judgement on PR using the personal pronoun *'to me this is not a surprise'* to indicate that this is her own perception (line 144). Later, however, she implies that this is a shared knowledge across the company. Her use of the inclusive *'we'* is vague as it could refer to the CofP of the meeting, her department (Business and Planning) or possibly Bahrainco as a whole.

Badria defends the decision to withhold the participation of PR until the final stages: *'that's the reason why we brought them at the end'* (line 145). Using the collective pronoun *'we'* she implies that this decision was made collaboratively (but excluding PR). Again, it is not clear who these people are, are they participants in the meeting or Bahrainco management? Badria goes on to justify the decision to leave out PR for the most part on the basis of their lack of professionalism: *'usually their productivity is very low'* (line 146). Using the conditional *'if'*, she constructs a causal relationship between the selective involvement of PR and achieving progress: *'if they were involved from the beginning we couldn't have achieved what we achieved'* (lines 146-147).

Along the same lines, I take the opportunity to ask about her perception of the Training department, to which she immediately answers with a rather frustrated tone, referring specifically to the Training department manager's lack of punctuality: *'training of course training the manager came late'* (line 149). This is followed by a (nervous) laugh and a meta-discursive comment to assess his behaviour: *'which is very negative indication'* and further criticism: *'he didn't attend the whole meeting'* (lines 149-150).

This extract has an interesting code-switching pattern. Like any Arabic speaker of English, it seems that Badria utilises Arabic connectors, fillers and pronouns: *'the'*, *'first of all'*, *'their'*, *'and the'*, *'because'*. However, she uses Arabic in line 149 to express feelings of frustration.

Extract (9):

Badria is describing Bahrainco's culture:

B when it comes to discipline sure we are more disciplined we are very disciplined (.) **see for example we get annoyed from Dr Sara** when she is late **when she answers her phone** (.) Bahrainco's people are very disciplined in that sense

Denotative Analysis:

This is taken from a longer extract (see Appendices, section 3.1, extract 6) where Badria answers my question about whether there is such a thing as a 'Bahrainco culture'. She repeatedly refers to '*discipline*' as a unique characteristic of Bahrainco: '*when it comes to discipline sure we are more disciplined we are very disciplined*'. Obviously, her use of 'we' is in the corporate sense to refer to '*Bahrainco's people*'.

While talking about Bahrainco and its organisational culture and norms, Badria uses Dr Sara as a contrasting example of what they, in Bahrainco, consider professional. Badria claims that Dr Sara's lateness and her phone conversations in the middle of the meeting are sources of annoyance, not only to her, but to all Bahrainco participants (lines151-153): '*Bahrainco's people are very disciplined in that sense*'. Therefore, by discipline, she mostly refers to strict codes of behaviour in meetings such as punctuality, interruptions, having phone conversations, and so on.

Interview with Sonia

Sonia is the most senior female (after Badria) representing Bahrainco in the meeting. She works mostly in field sites and other highly male-dominated contexts.

Extract (10)

In this extract, Sonia answers my question about how successful the meeting was. This part is taken from a longer extract:

S I think one of the most things which we lacked (.) doing at this preparation (.) is that we didn't involve HR from the beginning (.) that what actually (.) maybe made HR frustrated from us(.) they wasn't involved from the beginning (.) they're just given a really tight time to actually come on board

HA is it the HR or PR↑

S PR sorry PR (.) they didn't come on board early enough to actually you know

HA Badria said she didn't involve them because usually they are not (.) they are not

S yes they are not too active yeah I know that I know that (.) it's not only her everybody does this (.) usually if you (press) them by time yes they come on board (.) but (.) if you give them a lot of space they just (.) you know (.) fluctuate (.) they don't do it

Denotative Analysis:

Despite Sonia's positive feedback on the outcomes of the meeting, her use of the quantifier and superlative in the following: '*one of the most things which we lacked*' implies that the meeting was lacking many or some things. With this, she issues a hedged/disguised criticism of Badria's decision not to include PR early enough in the process of organising the conference (lines 155-157). The criticism is indirectly issued using the collective 'we', which implies a shared decision between key people in the organising committee. It is obvious that Badria is the one who made the decision autonomously given Sonia's strong and negative reaction; albeit her use of lexis such as: '*most*', '*lacked*', '*frustrated*', and '*tight*' to describe the consequences of such a decision for the PR people and the success of the meeting.

In line 160, I have acquired a more interactive role as an interviewer; in order to negotiate more explanation in this matter I have shared with Sonia Badria's perception and reasons behind her decision. This way, I have made Sonia's intention (to criticise Badria) quite obvious, therefore, Sonia's next turn is somewhat defensive. First, she attempts to minimise the effect of her criticism by agreeing with Badria: *'yes they are not too active yeah I know that I know that'* and establishing Badria's opinion as shared among all Bahrainco's employees: *'it's not only her everybody does this'* (line 161). However, she goes back and issues another indirect criticism of Badria's judgement: *'usually if you (press) them by time yes they come on board'* (line 162). In other words, if Badria had pressurised them, they would have fully participated. Again to hedge the criticism, she attempts to explain further the characteristics of the unprofessionalism of the PR people, who are believed to be unproductive, lazy, and inconsistent: *'if you give them a lot of space they just (.) you know (.) fluctuate (.) they don't do it'*.

Extract (11)

On the same line with the previous extract, Sonia is assessing the meeting by comparing it to other meetings in Bahrainco:

S you should've attended that meeting hehe (.) that was supposed to be done only by females so we were a group of 20 females (.) chosen from the organisation to actually er do the meeting (.) do the whole inauguration process (.) and Badria was the leader (0.2) I mean (.) these meetings go on and on (.) it's all just because they are females they're- I never attended meetings in Bahrainco (.) honestly (.) on that style (.) that (.) you know (.) it's very difficult to (-----) I usually like the er meeting to be very constructive (.) very (.) you know (.) directly (.) that's this what we do (.) this is how we do it (.) this is when we do it (.) ok (.) thanks (.) by (.) within half an hour you finish your meeting you do

everything (.) these meetings kept going on for two hours (.) and the outcome was very minute on the time that we spent on these meetings

Denotative Analysis:

The extract begins with Sonia sarcastically (albeit the laugh in line 164) recalling a previous women-only meeting of where Badria was again the leader. Comparing and mirroring the meetings has the purpose of issuing indirect criticism of Badria's management as well as all-female leadership and communication. This is evident by the string of highly critical statements which she issues with a sarcastic tone. For example, in lines 164-165 she says: '*that was supposed to be done only by females so we were a group of 20 females*'. The use of '*supposed to be done*' implies that the task was not done, or that it was not properly done.

Also, Sonia indicates that the meetings were a waste of her time: '*these meetings go on and on*'. There is an underlying criticism of Badria for not using her authority to control the meeting and impose discipline on the participants.

Also at this point, Sonia contrasts this type of meeting with the norms and traditions of the male-dominated departments in Bahrainco. She distinguishes herself from the former type by using the personal pronoun '*I*' to indicate her personal disassociation from such meetings: '*I never attended meetings in Bahrainco (.) honestly (.) on that style*' (lines 167 and 169). After a long criticism of the meetings (which I have deliberately omitted due to lack of space), Sonia describes the norms of mainstream Bahrainco meetings by alternating between the personal pronoun '*I*' to indicate her personal preference: '*I usually like the er meeting to be very constructive*', and the corporate '*we*': '*that's this what we do (.) this is how we do it (.) this is when we do it*'. According to Sonia, meetings in Bahrainco are often constructive, direct, concise, and productive (lines 170-173).

Interview with Nadeem

Nadeem is Badria's assistant and not a participant in the meeting under study.

Extract (12)

Nadeem is answering my question about Badria's leadership language and practices. Again, I divide the extract into A, B, and C because they are all answering the same question.

Part A

ND she is so open and friendly (.) everybody can talk to her about anything (.) but she is respectful you know (0.2) and one of them (.) she is always telling me (.) oh Badria is taking you for granted and makes you work more (.) I tell them anybody told you someone is taking advantage of me↑ (.) I am happy (.) and don't say that about my boss (.) yeah she is taking advantage of you (.) they are joking of course (.) joking (.) I don't like you to say this (.) she is (.) not I like to work (.) she is giving me the the opportunity (.) I like to work (.) so (----) I go and tell oh this person she told me you are taking advantage of me (.) and she laughs (.) she is always laughing (0.2) that's why she is successful

Part B

ND convincing others yes (.) she is very good in this (-----) God bless her she has she has a way (.) perfect (.) I think it's out of experience (.) experience and relax (.) I have learned something from her (.) I used to be a bit edgy (-----) you see (.) if you take things easier you produce more (.) ok↑ so she (.) she taught us this (.)

Part C

ND sometimes you know I am seeing her with some people with some engineers (.) and the way they talk- I told you Muneer before (.) he is (.) ha ha (.) and she is laughing in front of him (.) you know just (.) Muneer Muneer (.) and when he goes I am telling her how can you (.) accept (.) that he talks to you this way you know (.) and she is (.) she is telling (.) at the end I am doing what I want (.) she said at the end he is doing what I want

Denotative Analysis:

Part A

Nadeem describes Badria as '*open*', '*friendly*', and '*respectful*' (lines 174-175). Also, despite her high status, she is approachable: '*everybody can talk to her about anything*'. She also recounts an incident where a person from another department jokingly hints about Badria taking advantage of her (line 176), to which she responds defensively that she works hard because she wants to, not because she is forced: '*she is (.) not I like to work (.) she is giving me the the opportunity (.) I like to work (.) so*' (lines 179-180).

Nadeem speaks fondly of Badria and is happy to work for her: '*I am happy*' (line 177). Her relationship with Badria seems interesting. First, she refers to her as her boss: '*don't say that about my boss*' (line 177). This relationship is characterised by respect and loyalty. Another implied relationship is that of friendship. She describes her as someone who is open and approachable. She also gives examples of personal and intimate conversations that take place between them (line 181). According to Nadeem, Badria's reaction to disturbing situations is always laughter, and that's the reason behind her success (lines 181-182).

Part B

In this part, Nadeem attributes more leadership qualities to Badria describing her as '*relax*' and easy going. She describes her persuasion qualities as '*perfect*' and '*out of experience*' (lines

183-184). She also depicts Badria as a mentor and a role model to her: *'I have learned something from her'* and others in the department: *'she taught us this'* (lines 184 and 186 respectively).

Part C

This part is taken from a longer extract (see Appendices, section 3.1, extract 8) where Nadeem is describing a male subordinate of Badria, Muneer, who always challenges her authority as a superior. According to Nadeem, Badria would always be *'laughing in front of him (.) you know just (.) Muneer Muneer'* (lines 188-189). In other words, she is always very friendly with him in spite of his constant impolite and challenging behaviour. Nadeem uses the meta-discursive phrase *'she is telling'* to announce that she is reporting Badria's speech, then she impersonates Badria using the first person pronoun: *'at the end I am doing what I want'*, and finally she switches to reported speech *'she said at the end he is doing what I want'* (line 191). According to Nadeem, Badria purposefully avoids arguing with Muneer because in the end he is obliged to obey her orders because she is his superior. This indicates that Badria is not interested in the display of power; but rather the actual legitimate authority to make the final decisions.

Interview with Fahad

Fahad is a young male- employee who is a subordinate to Badria but is not a participant in the meeting.⁸¹

Extract (13)

Fahad is answering my question about Badria's leadership and language practices:

⁸¹My interview with Fahad is very short, and his answers are always direct and concise in comparison to the other three interviewees, therefore, I select only two short extracts.

Part A

FD she wouldn't er have you moving into a direction without actually getting your feedback regarding that direction (.) so maybe (.) from bottom (.) then she brings it up (.) I mean she takes it from you and she tells you what to do

Part B

FD again in between (.) we need to get something done (.) ok↑ not on the account of my *people* (.) yeah my people have certain things that they need to achieve (.) and I will not have them overloaded so that they can achieve what I need them to do (.) I will not have them (0.2) unhappy (.) so on so on and so on

Denotative Analysis:

Part A

Fahad is describing the transactional aspect of Badria's leadership language. While he talks about her as the determined powerful manager who directs her employees in a certain path, makes the final decisions: '*she wouldn't er have you moving into a direction...*', he also refers to her collaborative and consultative way of doing leadership: '*so maybe (.) from bottom (.) then she brings it up (.) I mean she takes it from you and she tells you what to do*' (lines 193-194)

Part B

Fahad describes Badria's leadership as '*in between*' in terms of balancing transactional and relational goals. He further explains this mediatory position by impersonating Badria using the first person pronoun: '*we need to get something done (.) ok↑ not on the account of my people...*' (lines 195-198). According to Fahad, although Badria is task-oriented, she prioritises the emotional and motivational side of her subordinates '*I will not have them (0.2) unhappy*', and because of that she avoids overloading them with work.

2.2. Connotative analysis

In this section, I discuss the implications of the data extracts presented above in regard to Badria's leadership language and the interacting and competing discourses as they emerge from the data of the meeting and the interviews.

The section is divided into two parts: leadership language and discourses within the CofP. The first part addresses my first, second and fourth research questions: What are the leadership and language practices that Bahraini senior women use with colleagues and subordinates within the context of corporate meetings? How do senior women perceive their own leadership language practices? How do their colleagues and subordinates perceive these practices? What insights do we gain by comparing the leadership language practices of the senior women from the three different communities of practice within Bahrainco?

In the second part of this section I will attempt to answer the third research question: What are the significant interacting discourses at play in the context? How do they shape the leadership language practices of the three senior women in their communities of practice?

2.2.1. Leadership language

In this section I will examine Badria's leadership practices as linguistically enacted in the meeting and as perceived by herself and her subordinates. Badria's case is quite different from the other two cases in that the meeting under analysis does not take place in her own department with her subordinates. As I have already explained in the Methodology chapter (section 3.2.1), this meeting takes place among various participants from different departments in Bahrainco and other institutions such as the University of Design and SATCO for the purpose of organising a conference. Therefore, her subordinates' perceptions of her leadership language might not be directly applicable to the language she uses in this meeting, but I believe they are relevant and insightful as they reflect the different facets of Badria's leadership language.

The denotative analysis of the extracts in sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 indicates that Badria's leadership language has the following main characteristics:

- Shifting language purposefully to achieve leadership goals (transactional and relational)

In the interview, Badria claims that she shifts her leadership language consciously and purposefully according to the other interactants in the meeting and her overall leadership goals. With higher management personnel and executives in Bahrainco, she would be more '*forceful*' and '*not as lean*' (extract 7, lines 122 and 130 respectively). According to Badria, this type of conventionally masculine aggressive language is not only appreciated and rewarded but required in the male-dominated CofP of Bahrainco: '*I had Hamed Al Qassab the other day in one of the meetings I insulted him and hehehe but at the same time he said that he liked my way of presenting my ideas and from that time he said this lady is going to reach places*' (lines 124-127).

Later in the interview, Badria contrasts this with a more maternal image of herself as leader. With her team, she claims, she also changes her leadership language depending on the purpose of the interaction, ranging between assertive linguistic strategies to get the work done, and avowedly maternal strategies to transform expertise and knowledge to her subordinates: '*when I want to pass a message to them ok? for example if I am guiding them...I will deal with them the way I deal with my children*' (extract 7, lines 131-133).

However, as the leader of the organising committee for the conference, Badria implies her tendency to minimise display of power as the chair, and therefore uses less assertive language with representatives from UOD (lines 139-141). This has a different purpose of rewarding Dr Sara's team for their hard work. I will provide more discussion on the discourses that shape Badria's linguistic choices in section 2.2.2.

- Code-switching to Arabic to enact and maintain Bahrainco's status and hierarchy (and other leadership goals).

Since all participants speak both Arabic and English except Dr Sara, the meeting takes place in English. However, occasionally, Amal, Badria and other participants from Bahrainco exchange brief comments in Arabic; this happens especially when the topic of discussion is related directly to Bahrainco and SATCO's traditions, such as maintaining the conventional codes of hierarchy between SATCO and Bahrainco.

An important example is in extract (4). Upon the introduction of the logo issue by Dr Sara, Badria interrupts her and begins a private conversation with Amal, which carries on for several turns: “*when the minister attends he complained about SATCO's logo*” (lines 37-38). The use of Arabic and the whispering manner reflect the speakers' purpose to withhold the discussion from others. This is perhaps due to the sensitive nature of the topic (the hierarchical relationship between SATCO and Bahrainco). Traditionally, SATCO, being the mother company, has a higher status than Bahrainco (see Appendices, section 3.1, extract 1). Also, as I will explain in greater details in the next sections, Bahrainco, being the sponsor of the conference is positioned in a higher status than UOD. Therefore, Badria's interruption of Dr Sara and her private exchange with Amal in Arabic are significant indicators of enacting power and the maintenance of this hierarchy.

On the other hand, there are various incidents in the meeting where Badria code-switches to Arabic when interacting with low-ranking employees from Bahrainco (not her direct subordinates). For example, towards the end of extract (4), Badria suddenly switches to Arabic when talking politely to Ameena (a female PR officer): ‘*Dear Ameen you have it right*’ (line 61). This particular code-switching incident is very interesting as Badria seems to be very polite in her indirect request to this junior employee. Her use of Arabic could be a marker of politeness, or a solidarity-building technique that serves to hedge the request.

Finally, in extract (6), Badria, frustrated at PR for double-booking the conference room, switches to Arabic to question Omar (a male PR officer): '**for what**↑ (.) **for what**↑' (line 112). The purpose behind the code-switching could be to hide her frustration and mitigate the effect of the questioning, or even to save his face by hiding her reaction from Dr Sara. Also, it could simply be Badria's instant reaction when confronted with something that is unexpected.

- Achieving leadership goals by using transactional and relational language strategies

The denotative analysis of the meeting and interview data indicates Badria's tendency to make use of a wide repertoire of traditionally feminine and masculine linguistic strategies to enact leadership and achieve a complex set of transactional and relational goals.

To begin with, the interview data suggests that Badria is a task-oriented leader. In extract (8), when asked about her perception of the meeting, her first response is: '**The objective of the meeting was met**' (line 142). This impression is confirmed in the interviews I conducted with her subordinates, Nadeem and Fahad. Both Nadeem and Fahad depict Badria as a powerful leader who chooses her language and plans her actions purposefully to achieve specific leadership goals. First of all, there is the indication that Badria has her subordinates work harder and for longer hours than average Bahrainco employees. In extract (12) Nadeem reports her conversation with a colleague from a different department: '*oh Badria is taking you for granted and makes you work more*' (lines 176-180). Later in the same extract, Nadeem narrates how Badria avoids confrontations with a certain (stubborn/defiant) subordinate because she knows she has the power and authority to make the final decisions: '*she is telling (.) at the end I am doing what I want (.) she said at the end he is doing what I want*' (extract 12, lines 190-191). Another significant example is in extract (13) where Fahad describes Badria's leadership. According to him, even though she works collaboratively with her subordinates, she still controls the process and direction of their progress: '*she wouldn't er have you moving into a direction... she takes it from you and she tells you what to do*' (lines 192-194).

On the other hand, Nadeem and Fahad also emphasise the relational aspects of Badria's leadership language. Nadeem describes her as open, friendly and approachable (extract 12, lines 174-175). Evidently, she constructs an intimate working environment where relationships between members of the CofP are based on hard work, loyalty, and trust. Nadeem perceives herself as not only Badria's subordinate, but her friend. Yet, when people criticise Badria behind her back, Nadeem defends her as a loyal employee to her superior: '*don't say that about my boss*' (extract 12, line 177). This attitude is apparently mutual as both Nadeem and Fahad describe Badria as loyal to her subordinates and concerned about their work-load, feelings, face needs and so on: '*we need to get something done (.) ok↑ not on the account of my people...*' (extract 13, lines 195-198). '[M]y *people*', reported by Fahad, is a significant phrase that carries powerful feelings of affiliation with her team and the CofP of the Business and Planning Department.

Other relational aspects reported by Nadeem are Badria's tendency to downplay power and avoid arguments as well as her calmness and composure when dealing with difficult and frustrating situations: '*she has she has a way (.) perfect (.) I think it's out of experience (.) experience and relax...*' (extract 12, lines 184-186). According to Nadeem, her constant laughter is the secret behind her success: '*she is always laughing (0.2) that's why she is successful*' (lines 180-182).

Sense of humour and laughter seem to be significant characteristics of Badria's leadership. The meeting data shows that Badria would resolve to use such strategies whenever she is confronted with an awkward, conflicting or frustrating situation. The first example can be found in extract (4) where Badria is having a private conversation with Amal. Negotiating her position of power, Dr Sara interrupts their whispering and implies her right to know what they are discussing. This is an awkward positioning for Badria where she needs to either decide to challenge Dr Sara or share power and information with her. Badria's first responds with laughter

and, then explains in a humorous tone that she was not planning to withhold the information from her: '*£we are discussing it and we will tell you£er you know (.)SATCO (.) is the mother company (.) ok↑*' (line 48). The laughter and humorous tone in this example indicate Badria's discomfort at Dr Sara's rather direct implication. It also serves as a repair strategy along with the justification and explanation that follow.

Further in extract (6), there are two more notable examples of Badria utilising humour and laughter to mitigate the effect of refusals. The first incident is when Dr Sara makes a suggestion that is considered outrageous in Bahrainco and SATCO's hierarchical conventions (to place Bahrainco's logo ahead of SATCO's). Instead of directly rejecting the proposal, Badria's first reaction is to laugh while allowing others to respond (lines 65-73). The second incident takes place a bit later when Dr Sara teasingly makes an even more outrageous proposal (to place UOD and Bahrainco's logos ahead of SATCO's), to which Badria responds with a direct '*no no*' along with an explanation phrased as a rhetorical question: '*£ Do you want these guys to lose their jobs£*' (lines 94-95). The humorous tone serves to lessen the effect of the refusal. Also, the implication that the '*guys*' will lose their job serves to show Dr Sara the magnitude of the consequences should they choose to apply her suggestion.

The last example is in extract (6). To everybody's shock, Omar from PR has just announced that the conference room has already been booked for another event. Badria's first reaction is seeking confirmation for the double-booking: '*the day before 22nd*', laughter, request for confirmation again, and further laughter (lines 96-110). Evidently, she uses laughter to mitigate her reactions and disguise her frustration.

What's more, Badria seems to make a great effort to control her emotions and hide her feelings of anger and frustration. The most significant example is her reaction towards the Training department manager (Ahmed Rahimi). In the interview, she expresses her great frustration at

his lack of professionalism and commitment to this project: '**of course training the manager came late which is very (.1) hehe very which is very negative indication (.) and he didn't attend the whole meeting**' (extract 11, lines 149-150). However, the meeting data has no indication of such frustration in Badria's language when dealing with Rahimi. Upon his arrival, she greets him politely (see Appendices, section 3.1, extract 2). Also, as illustrated in extract (2), Badria uses highly polite language using various hedges to issue a request: '*er yes Ahmed it will be good if you can contact them (.) we did (.) we did spoke to them but er somebody [else also at your level talking to them [it will er encourage them*' (lines 19-20). For persuasion, she appropriately uses compliments appealing to his ego and high status in the company.

On the other hand, there are instances in the data where Badria issues direct refusals with no mitigation. In extract (5), after a long heated discussion on the logo issue, Dr Sara insists on her position to prioritise UOD and Bahrainco's logo over SATCO's. Therefore, frustrated Badria issues an unmitigated bold refusal using the corporate 'we' to speak on the behalf of both Bahrainco and SATCO: '*we don't accept this*' (line 82). Later on, however, Badria attempts to explain the reasons behind her blunt refusal (lines 86-87). This indicates that Badria, who is often receptive to suggestions, draws a line where politics, hierarchy and power issues are involved.

Another example where Badria uses a direct language strategy is in extract (3). It begins with Badria seeking expert knowledge from Dr Sara: '*but how do they know they are invited only for the er (.) is that the norm? Or er I don't know*' (lines 24-25). It is only after taking Dr Sara's advice that she issues an unmitigated imperative: '*then leave it*', '*then leave it (.) leave it at the back*' (lines 28 and 32 respectively).

The last two examples and others indicate that Badria's use of direct language is usually mitigated by explanation, justification, laughter, and so on. Also, as apparent in extract (3),

Badria is not afraid to acknowledge her lack of knowledge in certain areas and seek consultation from others.

In fact, the meeting data reflects a great tendency on Badria's part to consult, share power, and make collaborative decisions with other participants in the meeting, especially Amal. Instances of Badria consulting Amal and allowing her to take the floor, interrogate others, make decisions, issue refusals and so on are commonplace in the meeting data (see extract 5). I have illustrated earlier the incident in extract (4), for instance, where Badria has a private discussion with Amal in Arabic (lines 37-46). When Dr Sara persists to know the content of their conversation, Badria's response constructs herself and Amal in an equally superior position where they make the decisions and inform others (including Dr Sara): '*we are discussing it and we will tell you*' (line 52).

The examples above and many others (see the Appendices, section 3.1, extracts 1-4) are evident of Badria's use of a repertoire of transactional and relational linguistic strategies to enact leadership. For transactional purposes such as managing the meeting (opening and closing the meeting, choosing and shifting topics, assigning speakers, and so on), Badria would use more direct, sometimes formulaic, language: '*we are just waiting for Ahmed Rahimi*', '*I think er it's time to start... and I think the designs is one of them (.) er have you looked at it from PR side*[↑]', '*ok Dr. Sara (.) so the last one (.) the backdrops right*[↑]'.

To conclude, data has shown that Badria is a leader who is able to strike a balance between the transactional and relational goals of leadership. For that, she utilises a wide repertoire of leadership language ranging from the use of authoritative strategies such as: interruptions, direct refusals, withholding information and the use of participatory linguistic strategies such as consulting, offering the floor, sharing power and information, explaining, justifying, using polite markers, laughter, and so on. This analysis, however, will not be complete without further

investigating the dominant discourses in the context that may influence Badria's tendency to use certain linguistic strategies more often than others. This will be discussed thoroughly in the next section.

2.2.2. Discourses within the CofP

This section will examine the interacting and sometimes competing discourses that construct and shape the linguistic choices of Badria and others in the CofP of the meeting. As I have already explained earlier, the CofP under discussion here is not that of Badria's own section (Business and Planning). Since the meeting takes place between representatives from different institutions and communities of practice, I regard this meeting as the CofP where all participants work on a joint endeavour (organising the conference), and use language that reflects their relative power in the context.

Based on the above, I have conducted an analysis on the language used by participants in the meeting using principles of FPDA (see Methodology chapter, section 4.2) to deduce the working discourses in the context of the meeting. However, I believe an introduction to the dominant discourses in Badria's own CofP (Business dept. /Bahrainco) is necessary to assess how and why she takes up certain discourses and resist others in the CofP of the meeting.

Discourses within Bahrainco

To begin with, in extract (7) Badria talks about the male-dominated, traditionally masculinised culture of Bahrainco's management where use of aggressive language (even towards one's superior) is necessary to climb the professional ladder: *'I had Hamed Al Qassab the other day in one of the meetings I insulted him and hehehe but at the same time he said that he liked my way of presenting my ideas and from that time he said this lady is going to reach places'* (lines 124-127). This is indicative of a dominant discourse of masculinisation in Bahrainco (Baxter 2003). As I have discussed in the previous section, Badria admits to succumbing to the

pressure and shifting to more assertive language when dealing with equals and superiors: *'I will be more forceful I will er I will let them see that (.) I will make it obvious that I am here (0.1) I mean you have to listen to me'* (lines 122-123). However, Badria is generally critical of, and resistant to, such a traditionally masculine approach to leadership, especially with her team members; in the interview, she evokes the image of a mother and a mentor with her subordinates (lines 131-132) (also see Appendices, section 3.1, extract 7).

This is relevant to the meeting under discussion because Sonia, a senior participant in the meeting, indirectly criticises Badria's leadership and management of the meeting by comparing it to a previous meeting of all females: *'Badria was the leader (0.2) I mean (.) these meetings go on and on (.) it's all just because they are females they're- I never attended meetings in Bahrainco (.) honestly (.) on that style (.) that (.) you know (.) it's very difficult'* (extract 14, lines 166-169). Therefore, Sonia's comments imply that there is a feminised discourse in both meetings chaired by Badria – I call it a 'discourse of feminisation' where conventionally feminine practices (e.g. cooperation, consultation, indirectness and so on) flourish. She contrasts this with a traditionally masculine view of meetings: *'I usually like the er meeting to be very constructive (.) very (.) you know (.) directly (.) that's this what we do (.) this is how we do it (.) this is when we do it (.) ok (.) thanks (.) by (.) within half an hour you finish your meeting you do everything'* (extract 11, lines 169-172).

Understanding that Badria has been resisting the discourse of masculinisation throughout her career, and is being judged negatively even by her female colleagues, has important implications for this study and enriches our understanding of the various dynamics in this context.

In the following sections, I will examine the most dominant discourses in the CofP of the meeting and illustrate how each discourse has emerged from the data, and how, by interacting and competing, they all work to shape Badria's leadership language and others in the context.

2.2.2.1. Discourse of Professionalism

I have suggested earlier that Bahrainco is a male-dominated CofP with a conventionally masculinised culture. Professionalism, being one aspect of the workplace culture, is also viewed through a traditionally masculine lens. In extract (9), Badria describes '*Bahrainco's people*' as disciplined: '*when it comes to discipline sure we are more disciplined we are very disciplined (.) see for example we get annoyed from Dr Sara when she is late when she answers her phone (.) Bahrainco's people are very disciplined in that sense*' (lines 151-153). As Badria attempts to elaborate, she contrasts this aspect of Bahrainco's perceived culture with Dr Sara's undisciplined/ unprofessional behaviour in the meeting (lateness and phone conversations). Interestingly in this particular context, Badria emphasises her sense of belonging to Bahrainco and its values using the corporate 'we' and taking pride in being one of the '*Bahrainco people*' (also see the Appendices, section 3.1, extract 6).

Although this is not an internal meeting in her department, Badria evidently still expects others to adhere to the codes of practice and values of Bahrainco, and if they don't, then she judges them negatively. These expectations apply mostly to the '*Bahrainco people*'; representatives from Bahrainco in the meeting are similarly subjected to this negative judgment. I have illustrated in section 2.1.2 that Badria expresses her utmost frustration at Ahmed Rahimi (Training department manager) for coming late and leaving early: '*of course training the manager came late which is very (0.1) hehe very which is very negative indication (.) and he didn't attend the whole meeting*' (extract 8, lines 149-150). To Badria, lack of punctuality is unforgivable and reflects absence of commitment.

Yet perhaps the most significant example is that of a whole department of Public Relations (PR), which seems to have been a subject of controversy between key participants in the meeting. PR has a reputation in Bahrainco for being unproductive. According to Badria, she decided not to include them in the project from the beginning because they would have sabotaged the team's achievements: *'I was not happy with PR first of all their attendance...'* (extract 8, lines 143-147).

Although PR's negative reputation seems to be shared knowledge in Bahrainco, Sonia is still critical of Badria's judgment and decision to leave them out: *'I think one of the most things which we lacked (.) doing at this preparation (.) is that we didn't involve [HR] from the beginning ...'* (extract 13, lines 154-163)

Based on these examples, I deduce that there is a working 'discourse of Professionalism' originating from Bahrainco and being applied in the new context of the meeting. There are various incidents where this discourse is brought to the surface by Badria, Amal, Dr Sara and others. For example, extract (6) and others highlight PR people's lack of professionalism and efficiency as they double-booked the conference room. This is obviously a source of annoyance to everyone who depended on them and the reason behind Badria, Amal and Dr Sara's interrogative behaviour and frustrated tone with Omar (lines 101-118).

Last but not least, Dr Sara's lack of punctuality is another source of negative evaluation by everyone. The small talk between Badria and others before and after the meetings (shadowing data, see Appendices, section 4.1) constantly includes jokes about Dr Sara's lateness.

Accordingly, I believe that the discourse of Professionalism has a significant effect on Badria's choice of leadership language and positioning in the meeting. Having said that, it is important to recognise the complexity of the context and analyse the effect of other interacting discourses in shaping Badria's various linguistic choices. This will be discussed further in the next section.

UOD. Therefore, Badria, as Bahrainco's representative is powerfully positioned. Also, as the chair of the meeting, she has the authority to make the final decisions and control the outcomes of the meeting. Consequently, Dr Sara is placed in a comparatively powerless position. This could be observed in the meeting; for example, in extract (5), Badria issues two unmitigated refusals to Dr Sara:

B '*see (.) I I think at least (.) whatever is going to show (---) at that day (.) it has to have SATCO's logo on it*' and lines (lines74-76)

B '*we don't accept this*' (line 82)

This has great implications in this context, as hierarchy seems to be maintained or violated through the positioning of the logos. Throughout the meeting, there were several discussions on how and where to place the three logos of SATCO, Bahrainco, and UOD in the banners, leaflets, invitation cards, and so on. When Dr Sara first introduces the issue (extract 4, lines 35-36), Badria immediately interrupts her to discuss the matter privately with Amal. She firstly reminds her of a previous event in Bahrainco where the Minister, SATCO's CEO, has complained about SATCO's logo being left out. '**he made us take it off and put the SATCO's logo**' (line 40).

Badria's constant consultation with Amal establishes the latter as an unofficial co-chair of the meeting. This co-chairing role is evident in various places in the meeting where Badria allows Amal to take the floor and respond to questions, interrogate other participants, issue orders and instructions, refuse proposals, and so on. In the example above in extract (4), Badria recognises the implications of the matter in regard to hierarchy and power issues, but before she announces to others that this is a problematic situation, she chooses to share it with Amal first, re-establishing her as a co-chair and deliberately excluding Dr Sara from the discussion.

A significant example is in extract (5) where Badria and Amal join to co-construct a bold on record refusal: (lines 74-76)

B see (.) I I think at least (.) whatever is going to show =

A = at that day=

B = at that day (.) it has to have SATCO's logo on it

The second part of extract (5) and extract (6) also contain various interesting incidents where Badria shares power and authority with Amal (for more examples see Appendices, section 3.1, extract 1). However, perhaps the most notable example of Amal's powerful role in the meeting is in extract (5), when Dr Sara proposes placing SATCO's logo down, which angers and shocks everyone, especially Amal who responds in Arabic: '**down you put the logo**↑ (...) **And Amal in the committee**↑' (lines 70-72). Her main role seems to be overseeing the whole process and making sure that SATCO's status and interests are maintained.

Based on the above, I deduce that there is a working 'discourse of Hierarchy' which privileges Amal and Badria over Dr Sara and affects the linguistic choices of Badria and others in the meeting.

Discourse of Hierarchy Resisted

During the meeting, the discourse of Hierarchy is constantly being resisted, and individuals' statuses negotiated. Despite the strict hierarchical boundaries between SATCO, Bahrainco, and UOD, there is a constant negotiation of power between the women representing the three institutions in the contested space of the meeting. The most obvious conflict is the one between Dr Sara from UOD and Amal from SATCO. Evidently, Dr Sara resists the discourse of hierarchy by constantly negotiating UOD's status and her own.

An interesting example takes place at the beginning of the meeting in extract (1). While Dr Sara assumes that they are awaiting the arrival of her colleague to start the meeting, Badria informs her that they are actually waiting for the Training department manager: '*ah ok ok (.) we are just waiting for Ahmed Rahimi he is in his way*' (line 4). On the surface, this might look very normal, but understanding the hierarchies in the context brings different insight into this incident. During my shadowing of two other similar meetings, I have observed that Badria usually starts the meeting when Amal and Dr Sara arrive (establishing them as key participants). Other participants' lateness doesn't hold up the meeting. By waiting for Ahmed Rahimi and not Dr Sara's colleague (who is actually her superior), Badria enacts this hierarchy and establishes Rahimi as a key participant.

There are various incidents where Dr Sara attempts to negotiate status and power in the meeting. For example, in extract (2), she takes the floor to issue a (highly hedged) request for Ahmed Rahimi on behalf of the group (lines 15-17). Here, Badria encourages Dr Sara's initiative and only steps in when she senses Ahmed Rahimi's hesitation (lines 19-20). Another example is in extract (4); when Badria excludes Dr Sara from the private discussion, she resists such positioning and demands to be included: '*tell us tell us please (...) tell us whatever that*' (lines 48-50)

Yet perhaps the most notable example of such negotiation is around the logo issue. Even after Badria has explained in detail the hierarchical relationship between Bahrainco and SATCO in extract (4), Dr Sara still attempts to renegotiate UOD's subordinate positioning. In extract (5), she proposes to place SATCO's logo at the bottom (lines 65-66), and later in the extract she proposes to place UOD's logo on top and Bahrainco's and SATCO's logos at the bottom. Other similar examples of Dr Sara negotiating status can be found in the Appendices, section 3.1, extracts 1 and 4.

Finally, it appears that Dr Sara is not the only one resisting a discourse of hierarchy. Although Badria is making notable efforts to enact and maintain hierarchical boundaries dictated by SATCO and Bahrainco, in the interview, she expresses her resistance to such positioning: *'this team it's not my project (.) I mean if you see they are contributing most of the things (.) I mean it's not fair to impose Bahrainco way of doing things on them (.) it's unfair it's unfair'* (extract 7, lines 139-141). Apparently, despite the formal hierarchies, Badria doesn't believe Bahrainco has power over UOD. Accordingly, when it comes to major decisions that affect the (symbolic) hierarchy, Badria uses very assertive and forceful language. Generally, however, she shares power and information with Dr Sara, uses egalitarian language and often seeks her expertise. This will be discussed next.

2.2.2.3. Discourse of Expertise

Badria's leadership language ranges between assertive and conciliatory depending on her overall goals, the status of the interlocutor, the setting, and so on. The meeting data has shown that Badria seeks the advice of other participants, each in their area of expertise. For example, in extract (3) Badria consults Dr Sara in matters related to planning and organising conferences: *'but how do they know they are invited only for the er (.) is that the norm? Or er I don't know'* (lines 24-25).

Also, in extract (4) Badria privately discusses a sensitive issue with Amal consulting her on norms and ways of maintaining hierarchy and keeping SATCO and the Minister happy (lines 34-46). There are numerous similar incidents in the meeting where Badria admits her lack of knowledge in certain expert areas and consults other participants in the meeting regardless of their status.

Accordingly, I infer that there is a working 'discourse of Expertise' that affects Badria's language and others, and reconstructs power and status. In the examples (3) and (4) above, Dr Sara and

Amal are positioned powerfully by the discourse of Expertise and are established as key participants in the meeting.

2.2.2.4. Interacting and Competing Discourses

How do these three discourses interact to shape Badria's language in the meeting? The data indicates that a discourse of Hierarchy and Status, which originates from Bahrainco, is being enacted and maintained by Badria and others from Bahrainco and resisted by Dr Sara.

Badria enacts and maintains hierarchy in the meeting through her use of direct language to manage the meeting, control participants' contributions, make final decisions, prioritise Amal's opinions, prioritise SATCO' and Bahrainco's wishes/ logos over UOD's, and so on.

In the meeting, the discourse of Hierarchy and Status competes with other two discourses of professionalism and expertise, resulting in observable shifts in Badria's language and others. For example, when the discourse of Hierarchy and Status interacts with discourse of Professionalism, Badria shifts to a more traditionally masculine language using direct questioning, teasing and banter with Omar (from PR) and Dr Sara, who are both positioned powerlessly by the discourse of Hierarchy and Status (extract 7, see the Appendices, sections 3.1 (extracts 1 and 4) and 4.1 (the shadowing notes)). Yet, with Ahmed Rahimi, who shares an equal status with Badria in Bahrainco's hierarchy, there is no sign of such reaction in the meeting. On the contrary, Badria uses politeness markers, highly hedged requests, and other forms of indirect language with him (extract 2, see the Appendix, section 3.1, extracts 2 and 3). I believe her use of highly egalitarian language with the Training department manager in particular is due to his high status in Bahrainco.

Last but not least, when the discourse of Hierarchy and Status interacts and competes with the discourse of Expertise, Badria's language shifts into a friendlier tone with Dr Sara. In Amal's case, this establishes her as co-chair.

3. Conclusion

Badria, being one of only two female managers in the history of Bahrainco, has acquired recognition to which few females aspire in this male-dominated corporation. Among many reasons for her success, her leadership language and practices have proved to be significant. Upon close analysis of the one meeting and various interviews with her colleagues and subordinates, I have gained some insight into Badria's choice of language when enacting leadership in her own department as well as in a new context.

I have found that Badria succeeds in achieving a rare balance between transactional and relational leadership goals. After working in Bahrainco for over two decades, she has learned to change and police her language in order to keep everybody content and satisfied. By understanding the dynamics of the dominant discourses in the company such as Professionalism, Status and Hierarchy and Masculinisation, she creates a space where she changes her positioning according to the situation and the interlocutors. With Bahrainco's management, she enacts a traditionally masculine persona; with her team members, she is the mother, the mentor, the defender and so on. She sets goals and strives to achieve them making use of a wide repertoire of traditionally masculine and feminine language. She focuses on tasks, which in this case are organising the conference and preserving Bahrainco's interest by enacting and maintaining status and hierarchy (with their symbolic forms). To achieve these, she is assertive in critical matters and more lenient and egalitarian in less important ones. Her smile, her sense of humour, her calmness in frustrating situations, and her understanding of her goals and what it takes to achieve them are what makes her successful.

However, despite her career success and popularity, Badria is not immune to criticism and the double bind (e.g. Cameron 1995; Kendall & Tannen 1997; Marra, Schnurr & Holmes 2006; Litosseliti 2006). Her colleague, Sonia accuses her of making wrong judgements (extract 10) and criticises her management of meetings (extract 11).

Finally, I believe that the greatest disadvantage in Badria's case is that her success in the male-dominated company of Bahrainco comes at a high price. It seems that Badria's unprecedented accomplishment of shattering the glass ceiling is viewed skeptically by many. From informal conversations I had with some Bahrainco employees, I learnt that there is a strongly-held belief that Badria was promoted through favouritism or nepotism rather than merits and that she is the managements 'beloved'⁸². In my interview with Nadeem, she refers to Badria's worry over her cousin's new promotion as the Bahrainco's CEO: *'when he came to this position (.) she said I will have some problems (.) you see↑ although she was getting whatever she wants anything she was asking for a meeting or something with the Chief Executive (.) since he came (.) she couldn't you know ↑... because they will say that's because her cousin'* (see Appendices, section 3.1, extract 8).

⁸² I decided not to focus on this in my analysis because it is mainly impressionistic and informal, but worth noting.

Chapter Four

Hanan's Case Study

1. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to exploring the leadership language of Hanan; a senior engineer in the Engineering department in Bahrainco. It is structured to answer my inquiries and research questions about females' leadership language and the discourses that shape their choices of language practices. I start the chapter with an introduction about Hanan's case study and some contextual information. This is followed by the presentation of two sets of data in section 2.1: the enactment of leadership (meeting data) and perception of leadership (interview data). Data extracts are further discussed in the connotative analysis in section 2.2 for the purpose of deducing Hanan's leadership language (section 2.2.1) and the working discourses in the context (section 2.2.2). Each discourse will be introduced in a separate section followed by a final section on the interacting discourses. Finally, the conclusion in section 3 will summarise the significant and major findings in Hanan's case study.

2. Hanan's Case Study

Hanan is one of only two female seniors in the Engineering Department, apparently a male-dominated CofP. Hanan's case study is based on data from one recorded meeting, two recorded interviews with Hanan and another male engineer as well as shadowing notes (attending company-wide event with Hanan).

In the next section I will present data extracts from both the meeting and interviews; each extract has its own denotative analysis. Later, in the connotative analysis, I will discuss further implications across all the data.

2.1. Denotative Analysis:

This section is divided into two parts; the first one will comprise extracts from the meeting data where Hanan is enacting leadership. The second part will include extracts from interviews where Hanan and her subordinate, Amir, express their perceptions of each other and the context.

2.1.1. Enactment of leadership: Meeting Data

As I explain in the Methodology chapter (section 3.2.2.), Hanan is working on a very critical project and this meeting is one of a series of meetings in which Hana and her team members (Amir, P1, and P2) gather to check and discuss the updates and the process of the implementation of the project.

Extract (1)⁸³

Hanan starts the meeting by laying out the agenda of the meeting and going through a checklist of items on progress:

⁸⁴Key: H=Hanan, A=Amir, P1 =contractor engineer 1, P2= Contractor engineer 2

H And now we're er (----) this list before (.) for the status of er (.) commissioning (--)
scanned er yesterday's sheets (-----) we'll go through each item (.) and we will see
about the update (.) of K40 (----)

⁸³This is a very technical meeting, therefore, I provide a glossary of the main technical terms:

SCADA (Supervisory control and data acquisition): Computer system that monitors and controls processes

K40: Radar detector

HMI (Human machine interface): Apparatus which presents process data to a human operator

RTUs (Remote terminal units): These convert sensor signals to digital data, and send digital data to supervisory system.

⁸⁴ See Transcription key in Appendices, section 1.

((The first 30 seconds in which Hanan begins and states the purpose of the meeting are not very clear because we were still in the process of seating; therefore there is a lot of noise from moving chairs))

(0.10)

H let's start with this (.) er point=

P1 =we have one more er an analog er

A which it temperature (-) temperature building (.) err (0.2) (--) but we have to check it (.) we have connected two wires (.) but er (.) the power supply (.) we don't have the (.) the the cable that goes into the (aisles)

H aha (0.2) so (0.2) when you say you have checked it you have checked it from-

P1 we haven't checked it

A the power (dot) yeah

H yeah but the other items (.) the other analog inputs they have been checked all through the way to the [SCADA↑

P1 [SCADA

H all SCADA↑

P1 HMI SCADA

P2 RTU HMI SCADA

H all er (.) except pending ↑ room temperature↑ (-) room temperature to be done

P1 has been done

H has been done (.) this is er recent (.) they just corrected the er (.) the censors↑

P1 except to that all is done

H except that↑

P1 all is done

Denotative Analysis:

Hanan starts the meeting unofficially during the process of seating by summarising and explaining how they will go about the meeting using inclusive 'we' to stress the team-work endeavour: '*we'll go through each item (.) and we will see about the update*'. This perhaps is normal given the nature and purpose of the meeting (a regular check -up routine).

The meeting commences formally when Hanan uses the inclusive '*lets*' to introduce the first item point to which P1 responds simultaneously and later on Amir gives further explanation and possible problems (lines 10-11). Hanan responds with the particles '*aha*' and '*so*' perhaps to give herself time to process the problem. After few seconds she starts asking for further clarification: '*when you say you checked...*', and double checking through the use of statements with a rising intonation and echoing of others' statements (lines 16-22).

Towards the end of this extract Hanan and her team members engage in the joint construction of talk, where Hanan goes through the list and Amir, P1 and P2 cooperate and alternate in answering Hanan's inquiries and update her with the work progress. This goes on throughout the meeting.

Extract (2)⁸⁵

Hanan has just found out that Amir and the team (P1 and P2) are using the old/wrong scaling unit (Date instead of Hour (H))

A we have changed the rate from 21566 to 816566 (.) err SSFA (.) the previous er scale was 1007(.) we have to do some programming (.) for that scale (.) (-) (which) will be reverse back to the normal scale

H (---) per hour or er↑

A before it was M[CH

P1 [only request is that (MCH)↑

H yeah ↑

P1 now it's SCH (.) it's the whole range

A whole range is 0067 to 0.67

H (0.3) because this the (flow) (.) we use for totalising (0.2)

P1 ok

H and (.) now they change the unit (.) to (.) H (.) hours instead of date (.) we have to to make (.) take that into consideration

P1 yeah of course

⁸⁵ Glossary:
SSFA: rate
MCH and SCHH: Scaling Units

H and (.) ((P1 and P2 are discussing the issue quietly for few seconds)) will it be easy for you to do this↑ because you know about our er (flow) (.) all our (flow) transmitters before all our previous calculations (.) we use er date (.) but if (.) so if you feel er (.) that it is not really er (.) right we proceed with this change↑ because (.) it's different than the previous ones (.) all our er previous er (.) transmitters and everything is per date (0.2) this is per hour ↑

(0.5)

A why they have changed (-) ↑

H because (.) er initially it per date and that was (.) very smooth (.) it's ok I mean (.) your (.) system can handle it yeah↑ the RTU and er the [SCADA] was able to handle that er

Denotative Analysis:

The extract begins with Amir explaining and sharing technical updates with Hanan, to which she seeks further clarification using a statement with a rising intonation : '*per hour or er*'. Instead of directly responding to her question, Amir and P1 take several turns to further explain and justify their choice of unit. In the meantime, Hanan listens tentatively to them using the minimal response '*yeah*'↑ and when they are done, she waits three seconds to make sure that they have said everything they needed to say and then gives the reason for her concern (line 37).

Although I am not able to explain the meaning and content of what she is saying, I think it is obvious that her contribution is informed and crucial. This is evident by her two second pause to allow the information to sink in. Then, there is no more justification or explanation from Amir or P1, instead they all wait for her to continue and after two seconds P1 issues the minimal response '*ok*' to show attentiveness. Hanan proceeds with a quiet tone, pausing several times to make sure that she is being clear (line 39) and later issues a mitigated order using inclusive '*we*' and the modal '*have to*' to stress the importance of this issue (line 40). Compliance and

H you think operator will understand ATG1↑

A it is confusing

(0.5)

P2 that's ok [we will

H [but it is er in a way (.) it's it's good as a maintenance er (.) when the maintenance guy come (.) he will interpret it he will say yeah this is coming from ATG1 (.) so yes maybe the message is not (.) cannot be fully interpreted by the operator (.) eventually I think (.) we need the word ATG (.) I guess in the er message (.) we need it=

A =we need it

P1 we get it↑

A yes in case that you say that all the the controllers are off then we will display a message [say that ATG

P2 [no we will (--)) we will educate the operator that (.) er it is in the model (.) already it has been (-) under the FAC FAC the controller (.) you have to see that alarm (.) based on that controllers (.) yeah otherwise we will educate the er operators

H emm

55 lines later

H ye- ye- well er (0.3) ((looking at some papers)) ATG1 because I am a system person (.) I understand [ATG it means something to me=

P1 [yeah =meaningful

H meaningful (.) but as long as we will get an alarm (0.3)

P1 but we can educate them (.) it's very

H you forget (.) even me after a while I will forget (.) ATG1 (.) it is connected to controllers
or to BMS (.) [I will forget (.) I will forget

A[you have to go back to the drawings=

P1 =yeah exactly (.) so it's better to have ATG1 and AC001

H yeah

P2 (-) then alarm will be the same [(.) so we [will er (--)

H [yeah [we will (.) yeah

Denotative Analysis:

The extract begins with P1 attempting to clarify his earlier suggestion of providing a simple description of the type of the 'ATG1 loop controller' for the operators in the control rooms. Hanan, not quite in favour of the idea, shows her (negative) surprise at his suggestion by asking him for further clarification (lines 55). When he responds with the affirmative, she starts a process of questioning, which obviously reflects her disapproval of the suggestion (line 58). Moreover, Amir builds on Hanan's indirect criticism with a negative evaluative adjective '*it's confusing*'. Hanan allows few seconds before she takes the floor; perhaps she is waiting for P1 to respond back with justification, instead he expresses his compliance: '*that's ok we will*'. She might have felt that she was a bit harsh with him; therefore her next turn is much more mitigated. She issues an argument weighing 'the pros and cons' of the proposal. At first, she shifts her questioning tone into more egalitarian and open attitude. She positively evaluates P1's proposal: '*it's it's good as a maintenance*', then, in order to show P1 that she totally understands

his point of view, she adds further justification of why she thinks it is a good idea (lines 62-63), then a quick reference to why she is concerned in the first place (line 64) and finally she comes to a conclusion where she partially takes up P1's suggestion using various hedging devices : '*I think*', '*I guess*' (line 65), then issues a more definitive phrase using inclusive '*we*' and a deontic modal: '*we need it*'. Amir immediately picks up Hanan's phrase and echoes it.

P1 responds immediately with a compliant question to show his readiness to follow Hanan's instructions: '*we get it*'. Interestingly, it is Amir, not Hanan, who responds to his question with an affirmative '*yes*' followed by further discussion of the particulars of the implementation (lines 68-69). P2, being the specialised technician, takes the floor to explain his and his partner's vision of implementing the new system (lines 70-72).

After this prolonged discussion (between Amir on one side and P1 and P2 on the other) about how to implement the new system without confusing the operators, Hanan, having been attentively listening this whole time, finally makes a contribution (line 74). She begins by acknowledging P1 and P2's point of view with a cut off '*ye ye*' followed by the adverbial '*well*' to indicate that she is going present a counter argument. She takes three seconds (perhaps to gather her thoughts or to retain their attention) then she explains her concerns over their suggestion by referring to her own experience and expertise in the matter (lines 74-75). Her argument is that the operators will get confused because, as opposed to her, ATG1 is not familiar to them. As usual, P1 shows total support and compliance to Hanan by issuing the minimal response '*yeah*' and rephrasing her words '*meaningful*'.

Hanan acknowledges P1's contribution and echoes him '*meaningful*', and carries on a bit further with her argument. After three seconds of silence, P1 repeats his earlier suggestion to '*educate*' the operators and train them, to which Hanan immediately objects: '*they forget*'. She tries to make her point by referring to her own personal abilities as an example: '*even me after a while I*

will forget with repeated emphasis: *'I will forget (.) I will forget'*. She also gives further justification of why this is not possible: *'it is connected to controllers or to BMS'*.

Amir, having interrupted Hanan, supports her by co-constructing and building on her argument.

P1 simultaneously agrees to Amir and Hanan's argument and modifies his proposal (line 82).

P2 explains further their action plan (line 83). In the meanwhile, Hanan listens attentively issuing several minimal responses: *'yeah'* and finally making a decision using the inclusive *'we'* to stress that it is joint endeavour: *'we will (.) yeah'*.

Extract (4):

This extract takes place half way through the meeting where Hanan is questioning P1 and P2 about their time frame and indirectly criticising them for their lack of planning and their failure to meet the deadlines and fulfil their promises. It is divided into three parts according to their chronological order. (It is important to note that there are many similar incidents in the meeting but are not included in this chapter for the lack of space):

A you have to do that the description (.) for the controller and pop ups↑

P1 description (.) it's both er finished up already

H everything will be↑

P1 no no the er (.) ok (.) this er (.) no this I know I will complete it

H yeah but (.)£ tell me when (I mean) £

((everybody is laughing))

H £what's the time now£↑

((More laughter))

H I don't want you to die [hehehehe

P2 [£(---)£

P1 [£ if this guy er this guy (says) today means till tomorrow till
tomorrow morning£

H tomorrow (-) till tomorrow morning 6 am (.) and you will come tomorrow morning (.)

P2 HMI I can er work on (.) job design I can work on

P1 no actually (.) once we complete this er dryer testing and the fixing of the small er that (.)
HMI things (---) and myself and Amir (.) we're concentrating on the 39 and those
communication and testing so [I thi-

A [we don't need the N44 for testing IL (.) two days↑

P1 in fact (.) he was asking me if I will do the er 39 communication (-) but I told him you
have (.) many work here [so

H [£you ha- there are other work [I haven't

A [hehehe

H spotted er (.) your visa is valid until 29

P2 yeah 29

A today is 22

P2 some er

H you have how many hours until 29↑

((Laughter from all))

200 lines later

H there are other items so (--) GPS setup

P1 I'll er (.) I'll fix it tomorrow (--)

P2 yeah (.) tomorrow we will set up (.) sit with him [and er

H [tomorrow↑ the first thing you say
tomorrow which means £

P1 hehe

P2 tomorrow we will

99 lines later

H so by (.) tomorrow (.) then it means (.) you will be finishing all your items (.) by tomorrow morning

P1 yeah

H yeah↑ (0.1) and we can proceed to K39 (.) tomorrow is (.) Wednesday

P1 I think by (.) [today (--)] just er hardly (.) we are going to take another hour for dryers (.) and myself and Amir will concentrate on K39 powering up

H today you can start K39 powering up↑

P1 yeah we can start

A are you sure↑

P1 yeah yeah sure

A (----)

P1 hehe

H you are making staying Amir up to [nine o'clock or eight↑ £like yesterday £

[(everybody is laughing)]

P1 hehe sometimes (--)

Denotative Analysis:

The extract starts with Amir, who is P1 and P2's direct supervisor, issuing a directive to P1 using a modal verb of necessity '*you have to*' (line 87). When P1 answers that the task is already finished. Hanan, as if not fully convinced of P1's claim, issues a checking statement: '*everything will be↑*' (line 88). P1 seems to get the hint because he responds with a rather confused and hedged manner '*no no the er (.) ok (.) this er*' and then makes a promise to meet the deadline: '*no this I know I will complete it*'.

Hanan begins a bold humour sequence where she uses banter to indirectly criticise P1 and P2 for their failure to meet the deadlines. Her banter consists of questioning P1 about the exact time he intends to finish the tasks (lines 91, 92, 99). Her exaggerated questions trigger laughter from everyone in the room, and she carries it further by ironically implying that she is afraid he will die from hard work (line 95).

P1, being more outspoken than his team-mate, starts defending himself and avoiding the blame by using a variety of methods such as redirecting the attention and banter to his partner (lines 97-98, 101), and bringing Amir into the picture, involving him in the process and emphasising their work as a joint endeavour (lines 102-103). Amir, rejecting the positioning of a partner and emphasising his superiority, interrupts P1 and issues a challenging statement (line 104).

However, P1's efforts are far from successful, and if anything, they are counterproductive. While he sets to blaming P2 for the delay, he reveals that there are many other unaccomplished tasks that Hanan and Amir are unaware of (lines 105-106). Evidently, Hanan inquires with a surprised and humorous tone (most probably to hide her great frustration): '*£you ha- there are other work I haven't spotted*' (line 107). This triggers laughter by Amir and more banter by Hanan, which she takes further by issuing a disguised threat using the same exaggerated questioning technique, but this time with a reminder of P1 and P2's visa expiration date: '*your visa is valid until 29*', '*you have how many hours until 29*' (lines 109 and 113 respectively). Amir co-constructs the banter sequence by participating with a comment: '*today is 22*' and issuing a sarcastic laugh (line 111).

At line 115, while going through the check list, Hanan inquires about the 'GPS set up', and P1 and P2 respond with a promise to fix it the next day '*tomorrow*'. Hanan, taking the same sarcastic approach to their promises, questions the validity of their proposed timing by implying that their conception of time may be different than hers: '*£the first thing you say tomorrow which means £*'. This time, P1 issues a laughter and P2 a promise: '*tomorrow we will*'.

Towards the end of the meeting, Hanan stresses the importance of meeting the proposed deadlines. For that, she uses checking statements (lines 122-123, 125). Then, as if confirming that they are fully aware of their promises, she uses banter in the form of exaggerated statement about what day of the week tomorrow is: '*tomorrow is Wednesday*'. P1 tries to assure her that they are working within the proposed time frame by giving more details about their work plan, again including Amir in the process (lines 126-127). Hanan and Amir question whether his time frame is realistic (lines 129, 130 respectively). When he responds with affirmatives to both questions, Hanan utilises more bold humour to blame P1 and P2 for keeping Amir at work for late hours (line 134). P1 responds with laughter, perhaps to disguise his embarrassment.

2.1.2. Perception of leadership: Interview Data⁸⁷

In this section, I present denotative analysis of selective extracts from the interviews with Hanan and Amir.

Interview with Hanan

Extract (5)

Here, Hanan answers my question about the language (e.g. direct versus indirect strategies) she uses with her subordinates and team members. This extract is divided into five parts (A, B, C, D, E), which are selected according to their relevance to my study:

Part A

H different people you have to treat them in different way (.) because they are (.) different people (.) and some people (.) it's (.) this what makes some people easier for you to deal with (.) some people (---) some guys are really argumentative and you have really to give them er a lot of reas- or explain (.) really (.) the reasons in details (.) why I want this and this and that (.) and they will always come back oh why you (--) what (--) but some people (.) it depends even on their (.) experience and how long have they been working (.) with you (.) they would (.) immediately yeah (.) ok we'll do that way so: em (.) it depends on the person

Part B

H the problem is we cannot tolerate mistakes (.) in that area (-) it could cause to (.) explosion it could er (.) and you know anything could happen (.) and er then at the end they say this is the control system did not really es- err (.) get the right job

⁸⁷ See Appendices (section 2) for interview questions templates.

Part C

H I think support (.) I mean you have really to give t- because er (.) I feel at the end (.) you don't need really very bright people (0.1) to (.) to do the job (.) just you have to have good relation with people (.) and that will maintain er good productivity

Part D

H at the end I always think of the (.) best er solution (.) so if it is (.) if I did not (.) present it and someone else present it I go for it (.) I don't really (.) stick to my own er (.) way or opinion (.) at the end er I think er we have to do it er professionally (.) and er (.) you know we have to wait (.) to weigh this option or that option (.) I mean at the end it needs to be executed well

Part E

H I mean not really (.) I am not a type of argumentative sometimes (.) and I learn after so man- I mean a number of years of experience sometimes I don't want to argue especially when it comes to (.) £higher up £

Denotative Analysis:

Part A

This is taken from a longer extract where Hanan explains how she shifts her use of leadership language from one person to another. Trying to get her to be more specific, I asked '*what does it [shift in leadership language] depend on?*'. Hanan answers my question by stating that since people are different in their communication practices (line 137-138), the leader should be able to accommodate those differences in order get the message through. She divides people into two categories: people who are easier to deal with and those who are argumentative (lines 138-

142). Argumentative 'guys' are the ones hard to please and require specific linguistic effort from her part (explaining, justifying, persuading and so on). However, towards the end (lines 140-142), Hanan adds another category to this division where she refers to the experienced people who have worked with her for so long. These are the ones who comply with her requests '*immediately*'.

Part B

This is taken from a longer extract where Hanan refers to her use of direct strategies with her team member when leading a major project. Hanan perceives the context as especially problematic- albeit her use of the indicativelexis: 'the *problem*'- (and perhaps requires special adjustment in language). She further explains that the problem lies in the nature of work in the engineering department where mistakes are not tolerated: '*we cannot tolerate mistakes (.) in that area*' (line145).To emphasise and support this claim, she follows up with examples about possible disastrousconsequences of any mistake in the execution of projects in her department: '*it could cause to (.) explosion it could er (.) and you know anything could happen*' (lines 144-145). Here, Hanan refers to her superiors and decision makers as '*they*'. According to Hanan, in this case, '*they*' will eventually blame such failure on her and/or her team in '*the control system*'. Apparently, Hanan appears to be conscious about her image as an efficient leader and seeks to avoid being associated with or responsible for project failure. This, she claims, persuades her to be more direct and less concerned about employees' face needs when it clashes with task accomplishment.

Part C

Hanan answers my question about whether or not, and to what extent she uses relational linguistic strategies with her team members such as support, positive feedback and so on. Hanan answers that she mostly offers '*support*'. She attempts to explain her point first by

referring to herself in the second person pronoun: '*you really have to...*' to make it appear like a universal condition. After some hesitation, she switches back to the first pronoun combined with a verb expressing emotions: '*I feel*' (line 148). This is perhaps to personalise this experience and refrain from the generalisation she attempted earlier. Then she uses the second pronoun again to refer to any leading person or project manager: '*you don't really...*'. She issues her advice using the deontic modal: '*need*' to indicate the unimportance of having '*bright people*' in the team. She claims it is more important to keep good relationships with ones' team members in order to maintain '*good productivity*' (line 150).

Basically, Hanan claims that as a project manager, compliance is more important than 'smartness' in team members (lines 148-149), and she, being the expert, her job is to do the 'thinking' and 'planning' and their job is to follow her orders accurately. Therefore, she proposes that keeping her team members happy and satisfied will motivate them to maintain good productivity.

Part D

In this extract, Hanan answers my question about sharing power with her team members and most specifically consulting them and taking their opinions. Hanan's repetitive use of the phrase '*at the end*' (line 151, also see extract 7, part C, line 147) indicates her focus on end results. Also, Hanan uses the frequency adverb '*always*' to refer the typical leadership language practices she uses in decision making situations. She stresses the importance of accomplishing the task: '*I always think of the best solution*', '*at the end it needs to be executed well*' and doing everything it takes to ensure that, whether this require her to hold on to her opinion or explore other options (lines 152-153). In line 153, Hanan switches to the inclusive pronoun '*we*' to emphasise the joint endeavour, which includes stages of planning: '*we have to wait*' (line 153),

decision making: *'to weigh this option or that option'* (line 154) and execution: *'we have to do it er professionally'* (line 153).

Part E

Here, Hanan answers my question about her use of argumentative language. She begins by referring to the need to change her language practices in the workplace in order to meet the demands of the job. She also makes clear reference to her long working years in Bahrainco, and how she has learned that use of such conventionally masculinised language (arguing) is useless especially with one's superior.

Extract (6)

Hanan answers the interview question about gender equality and the place of women in the engineering department in Bahrainco:

H I mean up to (.) last year for example (.) they wouldn't really recruit er females for engineers they don't trust them as er engineers (.) especially in engineering er (.) so many graduates (.) from (.) Bahrain University from outside univ- sure they apply (.) I mean and they are very good and distinguished (.) but you hardly see I mean they recruit (.) anyone (---) we have I mean myself I (.) initially I didn't think (.) of that (0.1) and then er (.) believe it or not I mean one of the Western he brought that to me (.) he said I mean err (.) he spoke to all those Bahrainis who are higher than him (0.1) and he said er (0.1) they don't er because you you are a female (.) they don't (0.1) I mean they put some (0.1) (cap) on your er (0.1) advancement (.) this is they say this is your culture here (.) °and err° I cannot change it

Denotative Analysis:

Here Hanan explains what she believes are the reasons behind the lack of women in the engineering department lies within the discriminatory recruitment process. She starts by giving examples of actual events which are indicative of such discriminatory practices: *'last year for example (.) they wouldn't...'* (lines 156-157). As she narrates a recent incident where professional women engineers were denied the chance to compete for jobs in Bahrainco, she refers to the management and decision makers in the company vaguely as *'they'*. This is perhaps to hedge her further accusations of Bahrainco's decision makers as sexist: *'they don't trust them as er engineers'* (line 157). Hanan emphasises that such discrimination is especially practiced in the engineering department and gives more examples to confirm her claim that the engineering profession is being gendered and as a result, women are being excluded (lines 157-160).

In line (163), Hanan shifts to the inclusive pronoun *'we'* then the singular pronoun *'I'* to refer to her personal experience with the 'glass ceiling' as a woman engineer in the male-dominated company of Bahrainco (line 161). She claims that she was oblivious to the actual reasons behind deferring her promotions despite her expertise and her long years of experience, and that her superior, an expat (an outsider and peripheral member of the CofP) is the one who brought it to her attention (lines 163-168). According to him, despite his efforts, it is the wider Bahraini patriarchal culture that is behind the gendered inequality and 'glass ceiling' in the company.

When reporting this incident, Hanan uses the anticipatory phrase *'believe or not'* (line 161) to indicate her shock and anticipate my reaction to the story. From lines 163 to 168, Hanan impersonates her superior and reports his words, perhaps to give more validity to her claims.

Extract (7)

Hanan answers my question about 'Bahrainco's culture':

H £I couldn't £ I mean I couldn't be (.) like Bahrainco people (.) who'd really always think (.) safety and don't do this and don't (.) make the cables that way (.) I wouldn't (.) £I feel I mean er I'm not convinced (.) that er (0.1) with those very strict I mean safety regulations (-----)there is little bit I mean (.) but not that much I mean (.) but in general in Bahrainco they are strict they have to follow the procedure (.) and regardless of these procedures sometimes you feel we don't need (.) we are just wasting our time in (.) following these procedures but (.) we have to do it

Denotative Analysis:

This is taken from a longer extract where Hanan answers my question about whether or not Bahrainco has a specific 'working culture'. She begins by distinguishing herself from other members of this CofP: '*I couldn't be (.) like Bahrainco people*' (line 169). Her repetitive use of the modal verb '*couldn't*' implies that she has tried over the years but she still couldn't adapt to this 'culture'. She expresses her disapproval of Bahrainco's core values such as safety, discipline, strict procedures and so on by referring to her own independent thinking and beliefs outside this CofP: '*I'm not convinced*' (line 171). She also provides abstract examples of how, over the years, she has witnessed those procedures being carried out at the expense of efficiency and task accomplishment (lines 171-175).

Interview with Amir:

Amir is a young male engineer working under Hanan in this project along with two other contractor engineers. This interview is very short as Amir's answers are very concise. During the interview, he seemed to be very conscious and careful and he declined to answer some questions about gender equality in the company.

Extract (8):

In the following selective extracts, Amir answers my questions about the nature of relationship between him and Hanan and most importantly, Hanan's use of leadership and language practices. In part A, Amir is reading through the list of leadership characteristics (see interview questions in the Appendices, section 2); I asked him earlier to specify the ones more typical of Hanan's:

Part A

A We share information (.) we have opinions (.) not everyone (.) ok she's she's my seni- she is a senior (.) but I mean we always share information (.) ((Amir carries on reading the list)) argue (.) no [(-) ok I mean fine for example sometimes we disagree on things (.) and that's natural (.) she (.) she has experience more than me (.) for example I do it some- in a way (.) she says ok (.) you have done it in a right way but it's better to do it like this

Part B

A she's she's a senior engineer I am an engineer so (.) I I was working on a differen- not different department I was looking after a different system (.) I recently joined this err (.) supporting this system for the past two three months so (.) I am little bit new in this field (.) err she was looking after this for for I donno (.) few years

HA and you (.) just joined

A no for instance I have er I have experience more in other other systems

Denotative Analysis:

Part A

Although the list of leadership characteristics are meant to encourage interviewees to comment on Hanan's leadership language and practices, Amir disregards that and instead, he constantly uses the exclusive 'we' to refer to their mutual communication process: '*we share information (.) we have opinions*', '*we disagree on things*'. By indicating that this is a mutual decision or arrangement rather than Hanan's choice of leadership language, Amir perhaps means to emphasise that he is on equal footing and status with Hanan. In line (176), he refers to this relationship as exclusive to him and Hanan with his words: '*not everyone*'. Then, he goes back to acknowledge the difference in status between them and then again he stresses his earlier claim that there is a mutual trust and sharing of information between them (lines 176-181).

Reading through the next point on the list (arguing), with a direct '*no*', Amir at first disagrees that Hanan argues at all, then with the discourse marker '*ok*', as if presenting a counter argument, he offers examples of disagreement between himself and Hanan, which he refers to as '*natural*' given the fact that she is more experienced than he is (line 179). The specific example he gives doesn't indicate any type of argument though, just a reference to the effect of his lack of experience in some aspects and the indirect, face-saving way she deals with such mistakes.

PartB

Amir, throughout the interview, responds to my questions about Hanan's leadership language in a way that minimises the status between them (see part A earlier). Therefore, I have tackled this

point separately by asking him specifically and directly about the nature of professional relationship and the difference in status between him and Hanan.

At first, he hesitantly indicates that there is a status difference: '*she's she's...*' (line 182), then he immediately shifts to focus on Hanan's and his different areas of expertise rather than status: '*I was working on a different department...she was looking after this for..*', '*I have experience more in other other systems*' (lines 182 and 187 respectively). He emphasises his recent involvement in the project by using the adverbials of time '*recently*' and '*three months ago*' (lines 183 and 184 respectively).

Extract (9)

Amir answers my question about the difference and similarities in the 'organisational cultures' across the different departments in Bahrainco (see interview question in the Appendices, section 2):

A every division is different (.) HR (.) if the guy who is er responsible er (.) let's say head of HR (.) superintendent of HR (.) if he doesn't show up one day nothing will it's not going to be er big big I mean (.) it's not going to make a difference (.) if somebody from er let's say from our side (.) didn't show up for one two three days (.) people will ask him ok (.) we (.) we are not sitting (.) like HR they have certain tasks (.) no we are handling projects (.) we have (.) problems to solve (.) if I don't attend to the problems then (.) one day two days and he doesn't show people will start to ask (.) why this guy is not coming↑ they will flag it up to my manager to my (.) GM (.) this is operation

Denotative Analysis:

Amir draws a comparison between HR and the Engineering departments. According to him, while HR's work is laid back, it is critical and stricter in the Engineering department (lines 188-

191). He indirectly accuses HR people of laziness by contrasting them to himself and others in the Engineering: '*we are not sitting*' and implying the flexibility of the HR job: '*like HR they have certain tasks*' (line 192). This is followed by a description of the Engineering job as super crucial and critical (lines 192-194), which, as Amir indicates, affects the 'organisational culture' of the department such as perception of/reaction to attendance as so on (lines 194- 195)

2.2. Connotative Analysis:

In this section, I will discuss further the implications of the selected extracts of the meeting and interview data presented above in regard to Hanan's leadership language along with the discourses within the CofP as they emerge from the language and communicative practices of Hanan and her team members during the course of the meeting and the interviews.

2.2.1. Leadership Language

My analysis of Hanan's leadership language is based on data from the meeting and interviews. Meeting data is highly valuable because it captures Hanan in the process of doing leadership. Interview data is similarly and equally essential because it offers the perspective of Hanan and her team members on the data, and it allows for the richer multi-layered analysis required in any social constructionist research.

The denotative analysis of the extracts has indicated that there are general patterns and unique characteristics in Hanan's leadership language, most important of which is prioritising task accomplishment. Apparent from the data, Hanan places great importance to achieving tasks and getting the work done. For example, in extract 5 (line 150), Hanan stresses the importance of maintaining '*good productivity*'. Similarly, in extract 5 (line 155), she emphasises the priority of getting the job done regardless of who makes the decision: '*I mean at the end it needs to be executed well*'.

According to Hanan, this is mainly due to the critical nature of the engineering work in Bahrainco. In the interview, she repeatedly stresses the intolerance of mistakes in her job and that they can lead to dire consequences on the company and the country as a whole. This is evident in extract 5(line 147) where she expresses her concern over being blamed for such mistakes: *'and er then at the end they say this is the control system did not really es- err (.) get the right job'*

Also, Hanan claims that she constantly shifts her leadership language (according to the interlocutors) for the higher the purpose of achieving tasks: *'different people you have to treat them in different way'* (extract 5, line 137). She divides subordinates and colleagues into: people who are easy to work with and people who are argumentative and require skillful persuasion strategies. She claims that the former are the ones who have worked with her for so long, and they have learned to trust her and comply with her instructions immediately.

Upon my close analysis of the meeting data as a whole and especially the extracts in section 2.1.1, I have observed the shift in Hanan's leadership language between the conventionally masculine strategies and use of power and authority on one hand, and the conventionally feminine facilitative strategies on the other. Evidently, as a leader, Hanan deploys a repertoire of conventionally masculine and feminine language practices for the higher purpose of achieving task-related goals and successfully getting the work done on time:

- Using conventionally masculinised leadership and language practices to achieve transactional ends:

Throughout the meeting, Hanan uses various linguistic strategies to assert her power as the most senior person in the group (project manager) and as the expert and most experienced person in the meeting. Examples of such strategies would be: giving direct statements when sharing expert knowledge, issuing unmitigated orders and instructions, disagreeing, confronting,

questioning, interrupting, holding the floor, and constantly resisting interruptions. Next I will provide some illustrative examples of Hanan enacting power from the extracts in section 2.1.1.

It is worth noting at the beginning that there is no small talk, or any type of relational talk for that matter, anywhere before, during or at the end of the meeting. There is also no use of first names or informal language in this meeting. As indicated in extract (1), Hanan starts the meeting directly during the seating process by stating the purpose of the meeting, giving a quick preview of the agenda and then controlling the topics and the flow of the meeting:

H and now we're er (----) this list before (.) for the status of er (.) commissioning (--)
scanned er yesterday's sheets (-----) we'll go through each item (.) and we will see
about the update (.) of K40

H let's start with this (.) er point

Mostly, Hanan uses statements with or without rising intonations to check and summarise work progress and go through the list of items in the agenda. She is also very specific and detailed (perhaps due to the nature of her technical work). Examples from the extract are as follows:

(Extract 1, line 13):

H aha (0.2) so (0.2) when you say you have checked it you have checked it from-

(Extract 1, line 16):

H yeah but the other items (.) the other analog inputs they have been checked all through
the way to the [SCADA↑

(Extract 4, line 122)

H so by (.) tomorrow (.) then it means (.) you will be finishing all your items (.) by tomorrow
morning

There are various examples in the data where Hanan uses direct unmitigated strategies with her team members, yet perhaps the most significant example is her use of banter in extract (4) to criticise work progress. This is a whole episode where Hanan uses unmitigated, bald on-record humour to criticise the lack of planning and failed promises by P1 and P2, and indirectly orders them to be more efficient. This type of humour is not egalitarian; it is more toward teasing and banter (Holmes 2006). As I illustrate in the denotative analysis, it gets potentially even more embarrassing when Hanan refers to their visa end date which really sounds like a threat: *'your visa is valid until 29'* *'you have how many hours until 29'* (lines 109, 113 respectively)

- Using Conventionally feminised language strategies to achieve transactional ends:

Hanan's prior goal is to achieve tasks; and her alternation between transactional and relational strategies is apparent in the meeting and interview data. In extract (5, Part C) she notes that she uses relational strategies to keep her subordinates motivated to do their job. As I have indicated in the introduction, when asked about the importance of maintaining good relationships with her team members, Hanan justifies using relational strategies on the basis of keeping her subordinates motivated to do the job.

Moreover, in the meeting, Hanan uses various direct and indirect techniques to issue orders and instructions. This ranges from using imperatives and language to exercise power and authority to issuing highly hedged orders and instructions usually accompanied by explanation and justification. Extract (2) is an example of a problematic situation where Hanan, although quite frustrated at knowing that her team members are using the wrong scaling unit, uses highly hedged request to get them to do the necessary changes. First, she expresses her concern over how they feel about the change (line 42): *'will it be easy for you to do this'*, explains and justifies the recent alteration in unit (line 43): *'all our (flow) transmitters before all our previous calculations (.) we use er date'*, gives them the choice to share their feelings about this decision

(lines 45-46): *'so if you feel er (.) that it is not really er (.) right we proceed with this change↑'*
and acknowledges their point of view (lines 46-48): *' because (.) it's different than the previous ones (.) all our er previous er (.) transmitters and everything is per date (0.2) this is per hour ↑'*

Another manifestation of Hanan's use of relational strategies occurs during the decision making process in the meeting. Although she uses directives and imperatives for quick (on the spot) decisions, mostly, however, she attempts to gather as much information and details about the issue as possible, listening to others' suggestions, proposals, and expert opinions before making the final decision, which usually comes out plainly and directly. Yet, she always follows it up with justification and explanation. On other occasions, she goes into long discussions and arguments about the matter and then issues her decisions in a rather hedged manner *'I think', 'I guess'*. There are also instances where Hanan 'takes a back seat' and let decisions be made collaboratively by the whole team in a process of negotiation and exchange of information and expert opinions.

An example of a negotiation process and a decision making moment is in extract (3). Hanan is discussing with her team members the message that should be displayed to operators and technicians. As I illustrate in the denotative analysis (section 2.1.1), although Hanan is sceptical about the suggestion made by P1, she responds by explaining her expert opinion in the matter and allowing him and his partner to clarify their point of view rather than completely dismissing it. After few turns they all reach an agreement and Hanan finally makes a decision using the inclusive pronoun 'we' to stress the joint endeavour: *'yeah we will (.) yeah'*

On the same note, in extract (5), when asked about making decisions, Hanan denies holding on to her opinions : *'at the end I always think of the (.) best er solution (.) so if it is (.) if I did not (.) present it and someone else present it I go for it'* (line 151-152).

Finally, the last example of Hanan using relational strategies and downplaying power is her significant collaboration with Amir to manage the work of P1 and P2. When asked about Hanan's leadership language and practices, Amir in extract (8) confirms Hanan's use of relational strategies (with him) such as sharing opinions and information: '*We share information (.) we have opinions (.) not everyone*' (lines 176-177)

It is also evident from the data of the meeting that Hanan repeatedly allows Amir to take over the discussion/negotiation/floor questioning and directing P1 and P2. For example in extract (3), Hanan allows Amir to respond to P1's question: '*we get it↑*' with a decision: '*yes in case that you say that all the the controllers are off then we will display a message say that ATGI*'. (lines 68-70). Also, in extract (4) Amir questions P1: '*you have to do that the description (.) for the controller and pop ups↑*' (lines 86). Again in extract (4) he participates with Hanan in co-constructing the banter (lines 107-114):

H [£you ha- there are other work [I haven't

A [hehehe

H spotted er (.) your visa is valid until 29

P2 yeah 29

A today is 22

P2 some er

H you have how many hours until 29↑

An interesting banter incident also occurs in extract (4), where Hanan acts like Amir's advocate in the team: '*you are making staying Amir up to [nine o'clock or eight↑ £like yesterday £* (line 134).

Hanan's sharing power with Amir could be read as her way to show solidarity and share (collective) responsibility with him as they both belong to the same CofP which represents Bahrainco in this project. However, there is an obvious conflict between Hanan and Amir especially when it comes to status difference, power and so on. While Hanan states clearly that Amir is her subordinate and that she has power over him (see Appendices, section 3.2, extract 4), Amir seems very reluctant to acknowledge her as his superior and talks of different kind of expertise rather than overall status. He also claims that Hanan is only doing what is expected of her and nothing unique or special (extract 8).

The picture gets more complex as Hanan seems very supportive of Amir during the meeting, giving him the floor and sharing power with him. Yet, it is striking to learn in the interview that Hanan is not only frustrated with Amir, but she actually blames him for the recurrent mistakes (see Appendices, section 3.2, extracts 3 and 4). This is a clear indication of Hanan's using relational strategies and shifting her leadership language, regardless of her feelings, to get the job done. Their perfect 'harmony' and cooperation in the meeting could be part of the values and practices of the CofP as they both represent Bahrainco in this project; they are both in the same team and are expected to put their differences aside and get the job done.

This brings us to the question: what is the role played by corporate and gendered discourses in shaping Hanan's leadership language? In the next section, I will identify the major working discourses in the context and how they interact at times and compete at others to position Hanan and her subordinates.

2.2.2. Discourses within the CofP

This part is dedicated to unveiling the working discourses in the context. In the following sections, I will illustrate how each discourse has emerged from the data and how by interacting and competing, they all work to shape Hanan's leadership language and others in this CofP.

2.2.2.1. Discourse of Masculinisation

I have already introduced the discourse of Masculinisation in the literature review chapter (section 3.1.1.2) and Badria's case study chapter (section 2.2.2). According to Baxter (2003), the discourse of Masculinisation promotes conventionally masculine language and interactional practices such as aggressiveness and competitiveness.

Based on the denotative data analysis of the extracts in section 2.1, it seems that although Hanan uses a wide repertoire of traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine leadership and language practices, her priority and major aim is to achieve the tasks and successfully complete the project on time. For that, she would shift her leadership language when needed depending on the situation and the interlocutors, making more use of the traditionally masculine leadership and language practices. Her use of such conventionally masculine strategies is apparent, for instance, in the formal start of the meeting in extract (1), her use of banter in extract (4), and so on. Also, in the interview, Hanan talks about her choice of direct (less friendly/less relational) leadership strategies as stemming from the critical nature of her work in the Engineering department.: *'the problem is we cannot tolerate mistake (.) in that area'* (extract 5, line 145).

Similarly, Amir confirms Hanan's claims in extract (9) where he compares the HR and the Engineering departments: *'we are not sitting (.) like HR they have certain tasks (.) no we are handling projects (.) we have (.) problems to solve'* (lines 191-192)

These extracts and many other parts of the meeting and interviews indicate the critical and task-oriented nature of work in the Engineering department, which, according to Hanan, requires her, her colleagues, and her subordinates to be more formal and direct with each other, and most of all, prioritise task accomplishment over other relational goals.

Also, according to Hanan, this preference for conventionally masculine language practices is maintained through the management's sexist recruitment policy: *'I mean up to (.) last year for example (.) they wouldn't really recruit er females for engineers they don't trust them as er engineers...'* (extract 6, line 159-160)

Moreover, in the same extract, Hanan argues that this gendered policy against women causes further discrimination to her and her female colleagues in the workplace as they are denied equal rights for advancement, training, promotion, and the like: *'one of the Western he brought that to me ... he said er (0.1) they don't er because you you are a female (.) they don't (0.1) I mean they put some (0.1) (cap) on your er (0.1) advancement (.) this is they say this is your culture here (.) °and errr° I cannot change it'* (extract 6, lines 164-167)

The Engineering department seems to be an exclusively male CofP in Bahrainco where there are hardly any female professionals. Further in the interview (see Appendices, section 3.2, extract 5), Hanan talks about her early days where she was the only female in a traditionally masculine working culture: *'initially I mean when I go and enter new places (.) of course (.) I feel I mean I am watched (.) but er eventually I get used to them (.) they get used to me (.) and now I am there (.) they don't I mean say (.) dirty jokes...'*

These examples and many others in the data indicate traces of a discourse of Masculinisation in this context with special appreciation to 'stereotypical constructs of masculinity such as hierarchy, order, structure, dominance, competitiveness, rivalry, aggression and goal-oriented action' (Baxter 2003: 147).

Naturally, in such a male dominated workplace, traditionally masculine language practices are normalised and expected from all employees, especially leaders and project managers (Baxter 2010). In addition, display of traditionally feminine language and practices may be viewed, not just as a weakness in character, but as a waste of valuable company time. Therefore, the minority of female leaders in this CofP are rendered powerless and may feel pressurised to acquire the mainstream traditionally masculine language in order to be recognised and appreciated.

Hanan's stance towards this discourse is interesting. As I have demonstrated earlier, on the one hand, she takes up forms of such discourse in her leadership language. Yet, she occasionally expresses her resistance to such conventionally masculinised language and male-dominated culture of the Engineering department and Bahrainco as a whole: *'I don't really (.) stick to my own er (.) way or opinion'* (extract 5, line 152), *'I mean not really (.) I am not a type of argumentative'* (extract 5, lines 156-157), *'£I couldn't £ I mean I couldn't be (.) like Bahrainco people ...in general in Bahrainco they are strict they have to follow the procedure (.) and regardless of these procedures sometimes you feel we don't need (.) we are just wasting our time in (.) following these procedures but (.) we have to do it'* (extract 7, lines 173-175).

2.2.2.2. Discourse of Seniority

This is a new discourse which I have deduced from Hanan's data. In this context, I use 'seniority' to refer to the amount of power, privilege and experiences an employee gains over working for a considerable amount of time in a company. It is in many ways similar to Baxter's (2003) discourse of Historical legacy.

Hanan, having been working in the same department for over 20 years, makes constant references to her long-working experience in Bahrainco. There are various referencing patterns in the data, many of which are indexed indirectly while discussing other matters. For example, in

extract (5), she indicates her preference to working with the same people who have worked with her over the years in the company: *'but some people (.) it depends even on their (.) experience and how long have they been working (.) with you (.) they would (.) immediately yeah (.) ok we'll do that way so: em'* (lines 141-144). There appears to be a privilege for the more experienced members who have already mastered the language and practices acquired in this CofP; which, in this case, is the traditionally masculine language (such as immediately carrying out Hanan's orders without further arguments and negotiations).

Other ways of referencing the value of her long involvement with Bahrainco is through indicating her experience and what she has learned from it over the years: *'and I learn after so man- I mean a number of years of experience sometimes I don't want to argue especially when it comes to (.) £higher up £'* (extract 5, lines 156-158). Additionally, throughout the interview, she recounts her pioneering stories and knowledge about the company's gendered laws and legislations (see extract 6).

Similarly, Amir refers to Hanan's years of experience to justify his subordinate position in this project. The following examples are from extracts (8):

A and that's natural (.) she (.) she has experience more than me (.) for example I do it some- in a way (.) she says ok (.) you have done it in a right way but it's better to do it like this (lines 178-179)

A I recently joined this err (.) supporting this system for the past two three months so (.) I am little bit new in this field (.) err she was looking after this for for I donno (.) few years (lines 181-183)

I deduce from the above that there appears to be a working discourse of Seniority in the CofP of the Engineering Department. This discourse seems to highly privilege Hanan and empower her and others of her generation. In many ways, it relates and overlaps with the discourse of

Expertise, but it differs in that the focus is not on the specialisation or expertise of employees, but rather on the number of years one spends in the company. In an organisation like Bahrainco, there are people who spend all their adult life working in the company but with no real expertise in specialised fields. Low ranking workers such as janitors and messengers could be empowered by the discourse of Seniority but not the discourse of Expertise.

During the shadowing process, I attended a company-wide event with Hanan, through which I have observed her conduct with her colleagues and superiors (see shadowing notes in Appendices, section 4.2). Interestingly, Hanan appears to be using the same traditionally masculine language and practices even with her superiors. For instance, she used banter and teasing with a male general manager (who is two levels above her in Bahrainco's hierarchy). For example, while conversing socially with him, she asked him about his (apparently good looking) son saying *'I am wondering where he got his good looks from; certainly not from you'*. This is an indication of Hanan's powerful position even amongst her superiors. This, as I inferred from the data, is due to a discourse of Seniority. Below, I discuss another empowering discourse at work in the context.

2.2.2.3. Discourse of Expertise

In Badria's case study, I have unveiled a discourse of Expertise in Bahrainco. Similarly, this discourse seems to be dominant in the Engineering department influencing employees' status in interactions.

In section 2.1.2, I have discussed the critical nature of work in the Engineering department as indicated in the interview data of Hanan and Amir. Certainly, being a task-oriented CofP requires appreciation for specialised expert knowledge in the field. Hanan's expertise in major projects is evident in the data. Amir, for instance, repeatedly refers to her experience and expertise: *'she has experience more than me (.) for example I do it some- in a way (.) she says*

ok (.) you have done it in a right way but it's better to do it like this' (extract 8, lines 180-181), *'I am little bit new in this field (.) er she was looking after this for for I dunno (.) few years'* (extract 8, lines 184-185)

Moreover, meeting data contains the most obvious evidence of Hanan's superior expertise. Of the data presented in section 2.1.1, extracts (2) and (3) show some indications of such knowledge. In extract (2), for instance, Hanan is surprised to learn that her team members are using the wrong scaling unit. Throughout the extract, she explains to them why they have changed the unit:

(Lines 50-51)

A why they have changed (-) ↑

H because (.) er initially it per date and that was (.) very smooth (.) it's ok I mean (.) your (.) system can handle it yeah↑ the RTU and er the [SCADA] was able to handle that er

Additionally, in extract (3), when Hanan is negotiating the message to be displayed to operators, she refers to herself as a *'system person'* who knows all about specialised technical concepts such as ATG1, BMS and so on (lines 75-81).

In the same line, when asked about her use of relational leadership language, Hanan states the importance of keeping team members content and motivated: *'I feel at the end (.) you don't need really very bright people (0.1) to (.) to do the job (.) just you have to have good relation with people (.) and that will maintain er good productivity'* (extract 5, lines 148-150). In this extract, Hanan is indirectly referring to herself as an expert by expressing the need for expertise mainly in leaders (rather than team members) as they are the ones in charge of the planning and decisions.

Therefore, I deduce from all of the above that there is a working discourse of Expertise in the CofP of the engineering department that places expert people at an advantage. Hanan is an expert in what she does; she has done it for over 20 years and has handled major critical projects ever since she joined the company (Bahrainco's website). Also, as I have mentioned earlier, Amir relates Hanan's higher status to her longer experience and expertise in the project. This is an indication that the discourse of Expertise positions Hanan powerfully especially when running the projects. (He claims that in the meeting, for instance, she gets listened to not only because she is the project manager but also because she knows best).

2.2.2.4. Discourse of Loyalty

Discourse of Loyalty has already been introduced in the Literature review chapter (section 3.1.1.2.1) as a discourse which denotes a sense of belonging, commitment, and devotion to one's family, team, or organisation. In this case study, I have found indications of Hanan disassociating herself from Bahrainco in many aspects.

Despite having had a long working experience in Bahrainco, Hanan seems to be less attached to the company and its culture than the other two senior women in my study. In fact, several times in the interview, she becomes critical, not only of the gendered policies, but even the established strict working culture and language practices (e.g. arguing) in Bahrainco in general and the Engineering department in particular. For example in extract (5), she denies being able to fit the 'argumentative' mould of Bahrainco employees. Also, in extract (7), she expresses her failed attempts to affiliate herself with the company and adapt to its 'culture': *'£I couldn't £ I mean I couldn't be (.) like Bahrainco people who'd really always think (.) safely and don't do this and don't (.) make the cables that way (.) I wouldn't (.) £I feel I mean er I'm not convinced (.) that er (0.1) with those very strict I mean safety regulations...'* (lines 169-175).

By referring to her fellow colleagues or '*Bahrainco people*' as a group who has certain expectations and required practices from its members (e.g. strict rules and regulations, safety culture, and so on), Hanan is indirectly indicating the existence of a discourse of Loyalty which she is contesting and resisting.

How do these discourses (Masculinisation, Expertise, Seniority, and Loyalty) interact and compete to position Hanan and shape her leadership language? This will be discussed next.

2.2.2.5. Interacting and Competing Discourses

In the previous sections, I have discussed the discourses that have emerged in Hanan's context through the data analysis process. These discourses interact at times and compete at others to shape the language choices of Hanan and others in this CofP.

To start with, the Discourse of Masculinisation privileges male employees in general and traditionally masculine language practices in particular. Therefore, Hanan is positioned less powerfully as a female. Perhaps, to lessen the limitation imposed by this discourse, and in order to be recognised and appreciated, Hanan utilises forms of traditionally masculine language (especially in critical moments such as possibility of missing deadlines or delay in accomplishing tasks)

In contrast, the discourse of Seniority appears to privilege Hanan since she is one of the most senior female employees in Bahrainco and has experienced growth and changes in the company over twenty years.

The discourse of Expertise also privileges Hanan as she has handled major projects in the Engineering departments over the years. I have already established in the previous sections that both expertise and seniority are specially valued and appreciated in Bahrainco. Employees who have been members of Bahrainco for considerable time appear to acquire special privilege

and power. When the empowering discourses of Seniority and Expertise compete with the discourse of Masculinisation, Hanan, although enabled and empowered, shifts to conventionally masculine language. For example, in the shadowing incident in section 2.2.2.1, Hanan uses banter and teasing when interacting with General Managers outside the company formal hierarchy.

However, at other times, discourse of Masculinisation overpowers discourses of Seniority and Expertise which privilege Hanan. It is evident in the data that discourse of Masculinisation affects Hanan tremendously as it serves to deny her promotions and opportunities. In the interview in extract (6), Hanan recounts her disappointment at the lack of recognition from the management despite her long experience and expertise, only to find out that her gender is holding her back in this male-dominated CofP: *'one of the Western he brought that to me (.) he said I mean err (.) he spoke to all those Bahrainis who are higher than him (0.1) and he said er (0.1) they don't er because you you are a female (.) they don't (0.1) I mean they put some (0.1) (cap) on your er (0.1) advancement'* (lines 164-167).

Finally, Loyalty is another working discourse in Bahrainco where core members are expected to show devotion and appreciation to the company, its management and unique culture. Therefore, the discourse of Loyalty is strongly tied to the discourse of Seniority in Bahrainco. However, Hanan resists the former (the pressure to *'be like Bahrainco people'*) and embraces the latter (her seniority and long years of experience in Bahrainco).

3. Conclusion

Hanan is one of only two senior women in the Engineering department in Bahrainco. Through my analysis, I have found that she is highly task-oriented, and for that she uses a wide repertoire of traditionally feminine and traditionally masculine leadership and linguistic strategies. When and why she shifts between such strategies requires deeper analysis into the interplay of the working discourses in the context. From a discourse theory perspective, Hanan's positioning is a complex one.

On the one hand, Hanan enjoys great amount of power maintained by the discourses of Seniority and Expertise, both highly significant in Bahrainco. On the other hand, she is constantly being positioned powerlessly by the discourse of Masculinisation. For that, she tends to employ traditionally masculine leadership language with her team members especially in critical situations as a way to survive and be recognised in such a male- dominated CofP. Despite all that, after over twenty years in the company and a long experience in leading key projects in the department, Hanan is still denied the promotion she deserves.

I believe the lack of official recognition (promotion) by the management has affected her attitude and sense of belonging and devotion to the company. Perhaps this lack of fairness and the persistent 'glass ceiling' is what makes her distinguish herself from the rest of the employees and resist the dominant discourse of Loyalty.

Chapter Five

Fatima's Case Study

I. Introduction

My third and last case study of female leadership language was conducted on Fatima. This chapter is structured to answer my inquiries and research questions about Fatima's leadership language and the discourses that shape her linguistic practices. I start the chapter with an introduction about Fatima's case and a brief description of the context. This is followed by the presentation of two sets of data in section II.a: the enactment of leadership (meeting data) and perception of leadership (interview data). Data extracts are further discussed in the connotative analysis in section II.b for the purpose of deducing Fatima's leadership language (section II.b.i) and the interplay of discourses in the context (section II.b.ii). Each discourse will be introduced in a separate section followed by a final section on what I perceive to be an overarching discourse of Family. Finally, the conclusion in section III will summarise the significant and major findings in Fatima's case.

II. Fatima's Case Study

Fatima is one of three women superintendents in the HR department in Bahrainco. Similar to the other two case studies, I have attempted to investigate various aspects of Fatima's leadership language as well as the dominant discourses in the HR CofP and their role in positioning Fatima as a leader and shaping her leadership language.

In the next section I will present data extracts from both the meeting and interviews; each extract has its own denotative analysis. Later, in the connotative analysis, I will discuss further implications of all the data extracts.

a. Denotative Analysis

In this section, I present detailed analysis of the data I gathered through various resources. The first part consists of extracts from the meeting data where Fatima enacts leadership.

Perceptions of Fatima's leadership language are revealed in the second part which consists of extracts from interview data with Fatima, Huda and Salem.

i. Enactment of Leadership: Meeting Data

As I explain in the Methodology chapter (section 3.2.3), this is an informal meeting between Fatima and her subordinates in her office in the HR department. She is leaving on a business trip and she had called in a quick meeting to discuss with her staff some important issues and inform them of the latest changes. The participants are of mixed gender (three females and four males). In contrast to the two case studies, there are no intercultural elements in this meeting. All participants are Bahrainis and the meeting takes place in Arabic with few instances of code-switching to English. Fatima often uses traditional Arabic expressions (e.g. inshallah, mashallah, etc.); therefore, I will be providing a glossary of such expressions in the footnotes.

Extract (1)

Fatima is laying out the agenda of the meeting by moving quickly through key topics. In the extract below, she is informing her subordinates of updates about the new Help Centre and that Hussein (the general manager of HR) has chosen Ahmed to fill the receptionist post:

Key: F= Fatima, S=Salem (M)

F I mean this is what has been happening in the department apart from that something called the Help Centre will be started (.) the one that will be located here (.) of course that was a request from the Management (.) its role (.) of course (.) is helping employees from wherever (.) er giving help through the phone (.) inquiring (.) whatever (.) and of

course this time they will start with er the rotation (.) so we will start inshallah⁸⁸ with Ahmed (.) of course Hussein decided to choose Ahmed because he felt that he was er (.) presentable (.) knows how to manage knows how to talk knows that (.) of course they want this to workout

(-----)

F of course the opening will be on the 3rd of October (.) the CE⁸⁹ might attend the opening (.) of course there will be chocolate and whatnot and all of these things (.) they will make PR⁹⁰ for it (.) and there will be picture taking [and all that

S [£what's most important in this↑ Ahmed [hehehe

F [£ the most important thing is Ahmed's pictures (.) he comes out in all the pictures (.) all the eyes are on him he is the one sitting there (.) of course there is the number of (.) there is the announcement there is phone er there is the phone number and there is er (.) the email address (.) and from your part also try to help (.) of course Hussein doesn't expect (.) and nobody expects that there will be crowds in there (.) I mean we don't want anybody coming in to see you all surrounding brother Ahmed chatting asking about how he is doing ha how are you Ahmed ↑anybody came to you ↑ and that so maybe people will come and see the crowd and think that these are people seeking er (.) also service (.) so they will be like (.) he is always busy (.) not free for us (.) he is chatting (.) he is not here (.) he is not around (.)

(-----)

⁸⁸God willing

⁸⁹Chief Executive

⁹⁰Publicity; small party organised by public relation services

F and the other thing that Hussein likes to get through (.) is that this job is not er (.) humiliating (.) or degrading (.) because Hussein knew that some people here were upset oh we don't want to do this job (.) I mean I personally (.) for me I don't see it offensive it is a decent job just like any other job (.) I mean er (.) it is not a reception job (.) and even the reception job I don't see anything wrong with it (.) I mean someone sitting in a decent office receiving er receiving phone calls I don't see anything wrong with it (.) £which reminds me of the Minister of Labour God grant him with mercy Dr Nabeel Al Marhoon (.) when he went to the restaurant of er (.) fast food (.) and he wore their uniform and he worked (.) I mean he wanted to encourage the Saudi youth to try on different jobs (.) I mean it's true he did it for two hours (.) but there was the message for people that there is nothing it's a decent job in Bahrain we have Alhamdulillah⁹¹ (.) people are exposed and they know (.) and they do it

Denotative Analysis:

Fatima's transition between topics is unexpectedly smooth and quick (with no pauses). In this turn, she starts by meta-linguistically stating that she will move into the new topic of the 'Help Centre' using language that minimises and downplays the importance of the new event '*something called the Help Centre will be started*' (lines 1-2). Later on, she provides further information about the location and specific purpose of the new centre and the person chosen to fill the post (Ahmed). She states three times that the management has made all the decisions and not herself: '*of course that was a request from the Management*' '*of course Hussein decided to choose Ahmed*' '*of course they want this to workout*' (lines 3, 6 and 7 respectively). She also takes this opportunity to endow Ahmed with compliments regarding his popularity and social skills by using the third person pronoun to talk about Ahmed in his presence. Fatima avoids taking agency of both the decision and the compliments: '*of course Hussein decided to choose*

⁹¹Praise to God

Ahmed because he felt that he was er (.) presentable (.) knows how to manage knows how to talk knows that' (lines 6-7).

After diverging from the topic for a while, Fatima goes back to add more details about the opening of the centre. To encourage her staff members to attend the ceremony, Fatima states that the event is so highly anticipated that even the CEO will attend; she adds with humorous tone that there will be chocolates and picture taking (lines 11-12). Salem, recognising the humour, interrupts Fatima to issue a humorous comment about Ahmed (in line with her previous compliments): '*£what's most important in this Ahmed hehehe*', to which she responds to and builds on, adding more emphasis on Ahmed's special status: '*£ the most important thing is Ahmed's pictures...*' (lines 13-16).

Just as smoothly as Fatima shifts between topics, she alternates between humour and serious talk. Right after she issues her humour, she shifts back to the Help Centre updates and speculations, stressing again the general manager's involvement in this issue: '*of course Hussein doesn't expect...*' (line 18-19). Another sudden shift occurs towards a more formalised language when Fatima indirectly issues a request for everyone to avoid gathering around and chatting with Ahmed. For that, she emphasises the collective effort: '*and from your part also*' to mitigate her imperative: '*try to help*', uses the inclusive '*we*' to align herself with higher management as well as the highly formal lexis '*brother*' to refer respectfully to Ahmed: '*I mean we don't want anybody coming in to see you all surrounding brother Ahmed chatting*', and finally impersonates Ahmed and others while narrating possible scenarios of what could happen if they don't take her advice (lines 19-24).

Fatima draws the topic to an end by acknowledging the unpopularity of the Help Centre project and the stigma that comes with such a job. She does this indirectly by reporting the general manager's opinions and acting like his delegate with the rest of the team: '*a:nd the other thing*

that Hussein likes to er get through (.) is that this job is not er (.) humiliating ...' (lines 26-27). To make an argument, after reporting the general manager's opinion, Fatima proceeds to share her opinion in regard to the new post and how it doesn't degrade the person through repeatedly using counter arguments such as '*I don't see it offensive*' '*I don't see anything wrong with it*' and positively evaluative adjective calling it a '*decent job*' in a '*decent office*' (lines 301-31)

To support her argument, Fatima uses other linguistic strategies that of storytelling mixed with a humorous tone. She narrates an incident where an influential Saudi Minister worked in a fast food restaurant for two hours to set an example for the Saudi youth (lines 32-35). The storytelling has an obvious mentoring tone, especially as she relates back to the Help centre post again using the lexis '*decent*' and complimenting the people of Bahrain in comparison to the Saudis. Fatima repeatedly and consistently uses compliments to encourage others and make it sound like she is stating the obvious (lines 35-37)

Extract (2)

This extract takes place after few topics have been discussed in the meeting agenda. Fatima is informing her team members of the new circular coming out regarding time keeping. In Bahrainco, employees normally come at 7 and leave at 3.30, but this is evidently changing. Fatima initiates the topic by narrating an incident that occurs every time her kids (with the driver) pick her up from work. This extract is very long, therefore I divide it into parts: A and B.

Key: F= Fatima, S= Salem, SH= Shareef (M)

Part A

F the other thing God protect you they want (.) what do they also want↑ (0.2) time keeping (.) this is turning into a big problem now in the company (.) the er management is not at all happy with the (.) for example at noon time (.) the congregation that takes place (0.1)

I mean my kids used to pick me up (.) my car was in the garage (.) they leave school and come with the driver here to pick me up and they tell me mum why is everybody looking up (.)

[(Everybody laughs)]

F [£they are looking at the clock (.) and it is not visible (.) and they tell you all of a sudden (.) all of them leave (.) he says all of them start running outside (.) if the clock changes (.) they all stare at the clock (.) the moment it turns three thirty (.) everybody rushes out quickly (.) he doesn't know what's going on (.) it's just that they all stare at the clock and then all of a sudden they all escape (.) so they tell you this give a really bad image (.) not just our Bahraini brothers (.) even expats (.) who are supposed to be experts (.) those who are in office are supposed to- so it will come out (.) er circular (.) and er this thing will be er (.) taken seriously (0.1) I mean every GM (.) he will forward this memo to his employees (.) every manager is responsible (.) every superintendent is responsible I mean for example if tomorrow Badria decided while she's home she called and said in fact Fatima I have an appointment ...

20 lines later

F so this is not going to be my responsibility (.) I will make justification for the person who has justification (.) the one who proves to me that he has justification (.) because I don't want to embarrass myself (.) and I don't want the employee to embarrass himself (.) so: er (.) a circular will come out soon supposedly in October (.) but I am telling you from now (.) anyone who has anything (.) it's preferable (.) that he has justification (.) to avoid embarrassment (.) so that I don't embarrass myself and you don't embarrass yourself (.) it's because I understand that this thing is give and take (.) I mean sometimes for example people run late (.) sometimes they need (.) you see them stay late at work to

finish up things (.) I am of the flexible type (.) I will be flexible give and take (.) but at the same time (.) not to the extent that we take it for granted ok↑

Part B

F so we will see in October inshallah when this circular comes out (.) because Hussein says I mean (.) they are very very serious about it (.) they tell you it's totally (.) not right they are really not happy about it (.) and now they are ignoring it because (---) (.) leaving work before time (.) staying back late at work (.) and those who stay late maybe even me because I come late I know that I (.) will stay back late (.) maybe somebody will say no you can't go about this way (.) come at seven and leave at three thirty (.) maybe I feel that no I will not be done by three thirty (.) meetings here and there (.) so does the management- Hussein said this will be applicable to all

S Fatima are you talking about HR↑ [or the co- (.) the company

F [all (.) that's why one memo will come out (.) and it will be signed by every GM for (.) his division (.) it will be in the same memo (.) and every one every GM will be held responsible by the Chief Executive for his employees (0.1) did you want to say something Shareef↑

((Shareef made an attempt to speak earlier but he was not given the floor; during the whole meeting he is standing, looking reserved and perhaps upset))

SH sometimes I leave work (0.1) to the bank (0.1) you know (.) run errands (0.1) for Hussein I mean (0.1) sometimes I run late (.) around half an hour or something (.) maybe more (0.1) is this is this going to be problematic↑

F this we will talk about when it happens (.) maybe Hussein himself changes his mind and doesn't do it (.) maybe he does it himself (.) but for example some people leave without

notification (.) they just disappear (.) and then you discover that they have been gone for hours (.) I mean this is an indication they tell you that this person doesn't have work to do (.) that he left and nobody noticed (.) or maybe somebody has loads of work (.) and busy (.) and he left without telling anyone employees come ask about him (.) so: it's better than each person tells the other (.) that you guys say I have some errand to run (.) and will come back (.) but we say oh this person is not here she said she had to go somewhere and come back (-----) so inshallah- I don't have a problem with my people here to be frank (.) but maybe you hear about certain individuals in other sections (.) so you you were informed (.) and you know what's going on (.) so we haven't got many issues frankly

Denotative Analysis:

Part A

In line with her 'presumed' role as the management's delegate and messenger in the HR department, Fatima starts the new topic of discussion with a rhetorical question: '*they want (.) what do they also want*' (line 38), probably to give herself time to look through the list in her note book (there is no written meeting agenda, instead Fatima is referring back and forth to her notebook). She announces the topic '*time keeping*' followed by an evaluative statement about the importance of the issue in order to attract her subordinates' attention: '*this is turning into a big problem now in the company*'(line 39). Another strategy to draw the attention to the topic is to refer to higher management's huge discontent with the situation of time keeping in the company (lines 39-40). The third strategy to maintain this attention is to draw on personal anecdotes in relation to this problem. The unexpected turn to narrating a personal incident involving Fatima's kids as an evidence of the gravity of the problem evokes humour (especially that while she gives details about her kids, her car, their school, she keeps it vague so that no

one expects what she is going to say next and how she is going to utilise this story to make her point) (lines 40-43).

After gaining the desired response (laughter from everyone), Fatima continues her anecdote with the same humorous tone. She narrates in extensive and repetitive details the reaction her kids have when they pick her up from work every day (lines 45-50). The problem being, company employees (Bahrainis, expats, etc.) rush to the gate at exactly three thirty. She uses the lexis 'escape' to give a mental picture of the situation. There is a clear condemnation in Fatima's tone and later on she directly evaluates the situation using an intensifier 'really' and an evaluative adjective 'bad'. However, even then she avoids taking agency of the judgment by using a vague agent: 'so they tell you this gives a really bad image'(line 49)(who are they? her kids? Management? Others?)Also, she resorts to generalisation and redirecting the blame to expats: 'not just our Bahraini brothers (.) even expats ...' (line 50). Fatima uses the lexis 'brothers' to show formality and respect; it may also has the overall purpose of lessening the effect of the criticism.

The humorous anecdote serves as an introduction to the actual news Fatima has been meaning to announce to her subordinates, which is that there is a new circular coming out concerning time keeping. The announcement is very quick and preceded by 'it will come out', and followed by an agentless passive and an evaluative adverb 'this thing will be er (.) taken seriously'(lines 51-52).Another strategy to lessen the effect of the news on the subordinates is to diffuse the responsibility to the various company hierarchical ranks. This circular will apply to everyone, including GMs and superintendents (such as herself) (lines 52-53). To further illustrate her point, Fatima proceeds for few minutes with narrating possible scenarios to demonstrate how she would be held accountable for their mistakes.

20 lines later

Fatima ends her various hypothetical scenarios with a less friendly tone issuing a hedged warning indicating that if they don't take this issue seriously, then she will take out her responsibility and they will have to suffer the consequences (lines 57-58). She later softens the warning by offering to support them if they abide by the rules. Her use of the following conditional clause serves as a hedged request and an attempt to reflect a certain image about herself, that of professionalism and fairness: *'I will make justification for the person who has justification (.) the one who proves to me that he has justification'*. Perhaps Fatima feels obliged to give further justification for her request; therefore, she appeals to her face needs as well as their face needs, and that she is doing this not just for herself, but for them: *'I don't want to embarrass myself (.) and I don't want the employee to embarrass himself'* (lines 59).

Further justification follows the rather serious tone Fatima acquired earlier as she strives to present other aspects of herself as understanding, flexible and helpful. She describes and categorises her leadership practices: *'I am of the flexible type'*, and she further explains what flexible means: *'I will be flexible give and take'* meaning that she is willing to listen to them and consider their reasons, but she goes back to the serious tone with a hidden warning: *'but at the same time (.) not to the extent that we take it for granted (.) ok↑'* (lines 65-66).

Part B

In the next part of this extract, Fatima repeatedly uses the same language techniques to attract her team members' attention, have them understand the gravity of the situation and finally request them to abide by the new rules. Her linguistic strategies again is vague and uncertain *'so we will see in October Inshallah when this circular comes out'*, referring to the management's agency and involvement: *'Hussein says ...'* (lines 67-69), as well as narrating

hypothetical scenarios and anecdotes (lines 70-74), and finally sharing the responsibility with her team members: *'Hussein said this will be applicable to all'*.

During Fatima's long speech, Shareef (an older employee with a low status job), has made several unsuccessful attempts to interrupt Fatima. When she finally reaches the end of her talk, Salem takes the chance to ask a question. This time he doesn't change the topic or make a humorous comment, but he asks a rather obvious question: he enquires whether this new law is applicable to the whole company or only the HR department (line 75). This question must be frustrating to Fatima because she has just said few seconds earlier: *'Hussein said this will be applicable to all'* (line 74). Without showing any sign of frustration, Fatima answers his question adding more detailed information about the memo (e.g. who will sign it and distribute it to employees, and so on; lines 76-78). Then, conscious of Shareef's earlier attempt to participate, she offers him the floor (line 79).

When given the floor, Shareef, rather contemptuously, protests that he does have to leave work sometimes to run errands, not for himself, but for the manager. He continues his complaint saying that these errands take time; he expresses that in a hedged manner using mitigating adverbials such as *'sometimes'* *'around'* *'or something'* *'maybe'* (lines 82-84).

Confronted with such an argument, Fatima issues a vague statement that this issue will be decided upon later: *'this we will talk about when it happens'* (line 85). As usual, she gives possible hypothetical scenarios to maintain the vagueness and avoid making any statements that could be held against her in the future, especially in this case regarding her superior: *'maybe Hussein himself changes mind...'* (lines 85-86).

Having issued the indirect criticism about the manager, she goes back to contradict herself and say that what's important is, not to stop the custom of running errands in company's time, but to notify somebody when they leave (lines 86-87). This modified version of the new law (you could

leave but let us know first) is issued possibly to soften the criticism. She follows it by the usual scenarios and impersonation of others in order to demonstrate how they should apply this new rule. Finally, she issues an indirect request for them to make sure they officially and formally notify her before leaving. For this, she uses the comparative '*so: it's better than each person tells the other...*' (lines 90-91).

Towards the end of the extract, Fatima compliments everyone indirectly by denying having any problems with her staff members in that regard: '*so inshallah- I don't have a problem with my people here to be frank...*' (lines 93-95). She also ends this topic by stating that the purpose of her talk was not to accuse anyone but merely to share information with them: '*so you you were informed (.) and you know what's going on*'.

Extract (3)

This extract takes place after a long discussion about Company X (a consultancy firm). Fatima has just shared information and speculations about this company's role in changing the structure of Bahrainco. The excerpt begins with Fatima offering the floor to others to ask further questions:

Key: F=Fatima, S= Salem

F what's more↑ anything else↑

S I have something to say (.) but maybe it has nothing to do with er what you have been saying (.) now (.) as you know Sana will be leaving end of this year (0.1) are you going to get someone to fill her position or er (.) I will be on my own↑ (0.1) and if it's going to be just me (.) ok I don't have a problem with the load (.) what if I am taking a vacation↑ (0.1) for a month for example (0.1) no one can handle the

section (.) especially that I go to work sites (0.2)

F your situation is critical (.) also your section is in a critical position (.) your section is one of those that Company X has a strong view about

S [heheh

F [so: (.) £I can't tell you anything now because (.) er the management might not agree with their view of the section (.) I mean even before (.) and this happened few times that suggestions come up that why don't you give this section to (.) for example instead of you doing it give it to another company to handle it

S what about us↑

F and you: (.) we have you rotate

((Fatima and several people laugh))

F £we can't let you off

S rotation how↑

F no no (.) this is just me [(--)

S [as an HR officer ok (.) but for example if they say as [an engineer

F [no no (.) no actually there's a possibility they would say (.) you HR you should discharge some people (.) so: er (.) to be frank I have no clue (.) till now I haven't

been informed about that (.) (---) the general vision of Company X but er I now er
there is an emphasis on decreasing the staff in HR (.) even decreasing the number
of the superintendents (.) decreasing the number of the sections

S I mean er (.) let's say next year (.) Sana is not here (.) in this case I can't take a
vacation

F we don't know what's going to happen maybe Subhan Allah⁹² they
might say Salem ha (.) we will give Sana an extension (.) we make use of her
since she (----) we will have her stay (.) err I mean (.) I don't I don't know frankly
because these things are not discussed (--)(.) so certainly they have something in
mind (.) but till now it has not been passed on to us (0.1) I mean Sana is going (.) her
leaving arrangements are going on (.) but er I am sure that they are aware of it (.)
Hussain knows (.) but I can share this concern

Denotative Analysis:

In the extract above, Fatima is listening to one of the younger subordinates' (Salem) complaints about the possible increase in his work load when his direct superior (Sana) retires soon. It begins with Fatima asking if anyone has anything to share, to which Salem responds that he has concerns and that he is going to change the subject (lines 97-103). His complaints consist of series of rhetorical questions and statements about his 'allegedly obvious' problematic situation. There is a sense of dependency in his tone and choice of words (e.g. '*I will be on my*

⁹²Glory to God

own↑' *'if it's going to be just me'*) as if to provoke sympathy from Fatima and others. Further, in a way of compromising, he states that he is not complaining about work load, he is only concerned about not having a substitute in case he needed to take a vacation, etc.

In her next turn, Fatima responds to Salem's complaints with a vague but very sympathetic answer right before delivering bad news: *'your section is one of those that Company X has a strong view about'* (lines 104-105). This is an idiomatic expression in Arabic that indicates bad news. This use of inappropriate register to respond to a complaint invokes humour, to which Salem responds with a 'nervous' laugh perhaps to hide feelings of disappointment (line 106).

With a humorous tone, Fatima follows up Salem's laugh with further uncertainty and indefinite answers, possibly to lessen the effect of her previous utterance. She starts by narrating possible scenarios that might (or might not) take place: *'the management might not agree with their view of the section'*, and recalling previous times when Bahrainco didn't follow Company X's advice (lines 107-110).

Keeping with the same complaining (and sense of dependency) tone, Salem's concerns seem to grow bigger as he asks Fatima: *'what about us↑'* (line 111). His use of inclusive 'us' here indicates that this change will reflect badly on almost everyone and Salem is acting like an advocate of them all.

Fatima's response *'and you: (.) we have you rotate'* has a humorous effect as she and everyone else (except Salem) responds with a laugh (lines 112-113). Rotation seems to be dis-preferable in this CofP. Fatima's humour consists of employing shock elements and giving unexpected responses. She further builds on the humour saying that rotation is better than laying him off (line 114). While everybody finds it amusing, Salem doesn't. Instead he responds back with serious questions showing greater concerns over his job *'rotation how↑' 'as HR officer ok (.) but for example if they say as engineer'* (lines 115, 117-118 respectively). Whether he has missed

((So many people laughing and commenting at the same time))

F I mean er with you I worked with you guys Alhamdolillah⁹⁵ you didn't give me hard time
(.) I haven't encountered problems with you (.) err and I would like to continue this way I
mean I inherited you from Khaled Abdualh (.) Khaled Abdualah used to say my section
is the best section

((Some people are laughing and others smiling—in response to the compliment))

F so I mean I didn't have any difficulties with you to be frank (.) Ahmed I must say (.) that I
am thankful to Ahmed because I gave him so so much work and he backed me up me (.)
and I told Hussein frankly Ahmed worked hard (.) really I mean you were a big support(.)
you did good

A thank you

F and I expect that you will all help him in the Centre (.) don't go bother him with questions
(.) give him hard time↑

40 lines later

F maybe (0.1) so: (.) good luck I think you are going to do a good job

A inshallah

((Two others say inshallah))

F you will (0.1) and thank you guys (.) and I will see you inshallah

((Everyone says inshallah))

⁹⁴Oh

⁹⁵ Praise to God

B [you go and come back safe inshallah

F [do you want me to get you anything from Japan↑ I myself don't know what's in there

((Laughter from some))

F I will get you mini Japanese

((Laughter from some))

((The social talk goes on and on about food and other things in her trip until the meeting ending with conventional farewell))

Denotative Analysis:

The end of the meeting takes an emotional turn as Fatima, after deploying humour about the Japanese people to lessen the emotional effect of the farewell, uses language which suggests that she is the protector and guardian of her team members: '*I know you won't be lost without me*' (line 135). The phrase was immediately picked up and echoed in the positive by Badria, who is one of the older female employees.

In the next turn, Fatima responds back with an utterance that evokes laughter '*afa on you*'. This is a colloquial expression in Bahraini Arabic has the meaning of 'oh' or 'oh no don't say that' in this context, and I believe that the inappropriate register which also carries with it an element of shock is what makes it amusing.

The following turns for Fatima mainly consist of compliments and expressions of gratitude to her subordinates: e.g. '*you didn't give me hard time ...*' (lines 140-141). She goes on to compliment Ahmed using both the third person '*Ahmed I must say (.) that I am thankful to Ahmed because ...*', also directly using the second person '*good luck I think you are going to do a good job*',

'really I mean you were a big support(.) you did good' and several evaluative adjectives and phrases (lines 145-148).

Later on, Fatima issues a mitigated request followed by an imperative: *'and I expect that you will all help him in the centre (.) don't go ask him (.) give him hard time'* (lines 150-151). And towards the very end (40 lines later), she asks her staff if they want anything from Japan (lines 159-160).

ii. Perceptions of Leadership: Interview Data

In this section, I present denotative analysis of selective extracts from interviews with Fatima, Huda (young female subordinate), and Salem (young male subordinate)⁹⁶. As I explain in the Methodology chapter (section 3.2.3), my interview with Fatima was informal, non-structured, and took almost three hours. The following are selected extracts.

Interview with Fatima

Extract (5):

Below, Fatima is answering my question about her leadership practices:

HA how would you describe your leadership with your team members↑

F well you should ask them

HA £yeah I will ask them (.) I will ask them but I want to know what you think of your own style (.) I mean what is your usual↑

F I try to be fair

HA what do [you exactly mean ↑

⁹⁶ For interview questions see Appendices, section 2.

F [same treatment to all

HA yeah but are you **usually** direct er

F ((long answer which is not relevant to the question))

HA do you focus on more on task I mean getting the work done or more on communication and having a team and er (.) what's your main goal usually ↑

F task has to be done (.) but it has to be done through communication too (.) I mean I have to follow up with them (.) and ask about what happened what they did and so on we have to (.) talk about it

Denotative Analysis:

When I ask Fatima about her leadership practices, she hesitates to answer the question: '*well you should ask them*' (line 166). When pressed further, she gives an answer that is of relational ends and human fairness as oppose to transactional ones: '*I try to befair...same treatment to all*' (lines 169, 171 respectively).

Evidently, when asked about her leadership in general, Fatima's answers are vague and centres on her subordinates' perceptions and feelings. Therefore, I resolve to asking more specific questions about the importance of accomplishing tasks and how she goes about doing that, to which she responds: '*task has to be done (.) but it has to be done through communication too*'(lines 176-177). She further explains what comprises '*communication*' using the filler '*I mean*' and listing a number of things that she 'has to do' such as following up, knowing all the details of work progress, and finally 'talking' about the task (lines 177-178). Fatima first uses the first personal singular: '*I have to follow up ...*' then shifts to the inclusive pronoun '*we have to (.) talk about it*' to show that it's a collaborative work.

Extract (6):

Below, Fatima answers my question about use of direct strategies with her subordinates:

F I tried if I want to be that way (.) that I don't slap the person with the catastrophe (.) I take it slowly with him (.) err it's not that you are beating around the bushes or anything but there is a little bit of indirectness to it

Denotative Analysis:

In this extract, Fatima acknowledges her use of indirect strategies: '*beating around the bushes*' and '*a little bit of indirectness*' especially when delivering bad news: '*catastrophe*'. This, in order to account for her subordinates' feelings: '*I don't slap the person with the catastrophe (.) I take it slowly with him*' (line 179-180). Fatima often uses idiomatic language and highly descriptive lexis that give an exaggerated mental image (e.g. slap, catastrophe, etc.).

Extract (7)

Fatima is answering my question about decision making and disagreeing with superiors:

F this happens sometimes I I see (.) something different than what they see and we argue (0.1) you see the other person for example of course the decision is his (.) and err he is angry because (.) you feel he wants to do what he wants but at the same time (.) if you are against it (.) and he is thinking about what you are saying (.) sometimes I (-) if I try and try I say (.) that's it it's up to you you are going to make the decision it's your decision

Denotative Analysis:

Fatima talks about disagreeing and arguing with her superiors. According to Fatima, when disagreement takes place between her and her superiors, she would express her opinion, but she would not insist on it. Instead, she would distance herself from decision making: *'of course the decision is his'* and *'I say (.) that's it it's up to you you are going to make the decision it's your decision'* (lines 183, 186-187 respectively).

According to Fatima's analysis, while her superior has the authority to make the final decisions, he is often has an internal conflict, because he still seeks her approval and consensus: *'he is angry because ... if you are against it (.) and he is thinking about what you are saying'* (lines 184-185).

Extract (8)

Towards the end of the interview, Fatima talks about having rejected a managerial position at Bahrainco⁹⁷:

F I will tell you something (.) I (.) I was contacted (.) I was offered to take a managerial position (---) ok↑ and I told them no (-----) I I want (.) I want to see my kids grow (-----) (-----) although so many people in my family were blaming me (.) it's ok take the position and then you will retire in few years and that kind of talk (.) I tell them I don't want to take up a job and I can't perform it the way I want to (.) this job being a manager in Bahrainco requires you to stay back late (.) and you take more time (.) it's true my kids are grown-ups now (.) they say your kids are grown-ups they don't need you now (.) I say on the contrary (.) they grew up but they still need me (.) I mean I want to I hang out with them (.) I talk to them (.) I am still going to continue to be part of their lives (.) I want

⁹⁷ There is no specific question which prompted this response. As I explained from the Methodology chapter (section 3.2.3), in this interview, Fatima would often change the topic and drift into personal and non-related matters.

to work (.) I want to get a good salary (.) I want to get er my own satisfaction (0.1) but at the same time (.) I want to enjoy my life (.) I want to have time to go to the movies with my husband (.) stay at home even if I just sit down and watch TV (.) that will relax me

Denotative Analysis:

In this extract, Fatima claims having turned down a managerial position for the sake of her kids. She starts with the meta-discourse phrase: *'I will tell you something'* to draw my attention to the importance and perhaps confidentiality of the matter. Then she uses the agentless passive *'I was contacted (.) I was offered...'* (line 188) to refer to personnel from higher management; I think the vagueness serves as an indication of the confidentiality/privacy/secretcy of the matter.

Later, Fatima uses the first person pronoun to indicate her rejection of the offer: *'I told them no'* (line 189). She explains later that the main reason is her desire to be have enough time to spend with her family: *'I want to see my kids grow', 'I want to I hang out with them (.) I talk to them (.) I am still going to continue to be part of their lives', 'I want to have time to go to the movies with my husband ...'*(lines 189, 196 and 198-199 respectively).

Also, Fatima expresses her defiance to her family, friends and society's norms by turning down the job everyone dreams of in Bahrainco for the sake of being a 'good' mother who is always there for her kids and a part of their lives (lines 190-191) . As it is typical of Fatima's language, she builds the argument by impersonating others and voicing her and their views (lines 190-195).

Fatima apparently distinguishes between her individual self (personal satisfaction) and collective self (being a mother and a wife) (see chapter one, section 3.1.2). She talks about having a good career as a partial success that has to do with her personal satisfaction rather than enjoying life: *'I want to work (.) I want to get a good salary (.) I want to get er my own satisfaction'* (line197).

She associates success for herself as a 'woman' with being a 'good mother', a 'good wife' and enjoying life: *'but at the same time (.) I want to enjoy my life...'* (lines 197-199).

Extract (9):

Fatima is talking about her job in the HR department in Bahrainco:

F when I graduated I didn't learn much I learned all by experience here (.) I mean I took my job from (-) and I spent years doing salaries (.) I was responsible for doing the salaries to all the employees of the company Haleema (.) the employees' offers I used to do them (.) and I used to make mistakes with the minimum knowledge I had (.) I mean er (.) but (.) I was not taught that in University I picked it up here

Denotative Analysis:

This is part of a longer extract in which Fatima extensively describes her working experience and her early working days in Bahrainco. She credits Bahrainco for all her knowledge in the HR: *'I learned all by experience here', 'I was not taught that in University I picked it up here'* (lines 200 and 204 respectively). According to Fatima, she started it out at the bottom of the professional ladder doing salaries (lines 201-202). She uses self-deprecatory language to highlight her lack of knowledge: *'I used to make mistakes with the minimum knowledge I had'* (line 203).

Interview with Huda⁹⁸

Extract (10)

The three selected extracts below highlight Huda's perception of Fatima's leadership language:

Part A

H communication to her is very important I mean we (.) regularly (.) I mean copy her in all emails (.) we update her on a daily basis about what we do in the section (.) she's aware of everything (.) lots of people call her and ask her for an update (.) so she would like to be (.) informed

Part B

H she gives us a lot of power I mean she (.) leaves us to decide (.) she would say I recommend that you do this and this and that↑ but at the end it's your decision ...she won't say ok you have to go I am forcing you (.) no (.) she'll give you leverage and (.) give you authority to make your own decisions

Part C

H I would say that she gives you constructive criticism (.) she says ok I understand that (.) you couldn't do this at that time but in the future please make sure that do this and this and that (.) I mean she would give you advice (.) she isn't gonna yell at you and say oh you didn't do this↑ (.) she's gonna tell you ok I mean you didn't do it this it's ok (.) next time please make sure that you for example (.) whenever you start a project or something (.) you finish it by the date required not a day later (.) nothing er (.) you know what I mean↑ she would just give you (.) constructive feedback for the next time

⁹⁸In contrary to the other two interviews, this interview took place in English; therefore, the selected extracts are Huda's own words and not translated.

Denotative Analysis:

In part A, Huda claims that Fatima values proper communication in the process of achieving transactional tasks; she likes to be in the picture and be informed of all the details (lines 205-208). Huda refers to Fatima as a leader in power, one who controls tasks progress, communication process and mediates between various parties: '*lots of people call her and ask her for an update*' (line 207)

In part B, Huda emphasises Fatima's use of relational strategies and share of power: '*she gives us a lot of power*' (line 209). When it comes to decision making, Huda claims, Fatima allows them the liberty to make their own decisions and leaves them the choice to do what they see right (lines 209-2012).

In part C, Huda claims that Fatima deals with problematic situations and subordinates' mistakes in a forgiving yet constructive manner (lines 212-215). To further explain Fatima's use of indirect language to give constructive feedback, Huda uses reported speech and impersonates Fatima: '*she isn't gonna yell at you and say oh you didn't do this↑...*' (lines 215-218). Also, according to Huda, Fatima sets realistic transactional goals and flexible deadlines taking in consideration her subordinates' capacities and work conditions (lines 216-218).

Interview with Salem

Extract (11)

The three selected extracts below highlight Salem's perception of Fatima's leadership language⁹⁹:

Part A

⁹⁹In my interview with Salem, I needed to explain my interview questions in detail and use various prompting strategies because his answers are always short.

HA ok (.) alright (.) does she usually er↑ in a meeting for example (.) does she usually mainly focus on (.) getting the work done and setting goals and so on or more of the (.) you know maintaining relationship er I mean

S it's like you just saw now

HA hehe

S it would be serious at the start but later (.) it would be (.) friendly

HA okay (.) alright (.) does she share information with you or do you feel she holds er↑

S Fatima↑ hehe she shares everything hehehe

Part B

HA does she usually hold the floor↑ most of the time like what I just saw in the meeting↑

S errr (----) it depends er on the type of the meeting I mean (.) for example this meeting was (.) she just wanted to send (.) a message (.) there is no discussion or something (.) yeah (.) but usually there isn't any (.) always sending information in the er meetings

Part C

S if there was something wrong (.) she wouldn't be like (.) this is wrong and stuff (.) no (.) it might happen in other way (.) maybe in er

HA how

S indirect (0.1) and nice way

Denotative Analysis:

In part A, Salem explains Fatima's reaction to her subordinates' mistakes. He first uses the conditional 'if' to strike an example, then he impersonates her '*she wouldn't be like (.) this is wrong and stuff*'. He also indicates that Fatima's language in the meeting was typical of her: '*it's like you just saw now*' (line 223). According to Salem, even if Fatima starts the meeting with a formal manner, she then allows for humour and other non- task related social or small talk: '*it would be serious at the start but later (.) it would be (.) friendly*'(line 225). When prompted further, he adds that Fatima shares inside information with her staff: '*Fatima↑ hehe she shares everything hehehe*'(line 227).Salem's laugh indicates that perhaps this issue has been discussed before and acknowledged.

In part B, I ask another specific question about Fatima's floor holding, to which Salem responds that she changes her techniques according to the type and purpose of the meeting (alternating between holding the floor and sharing it) (lines 229-231).Salem first hesitates to answer:'*errr*' then he explains that Fatima's 'floor holding' depends on the type of the meeting. He also refers to this meeting as an occasion where she '*wanted to send (.) a message*'. Then he revises and corrects his previous comment: '*but usually there isn't any*'. Evidently, Salem perceives meetings with Fatima as always containing no discussion.

In part C, Salem explains Fatima's reaction and the type of language she uses when confronting her subordinates with their mistakes. He first uses the conditional '*if there was something wrong*' to strike an example of a problematic situation, then he issues an impersonation of Fatima to further clarify his point '*she wouldn't be like (.) this is wrong and stuff*' (line 232). According to Salem, Fatima avoids direct criticism and prefers to use relational strategies and confront her subordinates in an '*indirect and nice way*' (line 235).

b. Connotative Analysis

In this section, I will discuss further the implications of the data extracts presented above in regard to Fatima's leadership language along with the discourses within the CofP as they emerge from the language and communicative practices of Fatima and her team members during the course of the meeting and the interviews.

i. Leadership Language

Based on the denotative analysis of the extracts in section a.i, I infer that Fatima's leadership language has distinctive patterns and characteristics, most notably are: prioritising relational goals, and use of relational language strategies to enact leadership:

- Prioritising relational goals:

To begin with, Fatima's explicit prioritising of the relational aspects of leadership is mostly apparent in the interview data. In extract (5), when asked about her leadership practices, Fatima's answer centres on the perceptions and feelings of her subordinates rather than achieving tasks: '*I try to be fair*', '*same treatment to all*' (lines 169 and 171 respectively). Also in extract (6), Fatima expresses her great care for her subordinates' feelings when justifying the use of indirect strategies: '*I don't slap the person with the catastrophe...*' (lines 179-181). Examples of Fatima's use of indirect hedging strategies and others (such as humour, narrative, and so on) are numerous in the data. Similarly, in the interview Salem recounts that, when confronting her subordinates with their mistakes, Fatima does it in an '*indirect and nice way*' (extract 11, line 235).

- Using relational linguistic strategies to enact leadership (Achieving relational and transactional goals):

- Achieving relational goals:¹⁰⁰

For relational purposes, Fatima uses a wide range of relational linguistic strategies such as issuing compliments, expressing appreciation, sharing power and information, attending to her subordinates' face needs, and so on . In extract (1), Fatima announces that Ahmed has been chosen by the management to fill the new post. First, she issues several (indirect) compliments: '*Hussein decided to choose Ahmed because he felt that he was er (.) presentable (.) knows how to manage knows how to talk*' (lines 6-7). I believe that the use of compliments in this example serves the purpose of enhancing Ahmed's self-esteem and sending a message to everybody that he has been chosen for his social skills and not because he is disposable to the department. This is because this post (similar to that of a receptionist) seems to come with a stigma of being a lower level job in the company: '*Hussein likes to er get through (.) is that this job is not er (.) humiliating (.) or degrading ...*' (lines 26-27).

Also, Fatima downplays power and information with her subordinates in order to gain their trust and minimise status difference. This is perhaps most apparent in extracts (2) and (3) where she updates her team members with detailed information on what goes on in board rooms (almost acting like a mediator between them and the management). Moreover, in the same extracts, she offers the floor to others: '*did you want to say something Shareef*' (extract 2, lines 227-230), '*what's more↑ anything else↑*' (extract 3, line 97).

Furthermore, Fatima evidently pays great attention to her subordinates' face needs and concerns. In Extract (3), when Salem expresses his concerns over his future career and work load, she uses various strategies to attend to his fears, such as humour: '*and you: (.) we have you rotate...£we can't let you off*' (lines 112, 114 respectively), and indirect vague language: '*£I*

¹⁰⁰In this research, I do not consider relational and transactional goals as polarised categories, but for cohesion purposes I will tackle them separately keeping in mind the overlaps between the two concepts.

can't tell you anything now because (.) er the management might not agree with ...', 'no actually there's a possibility they would say ...' (lines 107-108 and 119-120 respectively).

Yet, the most notable example of Fatima's use of relational strategies for relational purposes is the whole of extract (4). While wrapping up the meeting, she uses a wide range of relational language practices to maintain relationships with her subordinates and create a sense of unity and loyalty to the CofP. First of all, she enacts a caregiver and a motherly identity with her team members indicating a sense of intimacy and dependency: *'I know you won't be lost without me'* (line 135). She also issues several compliments and expressions of gratitude to her subordinates: e.g. *'you didn't give me hard time ...'*, *'Ahmed I must say (.) that I am thankful to Ahmed because ...'*, *'good luck I think you are going to do a good job'*, *'really I mean you were a big support(.) you did good'* (lines 140-141 and 145-148 respectively). Most interestingly, Fatima jokingly asks her staff what presents they want from Japan (lines 159-160), which reconstructs the relationship between Fatima and her subordinates from a mere superior in the workplace to a family member or a friend.

Last but not least, as I have shown in the denotative analysis of the meeting data, Fatima almost always downplays power with her subordinates and tries to avoid taking agency and responsibility of any decision: *'Hussein decided to choose Ahmed...'* (extract 1, line 6), *'because Hussein says I mean (.) they are very very serious about it...'* (extract 2, line 68), *'I don't I don't know frankly because these things are not discussed (--) (.) so certainly they have something in mind (.) but till now it has not been passed on to us'* (extract 3, 128-130). Similarly, in the interview, when asked about decision making, she claims that she mainly relies on consultation and taking others' opinion especially those with more experience in certain cases. She goes back to emphasise that since the decision is not eventually hers, she could only make recommendation to the manager. In other words, she denies having any privilege to make decisions in the HR Department, only recommendations, acknowledging with that the existing

hierarchy: *'if I try and try I say (.) that's it it's up to you you are going to make the decision it's your decision'* (extract 7, 186-187; also see the Appendices, section 3.3, extract 6). This downplay of power on Fatima's part, among other things, serves to lessen the hierarchical distance between her and team members.

- Achieving transactional goals:

I have shown in the previous section how Fatima focuses extensively on relational work. However, in this section, I propose that she actually uses relational linguistic strategies, not just to maintain workplace relationships, but to get the work done. In the meeting, I have observed that while Fatima uses leadership and language practices which may have a relational purpose on the surface, upon close analysis, it has become apparent (to me) that she is utilising different types and genres of relational strategies (such as humour, small talk, narratives, compliments, and so on) to achieve transactional ends (such as requesting, criticising, informing, etc.).

As I have already shown in extract (1), when Fatima announces that Ahmed has been chosen by the management to fill the Help Centre post, she issues several compliments, which serve, at least on the surface, the purpose of enhancing Ahmed's self-esteem and attending to his face needs (since she knows that this is not a popular position and people in the department look down on it). On a transactional level, however, Fatima intends to request that everyone should collaborate and work hard to make the new project work successfully (e.g. respecting Ahmed for taking the post and coordinating with him, avoid gathering at the Centre, showing up for the opening, and so on). Instead of directly issuing the above requests to her subordinates, she, first of all, engages in compliments, arguments and justifications. Also, as if luring them (to do what is required of them), she talks about chocolates, publicity, and picture taking (lines 10-12). Although this is obviously meant as humour (addressing her subordinates as children who can

be attracted by chocolate and pictures), I believe that Fatima is utilising it to achieve her overall work-related goals.

Moreover, extract (2) holds even more evidence of Fatima using linguistic techniques most conventionally associated with relational aspects of leadership to achieve transactional ends. To begin with, her use of personal anecdotes narrated in a humorous tone has various transactional purposes, most apparent of which is criticism: *'I mean my kids used to pick me up ...'* (lines 41-48). By recounting her kids' reaction to the behaviour of grownup employees, she not only wants to show the gravity of the situation (even kids were shocked!), but also sends a strong message to them, that of lack of commitment and professionalism in the workplace. It also serves as an introduction and sets the mood for the upcoming news.

Further in extract (2), Fatima proceeds for few minutes with narrating possible scenarios of how she would be held accountable for their mistakes: *"for example if tomorrow Badria decided while she's home she called and said in fact Fatima I have an appointment"* (lines 54-55). This use of scenarios has an overall purpose of requesting her team members to abide by the new rules and restrictions, because if they don't, she will take the responsibility. By appealing to their unique relationship and their affection towards her, she is hoping that they would do what she is asking them to do (they wouldn't want embarrass her, do they?): *'every superintendent is responsible'*, *'because I don't want to embarrass myself (.) and I don't want the employee to embarrass himself'* (lines 53 and 59 respectively). Also, expressing her concerns over their face needs has an obvious purpose of enhancing solidarity and group identity, but also functions as an indirect request for them to do what they will be asked to do in the coming circular.

Other techniques in the same extract involves sharing inside and detailed information about the company policies and what goes on behind the scene: *: 'so you you were informed (.) and you*

know what's going on' (lines 94-95) and), and issuing compliments: *'I don't have a problem with my people here to be frank'* (line 93) .

Interestingly, Fatima utilises various techniques such as explanation, justification and various relational strategies to inform her subordinates of the new time keeping rules and request them to provide sick-leave notes if they are not coming to work (which reflects the lack of discipline the employees have towards such international work standard as people seem to be going in and out of the company with a care-free attitude)¹⁰¹ .

Last but not least, Fatima's use of relational strategies, although consistent, rarely shifts to be hierarchical. In extract (2), while Fatima is trying to persuade her subordinates to abide by the new rules, she reveals a different aspect of her leadership persona. After a long discussion, Fatima issues a hedged warning to her employees: *'I am of the flexible type I will be flexible give and take but at the same time (.) not to the extent that we take it for granted (.) ok↑'* (line 65).

This is an interesting shift in tone where Fatima is asking them not to misread her flexibility as a weakness. Clearly, although Fatima wants her subordinates to view her as *'flexible'* in a sense that she 'gives and takes', or in other words 'negotiates', she also wants them to acknowledge her legitimate power as their 'boss'. This is a rather upfront admission/threat/declaration from her side, that by being flexible, she chooses to downplay power and that she could use her power oppressively if she was obliged to.

To sum up, in this section, I have attempted an exploration of Fatima's leadership language. Through investigating data from the meeting and the interviews, I have found that

¹⁰¹This, apparently, is not only an attitude and a practice of the lower level employees, but that of managers as well. An obvious example is when Shareef protests that he has to run personal errands to the manager: *'sometimes I leave work (0.1) to the bank (0.1) you know (.) run errands (0.1) for Hussein I mean (0.1) sometimes I run late ...'*, to which Fatima responds: *'this we will talk about when it happens ...'* (lines 82 and 85 respectively). Fatima's response, although confirms the existence of such practices in the company among managers, carries a covert criticism with it. Understanding this aspect of the CofP is crucial in reading Fatima's reaction to the topic of time keeping and her choice of Language.

Fatima tends to prioritise the relational aspects of leadership. For that, she uses a set of various relational linguistic strategies: Humour, narrative, share of power and information, compliments, informal language and many other indirect strategies to save her subordinates' face needs and maintain an intimate relationship with them. I have also illustrated how Fatima utilises the same relational language to achieve various transactional goals as well such as informing, criticising, issuing requests, and so on.

The next section, I will discuss the dominant discourses in the context and their role in shaping Fatima's leadership language.

ii. Discourses within the CofP

Upon close analysis of the meeting and interviews, I have deduced the following four discourses: Feminisation, Seniority, Loyalty, and the overarching discourse of Family. In the following sections I will illustrate how the first three discourses have emerged from the data and how they all interact to construct the overarching discourse of Family, which works to shape Fatima's leadership language and others in the HR department.

1. Discourse of Feminisation

This is a new discourse which I have deduced from Fatima's case study. I use the name 'Feminisation' to refer to a discourse which constructs conventionally feminine language and communicative practices as the norm in the community of practice.

In the male-dominated company of Bahrainco, the HR department is one of the very few sections that have a female majority. It is also the only section that has recently promoted three females into the superintendent position (Bahrainco's Website). This concentration of female 'power' may have had its effect on the working culture of the HR department as I have observed the use of mostly relational/ traditionally feminine language practices such as focus on

communication, open dialogue, share of power and information, relationships building, cooperative work, and so on (Holmes 2006).

In the previous section, I have illustrated various manifestations of such 'culture' mostly realised in the amount of intimacy members of Fatima's team show towards her and each other.

Significant examples of mutual affectionate talk could be found in extract (4) where Fatima says: *'I know you won't get lost without me'* (line 135), to which Badria responds: *'we are lost without you Fatima'* (line 136). Also, Fatima issues several compliments to show her affection and appreciation to all of her team members: *'I worked with you guys Alhamdulillah you didn't give me hard time (.) I haven't encountered problems with you', 'I didn't have any difficulties with you to be frank'* (lines 140-141 and 145 respectively). Seemingly, relationships are so significantly developed that it seems that the whole section functions as a big family, and Fatima's relationship with her subordinates appear to exceed that of a mere superior in the workplace. Fatima's use of language throughout the meeting not only reflects her feelings of affection and responsibility towards her team members, but also indicates the relationship of dependency between employees and their superior in this CoffP.

Other notable conventionally feminine language practices which are common in the HR department seem to be the constant gathering and chatting between its members. There are various moments in the data where this is manifest. In extract (1), for example, Fatima issues a highly mitigated request to everyone to avoid congregating at Ahmed's office: *'I mean we don't want anybody coming in to see you all surrounding brother Ahmed chatting asking about how he is doing...'* (lines 19-24)

Based on the above, I infer that there is a working discourse of Feminisation in the HR department which creates an environment where conventionally feminine linguistic practices are not only dominant, but expected and appreciated. The discourse of Feminisation apparently

places Fatima and other females in a powerful position .In my interview with Salem (Fatima's young subordinate), he expresses his content with working with a woman manager and the conventionally feminine leadership and linguistic practices (see the Appendices. Section 3.3, extract 7). Therefore, in this context, Fatima's motives behind using relational linguistic strategies to enact leadership can be explained through the discourse of feminisation because, apparently, it doesn't only empower her, but it also makes her leadership accepted and perceived positively.

Besides the discourse of Feminisation in the HR department, there are traces of another dominant discourse in Bahrainco that affects the relationship dynamics in the company and shapes Fatima's leadership language. This discourse will be explored next.

2. Discourse of Seniority

I have already defined the discourse of Seniority in Hanan's case study (chapter four, section 2.2.2.2) as a discourse which privileges and empowers the older, more experienced, and long-working employees in the company

I learnt from the interview that Fatima is older than the rest of the employees in her department, and she has a working experience of over twenty years. She started at Bahrainco as a fresh graduate and has been working in the HR department ever since, climbing up the professional ladder. Data of Interviews, meeting and shadowing indicate that Fatima highly values her experience and accomplishments at Bahrainco as she constantly makes references to her long working experience and seniority in the company. In extract (9), she describes her first job crediting all her knowledge in HR to Bahrainco: *'when I graduated I didn't learn much I learned all by experience here (.) I mean I took my job from (-) and I spent years doing salaries...'* (200-204, for more examples see Appendices, section 3.3, extracts 2, 4, and 5).

Fatima seemingly enjoys certain amount of power over others due to her historical legacy in the company. In extract (7), she describes incidents where her superior, despite having the authority to make the final decision, places high regard to her opinions: *'you see the other person for example of course the decision is his ...'* (lines 183-185)

Also, she repeatedly mentions that she was offered a managerial position and rejected it: *'I was contacted (.) I was offered to take a managerial position (---) ok↑ and I told them no...'* (Extract 8, lines 188-199)

Based on this evidence, I deduce that there are traces of a working discourse of Seniority; one which privileges older employees who have spent all their career- life in Bahrainco and who have witnessed the growth and change in the company. I believe that apart from Fatima's legitimate power as a superintendent of HR, discourse of Seniority earns her additional respect and places her in an even more powerful position than her younger colleagues.

The two discourses, Feminisation and Seniority position Fatima powerfully in the department. Being a much older and more experienced female superior empowers Fatima and affects her linguistic choices and others. In my data analysis, I have referred to instances where the language used between Fatima and her subordinates reflect an intimate relationship which exceeds that of a mere superior to more of a family member, parent or a mother. More interesting aspects of this relationship will be explored further in section 4.

3. Discourse of Loyalty

I have already introduced the discourse of Loyalty in Hanan's case study (chapter four, section 2.2.2.4), where I define it as one's commitment, and sense of belonging and devotion to one's group, family, or company.

In contrast to Hanan, Fatima constantly projects an image of a loyal employee. Whether it is at the meeting with her subordinates or in the interview, she tends to defend Bahrainco, its higher management and its decisions. Throughout the meeting, she keeps explaining the management's position and justifying its policies. There is also evidence in the meeting data that Fatima plays a role of mediator between the management and her staff members. Phrases in which Fatima identifies with the management and her general manager are quite numerous in the data '*of course that was a request from the Management*', '*of course Hussein decided to choose Ahmed*' (extract 1, lines 3 and 6 respectively), '*they want (.) what do they also want*' (extract 2, line 38) and '*Hussein knows (.)but I can share this concern*' (lines 126-132)

This shows that, linguistically, Fatima is attempting to strike a balance between her attachment to the team and her loyalty and affiliation to the management. She is trying to bridge the gap between higher management and her subordinates in a way that eases the tension, lessens the hierarchy, and enhances the spirit of collaboration of all for the good of the company.

Furthermore, in extract (2), she avoids criticising her manager for not abiding by company rules. Instead, she issues vague statements and hypothetical scenarios: '*this we will talk about when it happens*' (line 85) and '*maybe Hussein himself changes mind...*' (lines 85-86). Also in the interview, Fatima describes to me how she refrains from opposing her superior: '*if I try and try I say (.) that's it it's up to you you are going to make the decision it's your decision*' (extract 7, lines 186-187). Finally, in extract (9), she credits all her success and knowledge to Bahrainco: '*I learned all by experience here*', '*I was not taught that in University I picked it up here*' (lines 200 and 204 respectively). These extracts indicate Fatima's total acknowledgment and acceptance of the hierarchical system in Bahrainco as she avoids challenging her superiors even when they are possibly in the wrong. This positioning, I believe, is the outcome of her loyalty to the company which is manifested in her unquestionable obedience to her superior and the higher management.

Based on the above, I deduce that there exists a discourse of Loyalty in the CofP of HR where Fatima and all the employees are expected to affiliate themselves with Bahrainco and have high regard for its management.

Also, I have found that at the intersection the discourses of Feminisation, Seniority, and Loyalty, there is an overarching discourse of Family in the HR department, which is being reproduced and maintained by Fatima and her team members. This argument will be elaborated on next.

4. The Overarching Discourse of Family

In the Literature review(chapter 1, section 3.1.1.2.1), I have adopted Alakavuklar's (2009) definition of the Family discourse as the notion of using language and social practices which construct an intimate family-like environment between the employees in an organisation.

In sections 1 and 2 I have illustrated how discourses of Feminisation and Seniority position Fatima powerfully in her CofP and shape her leadership language. I have also referred to instances where the language used between Fatima and her subordinates reflects a unique relationship that exceeds that of mere superior-subordinates. Here, I suggest that Fatima acquires a maternal identity with her team members.

To begin with, Fatima identifies herself as a mother. Throughout the meeting and the interview, she makes a number of references to her relationship with her children. For example, in extract (8) Fatima justifies turning down the position of a manager for the sake of her family: '*I want to see my kids grow*', '*they grew up but they still need me (.) I mean I want to hang out with them (.) I talk to them (.) I am still going to continue to be part of their lives*'(lines 189, 195-196 respectively).

Moreover, in the meeting, Fatima seems to be utilising her experience as a mother to manage her subordinates and achieve transactional ends. In section i, I have explained how she applies

different types and genres of relational strategies (such as humour, small talk, narratives, compliments, etc.) to achieve transactional ends (e.g. requesting, criticising, informing, etc.). This unique positioning is, in my view, an indication of Fatima taking up a 'mother' role with her subordinates. Mothers (especially in traditional Arab families) often use indirect strategies to get their kids to obey their orders and behave in a certain way. Among many techniques, I believe they basically rely on unconditional love between them and their children and deploy certain linguistic strategies that, at least on the surface, appeal to their interest and future.

In the context of the meeting, several manifestations of such maternal behaviour are evident. To start with, voicing her feelings of love, care and pride towards her subordinate and exercising repressive power that is based on mutual love and respect could be found in the following extracts: '*I don't have a problem with my people here to be frank*' (extract 2, line 93), '*I know you won't get lost without me*' (extract 4, line 135), '*I mean er with you I worked with you guys Alhamdulillah you didn't give me hard time (.) I haven't encountered problems with you*' (extract 4, lines 140-141).

Such expression of love, care and gratitude is mostly obvious with her younger employees, especially Ahmed. Throughout the meeting, she 'showers' him and 'spoils' him with compliments: '*Hussein decided to choose Ahmed because he felt that he was er (.) presentable (.) knows how to manage knows how to talk*' (extract 1, lines 6-7), '*so I mean I didn't have any difficulties with you to be frank (.) Ahmed I must say (.) that I am thankful to Ahmed because I gave him so so much work and he backed me up me (.) and I told Hussein frankly Ahmed worked hard (.) really I mean you were a big support(.) you did good*' (extract 4, lines 145-148).

I believe that Fatima's linguistic strategies above indicate a mother identity and persona that she takes up with her subordinates. Interestingly, she doesn't deal with her subordinates, and Ahmed in particular, as adults who know and can judge what is good and acceptable or not,

instead, she tries to 'lure, tempt, and attract' them to get their work done properly through compliments and other relational linguistic strategies (which are arguably made acceptable by the discourse of Feminisation): *'of course there will be chocolate and whatnot and all of these things (.) they will make PR for it (.) and there will be picture taking'* (extract 1, lines 11-12), *'£ the most important thing is Ahmed's pictures (.) he comes out in all the pictures (.) all the eyes are on him he is the one sitting there'* (Extract 1, lines 15-17). The type of humour Fatima uses here revolves around addressing her subordinates as children who can be attracted by chocolate and pictures. I believe they not only realise the unique (mother- child) relationship they have with their boss, but they enjoy it and encourage it (at least the younger ones, hence Salem's joking remark (lines 13-14))

Also, Fatima has a very distinctive way to mentor and instruct her team members in general and Ahmed in particular. For instance, by giving them examples of possible scenarios of what might (not) happen and how to deal with it, she is indirectly stating the rules of what should /shouldn't happen by appealing to their sense of belonging to the CofP and its 'face'/image/reputation, etc. Fatima has a way of inviting her team to respond emotionally to the problem by appealing to the greater good and sense of unity of her team to get them to do the work required of them:

'anyone who has anything (.) it's preferable (.) that he has justification (.) to avoid embarrassment (.) so that I don't embarrass myself and you don't embarrass yourself' (extract 2, lines 61-62), *'nobody expects that there will be crowds in there (.) I mean we don't want anybody coming in to see you all surrounding brother Ahmed chatting asking about how he is doing ha how are you Ahmed ↑ anybody came to you ↑'* (Extract 1, lines 19-21).

Other evidence of Fatima enacting mother or caretaker role could be noted in Fatima's use of narratives: *'£which reminds me of the Minister of Labour God grand him with mercy Dr. Nabeel Al Marhoon (.) when he went to the restaurant of er ...'* (Extract 1, lines 31-37), *'for example at*

noon time (.) the congregation that takes place (0.1) I mean my kids used to pick me up (.) my car was in the garage ...' (Extract 2, lines 40-49)

Finally, in extract (3) there is a different aspect to Fatima's enactment of the mother identity as she asks her team members about what they would like her to get them from Japan: '*do you want me to get you anything from Japan*', '*I will get you mini Japanese*'. I believe that this is a very significant moment in the meeting where the whole section engages in an intimate family farewell where the mother is expected to bring gifts from her travels; only in this case, this is a 'business trip'.

Interestingly, based on the meeting data, this mother-child relationship is not one-sided; her team members contribute a great deal to this unique liaison. Indeed, her enactment of a mother's position is facilitated by her team members' interactive language that resembles those of children in a traditional Arab Family (see lit review section 2.1.3.2). For instance, in extract (2), Salem is concerned about his work load, and he could easily have asked for a substitute. However, since he is talking to his superior he may need to be indirect, but among all the indirect strategies available to him, he chooses the complaining strategy that carries a sense of dependency in it (which is perhaps more approved in this CofP): '*as you know Sana will be leaving end of this year (0.1) are you going to get someone to fill her position...*' (extract 3, lines 99-102).

Another related aspect to Fatima's leadership language is her utmost loyalty to higher management. She constantly refers to Bahrainco's management as the higher authority and to herself as a passive receiver: '*err I mean (.) I don't I don't know frankly because these things are not discussed (--) (.) so certainly they have something in mind (.) but till now it has not been passed on to us*' (extract 3, lines 128-130). With that, she projects higher management as a traditional Arab father, who makes the rules and expects middle Management (the mother) to

carry them out without questioning (See lit Review section 2.1.3.2). Therefore, I suggest that Fatima depicts Higher management as the *Father* of the family (who is responsible for the wellbeing of the family, works for the great good of the family even if the 'kids' don't like it, set up the rules and restrictions, etc.). This is indicated by an existing discourse of Loyalty in the CofP of HR. Fatima and all the employees are expected to affiliate themselves with Bahrainco and have high regard for its management.

Based on the above, I deduce that, where all the dominant discourses intersect, there appears an overarching discourse of Family, which is constantly re-enacted and maintained by Fatima. This discourse constructs and creates a (traditional Arabian) family-like atmosphere where members take up certain subject positions that are more acceptable in this CofP. These subject positions, although fluid and constantly shifting and changing, seem to be very rarely resisted.

To sum up, in this section I have proposed that Fatima creates a traditional Arabian family-like atmosphere in the HR department. This positioning is facilitated by the dominant discourses of Feminisation and Seniority. As a leader, Fatima often takes up a mother role (who keep an eye on her kids, protecting them, caring about their feelings, gently encouraging them to do the right thing, and manipulating them to do what she wants through various linguistic strategies such as stressing the sense of unity, cooperation, sympathy, etc.). Also, Through a discourse of Loyalty, Fatima depicts Higher management as the father of the family (who is responsible for the wellbeing of the family, works for the great good of the family even if the 'kids' don't like it, set up the rules and restrictions, etc.). Finally, Fatima's subordinates are like the *kids* of the family (who are dependent on the mother, nagging and complaining but at the same time loving and affectionate).

III. Conclusion

In this chapter I consider that I have successfully managed to answer my research questions about Fatima's leadership language and the interacting discourse that shape her linguistic choices in the CofP of the HR department. For that, I have identified four dominant discourses in the context (Feminisation, Seniority, Loyalty and the overarching discourse of Family) and described their crucial role in shaping and facilitating Fatima's positioning as well as her choice of leadership language.

Fatima has a unique way of doing leadership and surviving in the highly patriarchal and male-dominated institution of Bahrainco. By taking up a mother role, she exercises an invisible repressive power that is perhaps not apparent to her subordinates. This mother positioning is facilitated and maintained by the overarching discourse of Family in the HR department, and results in Fatima's heavy reliance on conventionally feminine linguistic practices such as humour, narratives and so on.

Chapter Six

Discussion

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I carry out a comparative analysis of the last three chapters in order to draw general insights from my study. For each research question, I will review and assess the main findings in relation to past research literature, and examine the ways in which this study can contribute to the fields of leadership, language, and gender in the workplace.

2. Discussion

Next is a comparative discussion of the most significant findings of each research question:

2.1. Research question (1):

What are the leadership and language practices that Bahraini senior women use with colleagues and subordinates within the context of corporate meetings?

This section is dedicated to answering my first research question across the three case studies. My analysis of the linguistic practices of the three women leaders is conducted in the light of Holmes' (2006) repertoire approach, which assumes that leaders use a wide linguistic repertoire comprising a versatile set of transactional and relational strategies and skills to do leadership (Bass and Avolio 1993; Bass 1998; Vinnicombe and Singh 2001). According to Holmes (2006: 64), while a transactional 'style of leadership' correlates with a language stereotypically coded as masculine, a relational 'style of leadership' is congruent with a language stereotypically coded as feminine. The former 'style' prioritises task-achievement and solving work-related problems while the latter places greater emphasis on fostering workplace relationships (see chapter one, section 3.3.2.1.1). My analysis of the three case studies has revealed some variations in the way the three senior women use language in relation to this repertoire.

In the first case study, it appears that Badria utilises a wide linguistic repertoire constantly shifting between a range of stereotypically masculine and stereotypically feminine linguistic strategies to achieve a set of interrelated transactional and relational leadership goals. Badria's main transactional goal is to organise for the conference while making sure that Bahrainco's interests are secured. Her main relational goal is to achieve this cooperation of transactions in a smooth and facilitative manner. I consider that all goals of leadership are intertwined ; in this case, while Badria utilises her power as a chair to manage the meeting efficiently and accomplish the sub-tasks in the agenda (making decisions in regard to invitation cards, conference venues, seminars, and so on), she makes an obvious linguistic effort to share power and save face. Meeting and interview data has revealed that she purposefully alternates between using assertive language such as issuing direct orders, decisions and refusals, and facilitative language with her subordinates such as using cooperative humour and issuing mitigated orders, indirect requests, and so on (see chapter three).

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the various types of humour people use in the workplace. Schnurr (2008) notes that humour is mainly used to maintain solidarity, team work and sense of belonging to the group; It is also used to mitigate directives and criticism especially when interacting with superiors. However, studies such as Holmes and Marra's (2002) reveals a 'darker side' to humour, particularly when used to subvert and challenge others. Holmes (2006) distinguishes between 'feminine or cooperative style of humour' and 'masculine or contestive style of humour'. Cooperative humour is usually used to support and confirm the contribution of the previous speaker. In contrast, contestive humour is often used to challenge or disagree with the previous speaker by use of witty challenging statements, teasing, banter, and so on.

While Badria uses cooperative/feminine humour, Hanan certainly utilizes contestive/masculine humour such as teasing and banter to challenge her team members. In fact, Hanan's approach

to leadership differs greatly from Fatima. The meeting data reveals that she prioritises task accomplishment over relational goals of the workplace. In the meeting, she uses an inventory of stereotypically masculine and stereotypically feminine linguistic strategies to achieve transactions and get the work done while paying less attention to her team member's face needs.¹⁰² As I explain in detail in chapter four, Hanan's meeting had the main goal of implementing and executing the project, which required checking that the processes were accomplished correctly and on time. While Hanan's linguistic choices reflect her preference to use directives, imperatives, checking statements, banter, and so on, she would occasionally use highly hedged and mitigated language, all for the purpose of ensuring the achievement of tasks without disruptions or delays.

Research in the workplaces in the Arabian Gulf reports similar findings. When studying the leadership 'styles' of Qatari senior women, Almuftah (2010:102), has concluded that rules in the Qatari workplaces 'have been constructed around the male norm', and that women needs to adapt stereotypically 'male working styles and attitudes' if they seek recognition and success in their workplaces.

In the third case study, Fatima, in contrast, prioritises relational aspects of the workplace such as creating intimate and familial working environment, strengthening the sense of belonging to Bahrainco, and considering her team members' emotional well-being and face needs. In order to achieve these various relational goals, she uses a wide range of relational linguistic strategies such as issuing compliments, expressing appreciation, sharing power and information, hedging orders and instructions, and so on. Fatima also utilises different types and genres of relational strategies (such as humour, small talk, narratives, compliments, etc.) to achieve transactional ends (such as requesting, criticising, informing, etc.) (see chapter five).

¹⁰²This applies to the Indian expats only, as data shows that Hanan uses highly cooperative language with Amir (a male engineer) (see chapter four). There will be further explanation for this variation in the next research question.

In the literature, use of relational language in the workplace is often associated with maintaining relationships, creating teams and so on (Holmes 2006). As in Fatima's case, few studies have attempted to investigate the use of relational language in achieving tasks, performing transactions, and solving work-related problems. However, I find that this concept is somewhat relevant to Fletcher's relational practice (RP) (1999) and later Holmes' adaptation of the term (2006) (see chapter one; section 3.3.2.1.2).

According to Fletcher, besides the obvious function of maintaining work-place relationships and saving subordinates' face needs, RP indeed plays a significant role in attaining organisational objectives and serving transactional goals. As I illustrate in section 3.3.2.1.2, Fletcher (1999: 48) also identifies four manifestation of RP in the workplace: 'preserving', 'creating team', 'empowerment' and 'self- achieving'. Of the four categories, I find that 'preserving' is the most congruent with Fatima's language practices with her subordinates. 'Preserving' is mostly concerned with damage control and minimising conflicts for the purpose of furthering organisational goals'. According to Holmes and Marra (2004), it often takes the form of off-record facilitative language such as issuing compliments, showing appreciation, giving approval, mentoring, humour, and so on (also see Holmes 2006). In the third case study, Fatima appears to use similar off- record relational language to enact leadership. By motivating her subordinates and constantly considering their face needs, she seeks to perform transactional functions.

I have also argued that Fatima's choice of relational language could be described as 'maternal' and her repeated use of such language practices constructs her as a 'mother' figure to her subordinates.

Theoretically, various gender and leadership studies (e.g. Fletcher 1999; Martin Rojo and Esteban 2003) find that the 'mother' role is one of the very limited- and limiting- positions women in leadership are allowed in the Western business context. Indeed, Fatima's choice of

the 'mother' subject position could be explained through Kanter's 'gender trap' theory (1977) (see chapter one, section 3.3.2.1.2). According to Kanter (1977), powerful positions for women leaders are somewhat restricted to traditionally 'feminine' subject positions such as: the mother, pet, iron maiden, and seductress. In this analysis, I follow Baxter's (2012) re-conceptualisation of Kanter's 'role traps' as the more dynamic 'gendered resources' through which women leaders construct and reconstruct themselves. I have argued that, given the number of challenges Fatima faces to prove herself as a capable leader in Bahrainco, she chooses to use the 'gendered resource' most *accessible* to her, which is the position of the 'mother'.

Interestingly, all three women leaders define themselves in relation to the mother role. In the interview, Badria explicitly refers to her conscious use of her motherly skills as 'gendered resource' to deal with her team members: *'when I want to pass a message to them ok? for example if I am guiding them ok? I will be leaner (.) I will have them be at comfort (.) I want them to listen (.1) I will deal with them the way I deal with my children (.) If I want to give an advice to my boy (.) if I want them to be the recipient yes I will do that'* (Appendices, section 3.1, extract 7; see also chapter three, extract 7).

Hanan also makes several references to the influence of her experience as a mother on aspects of her leadership practices. In the interview, she issues an analogy between the aspiration of a mother towards her kids and the aspiration of a woman leader towards her subordinates: *'you know err we learn a lot (.) from our kids when we bring them up and we (.) no matter how much really hehe your kid is bad (.) but you still at the end want (.) him to be good (.) so you really learn the skill (.) that er (.) to to have someone who is good (.) to have someone who's your subordinate and he is good...'* (see the Appendices, section 3.2, extract 6).

Additionally, I have also observed traces of another 'role trap' or 'gendered resource' in my first case (Badria), that of the 'pet' (Kanter 1977; Baxter 2012). According to Kanter (1977), a woman

leader taking up a 'pet' position is not taken seriously by male colleagues; such a role indicates a subordinate status in the organisation. Usually tokenised, such women are chosen for the boards to disguise dominant gendered discriminatory practices (Baxter 2010; 2003). Quite similarly, Badria was the first woman to be promoted to a managerial position in Bahrainco, and is one of only two women managers in the history of the company.¹⁰³ Although she constructs herself as resistant to Bahrainco's hierarchical system and practices (see chapter three extracts 8; also the Appendices, section 3.1, extract 5 and section 4.1 for shadowing notes), there is ample evidence in the meeting data that she chooses language that maintains and reproduces these hierarchical practices (the discourse of Hierarchy and Status). This act of compliance from her side probably constructs her as a non-threat to the management people, who get rather amused when she shows any sign of resistance. As Halford and Leonard (2001) suggest, 'pet' positioning often elicits the reaction of 'a kind of look-what-she-did-and-she's only a woman' attitude (p. 109). This is rather indicative in extract (7) where the General Manager was amused by Badria's aggressive language: *'I insulted him and hehehe but at the same time he said that he liked my way of presenting my ideas and from that time he said this lady is going to reach places'* (lines 124-127).

To sum up, the close analysis of the leadership language of the three women leaders has revealed that while Badria utilises a versatile set of direct and indirect linguistic strategies depending on the particular goal of the interaction, Hanan reveals a greater focus on transactions and a tendency to use language stereotypically coded as masculine. In contrast, Fatima adopts a 'maternal' position with her subordinates by focusing on creating an intimate workplace atmosphere and using highly facilitative and supportive language on most occasions.

¹⁰³ I have mentioned in Badria's analysis (chapter three, section 3) that Badria's success is viewed sceptically by many and some consider her the management's 'beloved'.

In the next section, I will discuss further the perceptions held by the three leaders of their own language and leadership practices as well as the way they are perceived by their subordinates and team members.

2.2. Research Question (2):

How do the senior women perceive their own leadership and language practices? How do their colleagues and subordinates perceive these practices?

In this section, I will review and share the most important findings and interesting insights I acquired from my analysis with regard to the second research question. Clearly, the enquiry is concerned with perception and therefore, my findings are exclusively based on the analysis of the interview data rather than the meeting data.

In the first case, Badria claims that her choice of language is rather conscious and planned. She acknowledges shifting her leadership and language practices depending on the interactants and the purpose of the interaction. For example, in the meeting under analysis, she aims at promoting a sense of unity and team work, therefore, she uses accommodating and facilitative language that could as well be coded as stereotypically feminine (Holmes 2006). With management personnel, she uses assertive and aggressive language so that she would be taken seriously by her (predominantly male) colleagues and superiors. With her team members, she uses linguistic strategies that range between the assertive and the cooperative in order to achieve the different transactional and relational goals of leadership (Marra, Schnurr and Holmes 2006), often provoking images of herself as a mother and a mentor (see chapter three).

Interviews with Badria's team members have revealed similar perceptions. Both Nadeem (female) and Fahad (male) depict Badria as a powerful leader who chooses her language and plans her actions purposefully to achieve certain leadership goals. They also emphasise the relational aspects of Badria's leadership language such as sharing power and using

collaborative strategies. Nadeem, who constructs Badria as her best friend and feels compelled to defend her, describes her as an open, friendly, approachable, and hardworking leader. She also claims that Badria has managed to create an intimate working environment where hard work, loyalty and trust are highly valued. Similarly, Fahad describes Badria as a leader who is loyal to her subordinates and concerned about their work-load, feelings, and face needs.

These qualities reported by Badria of herself and by her team members are similar to my earlier findings that Badria appropriates versatile linguistic strategies to enact leadership. Evidently, Badria seems to recognise and appreciate the complexities of doing leadership. Her choices of linguistic practices are clear, purposeful, and reflect her deep understanding of the importance of language in the process of managing people and work transactions equally and interchangeably.

In the second case, the interview with Hanan has likewise revealed that she places special importance on the transactional aspects of leadership. According to Hanan, her main goal is to achieve the task-in-hand and solve work-related problems efficiently, and for that purpose, she would shift her language and leadership practices according to the requirements of the context, even if it means changing her practices and adapting a stereotypically masculine argumentative 'style'. Hanan also considers that the value of maintaining workplace relationships lies in keeping the employees motivated to do the necessary work.

In contrast, the interview I conducted with Amir – a male engineer and Hanan's subordinate in the project – brings different insights into the picture. While Amir doesn't deny Hanan's focus on executing the project professionally, he doesn't give her credit for it either. He insists that Hanan is only doing what anybody in her position would do (see chapter four). This supports my argument that the Engineering department is a 'male-dominated workplace' (Baxter 2010) with a special appreciation for transactional functions and stereotypically masculine language. Amir's

position is interesting here because he is evidently resisting his subordination to Hanan, which may indicate a rather masculine view of the workplace where a woman superior is not very common or accepted. This may have had an indirect effect on his perception of Hanan as he is more likely to be critical of her language choices and leadership practices.

With both perceptions considered, I conclude that the interview and meeting data findings equally demonstrate that Hanan is a task-driven leader who, although uses a wide language repertoire and a range of skills, shows more preference to utilise direct and conventionally masculine linguistic strategies to enact leadership.

The question here is, to what extent has Hanan's leadership language been affected by the male-dominated environment with its requirements and expectations? Hanan herself has admitted succumbing to the pressure over the years and having to adjust her linguistic practices: *'I mean not really (.) I am not a type of argumentative' 'I don't want to argue'* (chapter four, extract 5, lines 155 and 156 respectively). Evidently, over the course of twenty years, Hanan has adjusted her leadership language to fit the mould of the conventionally masculine culture of the Engineering department.

Finally, in the third case, my interview with Fatima shows her great tendency to focus on relational aspects of leadership as she constantly refers to her subordinates' perceptions, face needs, and sense of fairness: *'I try to be fair'* (chapter five, extract 5, line 169). Additionally, she confirms and justifies her use of indirect strategies with her team members on the basis of accounting for their feelings.

Also, interviews with Fatima's subordinates yield similar findings. To start with, Huda (female) perceives Fatima to be an open minded and flexible leader who puts great emphasis on communication and maintaining excellent workplace relationships through the use of a range of cooperative leadership language practices and skills such as: listening, discussing, consulting,

sharing information, and so on. Similarly, Salem (male) stresses Fatima's use of indirect and facilitative strategies to hedge requests and give feedback (see chapter five).

Therefore, I consider that the interview data supports the findings from the meeting that Fatima prioritises relational goals and places special emphasis on proper communication between herself and her subordinates. Also, as I have argued in section 2.1, it proves Fatima's aptitude and tendency to apply the principles of relational practice (Fletcher 1999) to enact leadership.

To sum up, my analysis of all the data reveals great similarities and congruence between the perceptions held by the three leaders of their own leadership and language practices, the perceptions held by their team members, and the actual linguistic practices they use in the meetings. Badria acknowledges her constant efforts to appropriate and shift her linguistic practices according to the context. Interview data has revealed that she is positively perceived by her team members in terms of maintaining transactions as well as workplace relationships. Also, Hanan's perception of her own leadership language confirms her tendency to assign greater emphasis to workplace transactions and choosing her linguistic strategies accordingly. Yet, Amir's interview, while supporting my findings about Hanan's linguistic choices, also reveals insights about the type of challenges she faces in the CofP of the Engineering department (see next section). Finally, interviews with Fatima and her subordinates correspond with my earlier findings that she prioritises relational aspects of the workplace and utilises a range of linguistic strategies to achieve that end.

When comparing across the three case studies, it becomes apparent that both Badria and Hanan express their resentment at having to alter their language to meet the requirements of the conventionally masculine workplaces where direct, aggressive, and argumentative practices are more appreciated and rewarded. With Fatima, however, it doesn't seem to be the case. If

anything, throughout her career, she claims that she has gained appreciation and promotions¹⁰⁴,
how do we explain this variation?

Apparently, studying women leaders' language alone is not sufficient. In order to gain a multi-faceted perspective, I need to shed light on the context, with its layers and complexities. Baxter (2010: 140) states 'effective language of leadership is partially an outcome of a person's use of diverse, skilful and versatile linguistic repertoires within specific contexts. But this is always mediated by and negotiated through the prevalent discourses within the community of practice'. In this study, I reference Holmes' (2006) concept of masculine and feminine communities of practices (see chapter one, section 3.2.1.1).¹⁰⁵ In the next section, I will explore the prevailing discourses in each leader's community of practice that could have influenced their language and leadership practices.

2.3. Research Question (3):

What are the significant interacting discourses at play in the context? How do they shape the leadership and language practices of the three senior women in their communities of practice?

This section is dedicated to discussing the third research question. Data analysis has revealed some similarities and differences in the type of working discourses in the three case studies, each in its different CofP. Each department (e.g. Business and planning, Engineering, Human resources) is characterised by a distinctive set of interwoven discourses, which affect the women leaders and shape their professional identities and leadership language. Sunderland refers to this concept as 'discoursal diversity' in organisations (Sunderland 2004: 193).

¹⁰⁴She claims she was offered a managerial position but she turned it down for the sake of her family (see chapter 5, extract 8)

¹⁰⁵ Since this concept is polarising to a large extent; I am using it here from a more fluid perspective and dynamic repertoire approach, where members of communities of practice use an inventory of conventionally masculine and feminine language practices interchangeably depending on the context

The first case study is the most complex one, mainly because it integrates two CofPs: the CofP of the Business and Planning department, which is Badria's own section, and the CofP of the meeting, which is created solely for the organisation of the conference and will be dissolved once its goals are met (see chapter three). Badria, being a 'core' member of the two CofPs (Holmes 1999) and the one with the authority to manage both, surely displays language and leadership practices that are informed by the discourses circulating in these two CofPs (among others).

To start with, data analysis has revealed a dominant gendered discourse of Masculinisation in the CofP of the Business Planning department. According to Baxter (2003: 147), this discourse promotes 'stereotypical constructs of masculinity such as hierarchy, order, structure, dominance, competitiveness, rivalry, aggression and goal-oriented action'.

In this case, the discourse of Masculinisation has worked to disadvantage Badria throughout her career and subject her to the 'double bind' (e.g. Cameron 1995; Kendall & Tannen 1997; Marra, Schnurr & Holmes 2006; Litosseliti 2006), where women are condemned as non-competent leaders if they use language consistent with the predominant gender stereotypes, and as unfeminine when they acquire practices that are inconsistent with those gender stereotypes (Catalyst 2007).

Evidently, Badria has developed the capacity and skills to shift her positioning depending on the context in order to lessen the damage of this gendered discourse. An example would be when Badria uses direct and less egalitarian language where the discourse of Masculinisation is most dominant: the boardroom. Evidently, this positions her powerfully among the other male managers. However, despite all this linguistic effort, Badria is still subjected to the 'double bind' even outside her own CofP; this is evident from Sonia's criticism of Badria's management of meetings (see chapter three, section 2.2.2).

Moreover, data analysis has also revealed a set of interacting and sometimes competing discourses in the CofP of the meeting. Since it is the CofP that is essentially under discussion, I was able to find various traces of different working discourses, all of which originates from Bahrainco and are being taken up or resisted by Badria and others. Firstly, I have deduced a working discourse of Professionalism that imposes certain 'occupational' characteristics and expectations to which employees are obliged to conform, if they seek to be regarded as professionals in the workplace (Evetts 2005; 2006).

In this context, the working discourse of professionalism promotes certain work values and practices such as punctuality, regular attendance, productivity, and so on (see chapter three, section 2.2.2.1). It works to position Badria and Amal powerfully and certain others (Dr Sara from UOD, PR people, Training department manager) in a weaker position; it also enables Badria to 'enact oppressive'¹⁰⁶ power and justifies her use of direct and less egalitarian language with those regarded (according to this discourse) as non-professionals.

Yet, there is another interacting discourse that has a different effect on Badria's use of such direct language, which is the discourse of Hierarchy and status. This discourse, also originating from Bahrainco, privileges both Badria and the training manager over the others. Being in the same rank as the Training manager in Bahrainco places restrictions upon Badria's language choices, therefore, she displays tendency to use highly polite language with him, even at times of great frustration¹⁰⁷. Also, this discourse of Hierarchy¹⁰⁷ privileges Amal due to her 'status' as the representative of the 'mother company': SATCO. Therefore, Badria displays much more consideration to Amal's opinions often consulting her before making decisions.

¹⁰⁶Fairclough (1992)

¹⁰⁷During the interview I have learned that Badria was highly frustrated with Manager Training for his lack of commitment, coming late, diverging from the topic and so on (see chapter three, section 2.1.2).

A final discourse of Expertise was also found to have great influence on Badria's choice of linguistic practices. This discourse privileges people with required expertise and positions them powerfully. Therefore, Badria uses facilitative and conciliatory language when consulting the expertise of Dr Sara and Amal. When the discourse of Expertise competes with the other two discourses, Professionalism and Hierarchy and Status, it shifts Dr Sara's position, who is an expert in organising conferences, into a powerful one. When the discourse of Expertise interacts with the discourse of Hierarchy and Status, it supports Amal's already powerful positioning. Both women will occasionally be granted floor space and some power to influence or change decisions, direction of discussion, and so on.

In the second case study, several discourses have been deduced from the CofP of the Engineering department, some of which are similar to the ones found in the first case study such as the discourses of Masculinisation and Expertise. Specific to Hanan's case study are the discourses of Seniority and Loyalty (see chapter four, section 2.2.2).

Similar to Badria's own section of Business Planning, the Engineering section has proved to be a highly male-dominated CofP where a discourse of Masculinisation dominates ways of doing work and sets the expectations for leaders' and subordinates' language and communication practices (Baxter 2003). Therefore, Hanan shows a great tendency to use language and leadership practices that are coded as stereotypically masculine such as a focus on transactions, use of direct strategies, banter and teasing, and so on.

However, discourses such as Seniority and Expertise produce a different effect on Hanan's leadership language. As I explain in chapter four, through a discourse of Seniority, employees are given value according to the length of their involvement in an organisation. It privileges senior employees who have worked in the organisation for a considerable amount of time, in Hanan's case, over 20 years. Through the discourse of Seniority, Hanan acquires exceptional

power and authority that enable her to use direct and unmitigated language even with her superiors¹⁰⁸ .

Equally, a working discourse of Expertise empowers Hanan in her CofP, especially since she has managed some of the most important projects in the company. In the meeting (and in many others I presume), her superior expertise in key issues works to legitimise her use of less cooperative language strategies in running the meeting, setting deadlines, and making final decisions.

Finally, a discourse of Loyalty has surfaced throughout the interview. Hanan repeatedly displayed resistance to the core values of Bahrainco in general and the Engineering department in particular. In the literature, loyalty is mostly referred to as a construct or a sub-heading of a discourse rather a discourse on its own, which basically entails devotion to ones' family, team or organisation (Casey 1999; Ryan 2011; Western 2008). However, few studies such as Lyman's (2003:27) article on corporate law refers to a 'Loyalty discourse', again as a concept of devotion that is 'grounded in widely-shared cultural norms' (see chapter one, section 3.1.1.2.1). Also in the literature review chapter (section 2.1.3.2), I have explored the concept of 'loyalty' in relation to traditional Arab family values.

Based on the above resources, I consider that in the corporate context of this study, the prevailing 'discourse of loyalty' requires identification with Bahrainco along with its core values and culture as well as adopting a collective identity where employees work for the overall good of the company rather than their personal interests. In the light of that definition, it appears that Hanan resists a discourse of Loyalty¹⁰⁹ by distancing herself from Bahrainco's culture and displaying a lack of appreciation and devotion to its management and its core values.

¹⁰⁸See the Appendices, section 4.2 (The banter and teasing incident with her superior)

¹⁰⁹ In the interview, Hanan repeatedly displays her resentment towards the gender discrimination prevailing in the company and some core values such as discipline, safety, and so on. This, perhaps, is caused by her feeling of lack of appreciation.

Accordingly, she constructs herself as a 'peripheral' rather than a 'core' member of her own section as well as the wider Bahrainco organisation (Fairclough 1992). While I have not observed direct effects of this discourse on her use of language in the meeting per se, I theorise that it has had a negative effect on her career progression. Along with the discourse of Masculinisation, the discourse of Loyalty dis-empowers Hanan and could explain the persistent glass ceiling in her case.

Finally, Fatima's data has yielded interesting findings in relation to discourses as I have traced three interwoven gendered and non-gendered discourses: Feminisation, Seniority, and Loyalty; all interacting and competing to construct an overarching discourse of family.

As a start, the CofP of the HR section was found to encompass a working discourse of Feminisation through which women employees are privileged and empowered¹¹⁰. Also, a range of mostly stereotypically feminine speech and communicative practices are highly regarded and normalised in this predominately women-dominated department. Holmes (2006) refers to this type of CofP as 'feminine' or 'women-friendly' workplaces (P.10 and 211 respectively), where stereotypically feminine speech practices prevail (e.g. use of egalitarian strategies, personal anecdotes, cooperative humour, and so on).

Along with the discourse of Feminisation, a discourse of Seniority was also found to play a major role in empowering Fatima and other older and more experienced women employees in the CofP of HR. The double effect of both discourses has constructed and gendered Fatima's role into a 'mother' and a 'care giver' to her subordinates. I have also found that this acquired 'maternal' identity has led to expectations for more nurturing, intimate and emotionally charged language from Fatima and others. Also, Fatima's use of highly relational language to enact leadership arguably does not only reflect her awareness of this preferred communicative code in

¹¹⁰Albeit, the HR is the only department that has three female superintendents.

her section, but also constructs her as an agent in the production and maintenance of these discourses.

The third discourse – the discourse of Loyalty– is a good example of the above claim. While Hanan has shown resistance to the discourse of Loyalty in her section, Fatima, on the other hand, has proven to be a supporter and a maintainer of this discourse. She constructs and maintains the discourse of Loyalty by doing the following: constantly showing appreciation to Bahrainco's management and encouraging her subordinates to do the same, identifying with the management people, defending and justifying their 'unpopular' decisions and portraying them as guardians and protectors of the company and all the employees, avoiding all sites of struggle with her superiors and Bahrainco's management, and acknowledging and accepting the company's hierarchies (see chapter five). All of these practices work to construct a sense of unquestionable loyalty within Fatima's team members and establish her as a powerful agent in constructing the next discourse, the overarching discourse of family.

The use of family metaphor and practices in corporations has been explored in various studies (e.g. Barker 1993; Goodman 1986; Ouchi 1981; Peters & Waterman 1984; Safizadeh 1991; Kunda 1992; Tjosvold 1991). Such a trend in management promotes certain qualities in employees such as commitment and loyalty to one's organisation and provides a community to which one can belong and feel secure. It also constructs an organisational culture that is hierarchical and paternalistic where management and superiors are viewed as parents working for the greater good of the family (Casey 1999; Legge 1999). Alakavuklar (2009) argues that the family metaphor in the corporation could be regarded as a discourse promoting a belief that all employees are part of one big family, where relationships between members are based on mutual love and commitment. In such contexts, use of collaborative, facilitative, and sometimes emotionally charged language is encouraged and normalised.

I have argued earlier that the discourses of Feminisation and Seniority interact to construct Fatima as a 'mother' creating with that a family-like atmosphere. On her part, Fatima takes up that role linguistically by using protective and nurturing language with her subordinates. I have also established that Fatima makes a notable effort in constructing a CofP where employees have the utmost regard and unquestionable loyalty to the management and the company as a whole. Based on the above, I have inferred that there is an overarching discourse of family which lies at the intersection of the three discourses: Feminisation, Seniority and Loyalty.

In this section I have reviewed the various interacting discourses in each case study, how they empower or disempower the senior women, and work to shape and construct their leadership language practices each in her CofP. To what extent are these three contexts similar or different? What insights do we gain by comparing the language of the three leaders, each in her CofP? These questions will be answered next.

2.4. Research Question (4):

What insights do we gain by comparing the leadership and language practices of the senior women from the three different communities of practice within Bahrainco?

This section aims to answer the fourth and final research question. Comparison is a key issue in my study because I seek to identify various models of female leadership in this part of the world where a unique composition of religious and cultural discourses affect the lives of women in organisations on a daily basis. Although I have made general references to the wider context as I consider relevant, my discussion primarily focuses on the effect of dominant discourses on the leadership and language practices of three women leaders in the context of organisational meetings, each in a different CofP. As a start, I will draw a comparison between the communities of practices of the three case studies, the prevailing discourses I have traced in

each context, and the implication of the multi-layered context on each leader's linguistic practices. Then I will provide a (comparative) review and assessment of each woman leader.

In the first case study, I draw my analysis mainly from two interrelated communities of practice. The first one is Badria's own section, Business Planning department, and the second one is the CofP of the meeting, which comprises a group of mostly Bahrainco's employees from different departments, a couple of representatives from University of Design and one representative from SATCO (chapter three). I have argued in section 2.3 that discourses between the two communities are fluid and are mainly constructed and maintained by Badria and other Bahrainco employees. Therefore, I consider that these discourses (Masculinisation, Professionalism, Expertise, Hierarchy and Status) are dominant discourses in Bahrainco and are being transferred into the new context in one way or the other.

However, while the discourse of Masculinisation is highly dominant in the Business Planning department, there are no obvious traces of it in the CofP of the meeting. This could be explained through the insights gained from the interview data. In the interview, Badria has shown resistance to the discourse of Masculinisation, and I believe that the new context (the meeting under analysis) could be her opportunity to use the language she considers most appropriate without being limited by organisational constraints (and far from the judging/monitoring eyes of Bahrainco's management). Therefore, she utilises a wider range of linguistic resources to enact leadership.

The second case study has a less complicated context as the meeting under discussion is a routine check-up between the project manager (Hanan) and her team members. Therefore, the Engineering department is the most obvious and defined CofP here (see chapter four). Applying Holmes's (2006) concept of 'masculine' and 'feminine' communities of practice to my own study,

I find that the Engineering department falls towards the masculinised type where work is mainly task-oriented with special preference for adversarial and highly direct language practices.

In the literature, engineering workplaces have been found to be strongly work-focused, with little regard for personal and social functions (Faulkner 2009). Also, they are often male-dominated CofPs 'accommodating a range of masculinities' (Faulkner 2009: 14). There is often a prevailing stereotypically masculine culture where women are alienated and discriminated against, and where language is used in the most formal and direct forms to show 'hands-on technical competence' (McLlwee and Robertson 1992:139). Likewise, my study on Hanan's section show similar findings where the discourses dominating in this CofP (Masculinisation, Seniority, Expertise, Loyalty) constitute and are constituted by such male dominated culture. Equally, as a leader, Hanan has been found to use a range of highly direct and stereotypically masculine leadership language as a way to establish herself as capable and professional as her male counterparts.

In my third and final case study, the community of practice under analysis is the Human Resource department. In the literature, HR has always been more of a women's domain compared to other professions (Metcalf 2007, Bierema 2001; Howell, Carter, and Scheid 2002). Similarly, the HR department in Bahrainco is a CofP where women are mostly privileged, and language strategies stereotypically associated with females are highly valued (see chapter five). My analysis has revealed Fatima's tendency to use highly mitigated and stereotypically feminine linguistic practices. Unlike the other conventionally 'masculinised' departments in Bahrainco, dominant discourses of Feminisation along an overarching discourse of Family prevail in the HR department. Yet, it still retains some of the most predominant discourses in Bahrainco such as Seniority and Loyalty.

Yet, this variation has its drawbacks; the 'feminisation' of HR has had an effect on the perception held towards this department by other Bahrainco employees. In the interview with Amir from the Engineering department, he contrasts the work and commitment of the 'professional' engineering employees with their 'laid-back' counterparts in the HR: '

A every division is different (.) HR (.) if the guy who is er responsible er (.) let's say head of HR (.) superintendent of HR (.) if he doesn't show up one day nothing will it's not going to be er big big I mean (.) it's not going to make a difference (.) if somebody from er let's say from our side (.) didn't show up for one two three days (.) people will ask him ok (.) we (.) we are not sitting (.) like HR they have certain tasks (.) no we are handling projects (.) we have (.) problems to solve (.) if I don't attend to the problems then (.) one day two days and he doesn't show people will start to ask (.) why this guy is not coming↑ they will flag it up to my manager to my (.) GM (.) this is operation

'This is operation', an expression Amir uses to indicate the transactional aspect of the engineering work as opposed to the 'less significant' relational aspect of the HR work. In the literature, in a male-dominated organisation such as Bahrainco, professionalism is often equated with the masculine. According to Still (1996:71) 'the masculine model is considered to be the professional model: this applies to communication, standards of behavior, processes and practices in the organisation'.

However, despite this negative evaluation of HR, Bahrainco seems to support and encourage women's empowerment¹¹¹ in this particular department (see chapter five, section 2.2.2.1). Does this reflect a genuine interest from Bahrainco's management to empower women in the company or it is another form of tokenism to disguise the gendered discrimination in such a 'male-dominated organisation' (Baxter 2010: 19)? I believe the latter is most likely in this case,

¹¹¹ Women empowerment refers to providing equal opportunities for women to reach leadership positions (see chapter one, section 2.1.4)

except that the tokenism here is taking place on the level of departments, not individuals. By choosing a 'less important' department such as HR and promoting few women who are already privileged by prevailing discourses of Seniority and Expertise,¹¹² Bahrainco presents itself as a supporter of female empowerment. Baxter (2010) refers to such organisations as 'male-dominated corporations' which often claim gender neutrality through initiating new policies that appear to grant women equal opportunities while keeping sexist attitudes prevailing through gendered discourses-e.g. discourse of Masculinisation.

Taking everything into account, comparing and contrasting discourses have revealed important insights about the larger organisation (Bahrainco), and has enforced the view that it is indeed a 'male-dominated corporation' (Baxter 2010). I have already explained in chapter one (section 2.2) that Bahrainco is a huge company with strictly hierarchical and patriarchal culture. However, in this study I have found that the various sections under the umbrella of the organisation are not necessarily homogeneous in regard to the general characteristics, dominant discourses, use of language, and so on. By using principles of the 'discourse approach' (Foucault 1972) and adapting Holmes's (2006) concept of 'masculinised' and 'feminised' communities of practice, I have found that a gendered discourse of Masculinisation is dominant in the 'Masculinised' communities of practice: Business Planning and Engineering departments. Other discourses as such Professionalism, Hierarchy and Status, Seniority, Expertise, and Loyalty are interwoven and are always interacting in a cyclical manner. To illustrate, while the discourse of Seniority supports hierarchy, it also reflects an important characteristic in Bahrainco's culture, which is the importance of valuing its employees and creating a sense of belonging. Yet, this is only the case when unquestionable loyalty to Bahrainco and its management and hierarchies is evident¹¹³. Therefore, you note that while the

¹¹²All three superintendents in HR are females who have worked in Bahrainco for over 20 years.

¹¹³There are two studies that criticise the reconstruction of Family discourse in organisations on the grounds that it maintains hierarchy, patriarchy and repression (Al Akavuklar 2009, Casey 1999)

discourse of Loyalty is working in favour of Fatima, it is undermining Hanan, who repeatedly showed her resistance to this discourse. In Badria's case, although a discourse of Loyalty could not be directly traced and defined because of Badria's shifting positions between the interview and the meeting, she made considerable linguistic effort to maintain the status and hierarchical relations between of Bahrainco and SATCO in the meeting– which shows some degree of loyalty to her company, their rules and hierarchies.

This cyclic relationship (see figure 2 below) between the various discourses appears to maintain and reproduce an overarching discourse of Masculinisation in Bahrainco. For example, discourses of Seniority and Loyalty work to maintain hierarchical relationship (see section 2.3); the latter is rather a characteristic of the discourse of Masculinisation. Also, the discourse of Expertise requires special emphasis on and appreciation of the transactional aspect of the workplace, which is also distinctive of the discourse of Masculinisation (Baxter 2003).

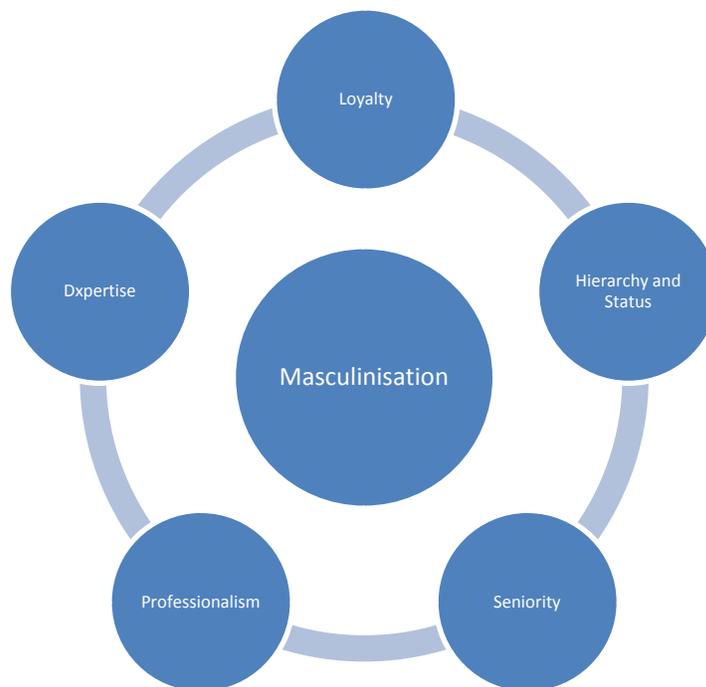


Figure 2: Relationship between the discourses in the context.

I have already explained how the women leaders in my study react to their complex and distinctive context. Whether reproducing or resisting dominant discourses in their communities of practice, each woman leader shows unique dispositions towards these discourses through their constant shifting of subject positions as well as making informed choices of language practices to enact leadership, encompassing interrelated transactional and relational goals.

My analysis has revealed certain disparities between the communities of practice under discussion, and even more variation in the way senior women enact leadership in the light of the given dynamics of the context. Baxter (2010:164) asserts that '[d]epending on the context, the gendered nature of leadership language may become a 'problem' for senior women, or alternatively be celebrated as a valuable and distinctive 'asset''.

Starting with Badria, despite the negative evaluation and stereotyping of the 'pet' role, I believe she is the most successful example of the three leaders¹¹⁴. From a social constructionist perspective that views leadership as a social action rather than an attribute, language and gender researchers view effective leaders as those who are able to constantly appropriate the vast language repertoire and leadership skills available to them depending on the context (e.g. Baxter, 2010, Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Holmes 2006, Mullany 2007, Schnurr 2008). As I have illustrated, Badria shows an exceptional awareness of the linguistic resources available to her, using them skilfully to enact leadership, and without jeopardising her status in the company or upsetting the management.

Hanan, on the other hand, is an example of the classic 'double bind' (e.g. Cameron 1995; Kendall & Tannen 1997; Marra, Schnurr & Holmes 2006; Litosseliti 2006) where women are condemned either for speaking cooperatively or aggressively. In this case, Hanan, who works in a male-dominated CofP, places great importance on achieving work-place transactions, taking

¹¹⁴Not only was she the first woman manager in Bahrainco, but right after the data collection, Badria actually left her job for a much prestigious, higher paid job at an international company.

up mostly language typically associated with masculinity (such as directness, displaying power and authority, using banter, etc.). The 'double bind' is manifested in the lack of formal appreciation and denying her a well-deserved promotion after serving the company for over twenty years (and making exceptional linguistic effort to fit in the 'masculinised CoffP' of the Engineering department).

Finally, in Fatima's case, her persistent use of indirect facilitative leadership language appears to come at a high cost. Although she seems very comfortable with the position of the 'mother' in her department, as from that position she gets power, authority and respect, this positioning, especially if used permanently could have several disadvantages and could create various obstacles to woman a leader. According to Kanter (1977), a woman leader might not be taken seriously when 'trapped' in the role of 'mother' because this role is not dependent on professional expertise, but rather on socio-emotional capacities. Baxter (2012:8) notes: 'this position is fundamentally limiting for senior women because the 'mother' is expected to provide a service to peers rather than to be respected for her independent, professional and critical abilities'

On a different level, although a mother's power is legitimate, it requires a great deal of manipulation and linguistic effort to achieve workplace transactions, some of which may be sudden and urgent. In this case, enacting the considerate and protective mother role could be a hindrance to tasks as well as frustrating and exhausting to the leader herself. As I have shown in chapter five (section 2.2.1), Fatima spends considerable amount of time and linguistic effort (story- telling, complementing, explaining, justifying, etc.) to accomplish basic tasks such as informing her subordinates of the new timing system or requesting them to avoid gathering, and so on.

After a close analysis on the language of the three leaders and their communities of practices, it appears that in this context, the more male-dominated the department is, the bigger the expectation from senior women to acquire stereotypically masculine practices, the bigger the double bind, and the less rewarded they are. Engineering is the most male-dominated of the three sections, Hanan is the most task-focused, direct and aggressive leader of the three, and the less rewarded one.

When considering discourses, there is another significant observation. While Badria and Hanan take up, resist and sometimes reproduce dominant discourses depending on the context, Fatima plays a major role in constructing and maintaining the discourses in her CofP (perhaps because they all work to her favour). Unlike Badria and Hanan who are undermined by the discourse of Masculinisation in their departments, discourses of Feminisation, Seniority, Loyalty and Family all work to empower Fatima. Being a woman, a senior woman, and a loyal employee in the HR department has privileged Fatima over others. By choosing the 'mother' subject position, I believe Fatima is exploring the full potential of her 'femininity' and using it to her favour.

Finally, the question that begs to be answered here is: To what extent do senior women contribute to the reproduction of the discourses which work to undermine them? It seems that all three women in my case studies reproduce the gendered discourse of Masculinisation or its sub-discourses (Seniority, Loyalty, etc.). This appears to be, to a large extent, a way to succeed in such a male dominated corporation. The only senior woman who openly shows some resistance is Hanan, and perhaps that is why she is the lowest ranking of the three.

3. Implications of the Arabic and Islamic values and Discourses on theContext

Research in the Middle Eastern business context suggests that cultural and Islamic discourses have a huge effect on the business communication processes of Arab corporations (Ahmed

1998; Metacalfe 2006). Similarly, in my data, I have found that the wider cultural context and the cultural values of the Arab/Bahraini community (such as Patriarchy, hierarchy, seniority, and loyalty) play a major role in constructing and shaping the dominant organisational discourses in the different departments in Bahrainco. However, the three departments in seem to vary in their conformity to the wider cultural context. I have found that the HR department, to a large extent, mirrors the cultural values of the Bahraini community, where the dominant discourses can all be traced back to established cultural norms.

To start with, the discourse of Loyalty can be related to the notions of loyalty and collective self in the traditional Arab Family (Barakat 1993). This discourse places both the mother and the children in a powerless position as they are expected to depend on the father and follow him blindly. Also, members of the family are expected to hold up the family's reputation and let go of their individuality for the greater good of the institution. Likewise, Fatima in the third case study, appears very protective of her people (both subordinates and superiors), making exceptional effort to create a sense of collective responsibility and encourage her team to work for the greater interest of Bahrainco.

Moreover, when Fatima adopts a discourse of Loyalty, she establishes and maintains a culture of hierarchy in her CofP. This hierarchical culture she is promoting is in several aspects similar to the one found in a traditional Arab family where the father works for the good of the family and makes all the decisions. The mother, while herself a subordinate to the father, fulfils a mediator positioning between her kids and her husband. She enjoys relative power as she is responsible for preserving the value system and the emotional wellbeing of the whole family. Yet, the mother is the one entrusted in raising and disciplining the children on a daily basis. Therefore, there exists a strong matriarchal system alongside the dominant patriarchal system in the Arab family (Barakat 1993).

Last but not least, the discourse of Seniority has its roots in one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Middle Eastern, Arabic and Bahraini culture: the respect for the elders. Indeed, in the traditional patriarchal culture of the Arab world, two kinds of people are privileged; males and elders (Barakat 1993; Ghousseub 1987; Joseph 1996; Joseph & Slyomovices 2001; Sabbagh 2005; Sharabi 1988). In the case of Bahrainco, I believe that this concept works on two levels: elder in age and length of experience in the company.

On a different level, the male-dominated and patriarchal culture of the Arab Islamic society is evident in Bahrainco, even in the HR department where the majority of employees are women. Although women are in power, they are still kept at middle management, restrained and controlled by two higher levels of male superiors (Manager, and General Manager). In the interview, Fatima indicates her lack of authority when reporting a discussion she had with her manager: *'if I try and try I say (.) that's it it's up to you you are going to make the decision it's your decision'* (chapter five, Extract 7, lines 186-187).

Additionally, similar to the discourse of Feminisation prevailing in HR, Weir (2002) notes that, interactional practices in the Arabic workplace could be considered 'feminine' by Western standards. The focus on humility, trust, relationship building, and collaboration in the Islamic teaching translates into powerful discourses that affect the communicative practices in the public and private spheres. Therefore, participative, facilitative, and cooperative leadership practices (e.g. indirectness, mitigation, and other face-saving strategies.) are highly preferred and valued (Badaway 1980, more ref).

This aspect sets any research in the Middle Eastern workplaces apart from the vast literature written on workplace practices in the West. While few studies have similarly found 'feminised' cultures in many international companies (Cameron 2000; Fairclough 2001), my research bears another significant dimension of Western influence, due to Bahrainco's beginnings as a Western

establishment. Therefore, I suggest that the other two departments (Business Planning and Engineering) exhibit characteristics and discourses that, perhaps, are reminiscent of Bahrainco's roots in Western management such as focus on transactions, professionalism, expertise and experience.

It appears that the combination of discourses that are informed by Western and Middle Eastern management practices has produced a unique organisational culture in Bahrainco. The combined effect of patriarchy and Western influence is more obvious in the most operational and technical department (Engineering); which has been shown to exhibit a strong conventionally masculinised culture. It is also patriarchal in the sense that all leadership positions are reserved for male employees, and the small number of women is placed in supportive positions such as clerical jobs and so on. In contrast, the people-managing department of HR is more 'feminised' and, as I indicated earlier, is being utilised and exploited (tokenised) by Bahrainco's management to reflect a flatter, women friendly culture. This may have many purposes such as promoting Bahrainco as an ad hoc company in the mid of global changes in management, and locally to respond to the pressure from the government to empower women (see chapter one, section 2.2).

However, I think, most of all, this polarisation and gendering of departments indeed reflects the wider cultural and religious values in the society, where discourses of gender difference and different gender roles prevail (see chapter one, section 2.1.3.4). Men and women are equal but are born to fulfil different roles. Men are associated with technical and operational work, and women are associated with jobs that require interpersonal skills. Therefore, women are likely to be appreciated, respected, and rewarded for being 'feminine' at HR. Presumably, senior women taking up a 'mother' position (such as Fatima) could be highly regarded and may have more potential to succeed in this part of the world than the West.

4. Conclusion

My analysis of the leadership language of three women leaders from different departments in Bahrainco has yielded significant findings that could inform further research in the specific areas of female leadership language in the Middle East. On the level of organisational cultures and discourses, I have found that the wider cultural context plays a major a role in constructing and shaping dominant organisational discourses. Patriarchy, hierarchy, seniority, and loyalty are all values which are deeply ingrained in the Bahraini, Arabic, and Middle Eastern cultures.

Additionally, my analysis has shown that the three senior women enact leadership differently making variable use of a repertoire of conventionally masculine and feminine linguistic practices. However, they all appear to have limited language resources and even more limiting subject positions; and they all experience the 'double bind' in one way or another. Yet, the extent of this limitation depends on the CofP with its prevailing discourses.

I have also found that the language of the three women leaders is in many ways similar to their counterparts in the West. They experience the same type of difficulties and obstacles, and they all have to exercise considerable linguistic expertise to police and adjust their language , to be more direct, competitive, and aggressive in order to avoid the stigma of being 'feminine' in the workplace. However, it is may be harder for Middle Eastern women to achieve any degree of equality with men in the workplace because discourses of Gender difference lie at the core of the Islamic teaching and ideology.

While this research has attempted to explore the unearthed ground of female leadership language in the Middle East, research on a bigger scale is needed to explore further the differences and similarities of leadership language between Western and Middle Eastern women leaders, and linguistic practices of men and women in the Middle Eastern context.

The Conclusion

In this research thesis, I have examined the leadership language of three senior women working at a male-dominated corporation in Bahrain. My core aim was to explore the under-researched area of Arab leadership language in general and female leadership in particular. Yet, I also wanted to offer models of good practice for women seeking better opportunities and leadership positions in the Arab Middle Eastern workplaces, which are still considered a male-domain. In this regard, Metcalfe (2007) emphasises the need for women's mentoring and role models in the Middle East and particularly in Bahrain. He notes that while there are many women organisations in Bahrain such as Business Women Society (BBS) and Bahrain's Women Society (BWS), most of these tend to focus on women's role in the community and family. In the workplace, however, there still exists a lack of professional women and role models for female leaders.

My research of women leaders' language in Bahrain has yielded several significant findings, most important of which are the following:

- In each department, there is a distinctive set of interwoven discourses—interacting and competing— which affect the women leaders, their positioning in the workplace, and their success and career progression. These discourses also appear to play a major role in shaping the senior women's leadership language. The same discourse can be found in more than one department (such as the discourses of Masculinisation, Loyalty, Professionalism, etc.). Generally, I have found that some discourses work to disadvantage the women leaders in my study —such as discourse of Masculinisation in Badria's and Hanan's case). These are usually resisted by the senior women in my study. For example, Hanan resists the discourse of Loyalty by disassociating herself from the 'Bahrainco people' and their value system. In contrast, other discourses—such

as Feminisation, Seniority, and Expertise—are rather empowering and are often taken up by the women leaders.

- I have also found that women are still a minority facing all kinds of obstacles and discrimination such as the ‘double bind’, the ‘glass ceiling’, and so on. Based on the analysis, the three senior women appear to have limited language resources and even more limiting subject positions; and they all experience the ‘double bind’ in one way or another. Yet, while the situation is changing due to the Bahraini government’s pressure on corporations to empower women, many departments such as the Engineering are still an exclusively male-domain.
- The wider cultural context appears to play a major a role in constructing and shaping dominant organisational discourses. For example, Islamic principles promote the idea that while men and women are equal, they are born to fulfil different roles. Therefore, a dominant discourse of Gender Difference prevails in Bahraini society and the workplace alike. In Bahrainco, for example, it appears that male employees are associated with technical and operational work, and female employees are associated with jobs that require interpersonal skills.
- Other cultural values such as patriarchy, hierarchy, seniority, and loyalty can all be found in Bahrainco especially in the male-dominated departments of Business Planning and Engineering. However, the HR department exhibits other types of traditional Arabic and Islamic values such as humility, trust, relationship building, and collaboration. However, since Bahrainco is originally a Western establishment, some departments (e.g. Engineering and Business and Planning) also appear to exhibit characteristics and discourses that, perhaps, are reminiscent of Bahrainco’s roots in Western management such as focus on transactions, professionalism, expertise and experience. Generally, I believe that Bahrainco’s organisational culture is unique and is a product of a merger between Western and Middle Eastern management practices.

When considering the findings of my study, it is important to bear in mind that Bahrainco, owing to its history and nature of its business, is not a typical organisation in the Arab Middle East. Other workplaces in Bahrain such as banks and private corporations may differ in terms of employees' gender composition, issues of equality, glass ceiling, intercultural element, and so on. Therefore, my small scale study is by no means representative of Arab Middle Eastern companies, nor should it be generalised to a larger population. In fact, I believe future research on a bigger scale is needed in the following areas:

- Comparative studies of men and women's leadership language in the Arab Middle East.
- Studies that explore the differences and similarities of leadership language between Western and Middle Eastern women and men leaders.
- Studies that examine in depth the effect of cultural and Islamic discourses on workplace contexts and Arab's leadership language.
- Studies that focus on the intercultural elements of Arab Middle Eastern workplaces.

Last but not least, working with the three senior women has been very inspiring. Each leader is accomplished, distinctive and unique in her own way. They all face mostly similar and sometimes different types of challenges perpetuated by the dominant discourses in their departments. Yet, each leader uses distinctive set of linguistic practices. Each leader interacts, resists, and reacts to the interwoven discourses differently. These are all models of good practice; these are all successful women working in a highly masculinised environment, making a change every day towards gender equality in Bahrainco and women emancipation in Bahrain.

I hope this research could reach out to all Bahraini women seeking success in the workplace. Therefore, I intend to collaborate with the Ministry of Labour in Bahrain in order to organise

workshops for beginning employees (especially women) to introduce them to the kinds of obstacles and discrimination they may face in the workplace; and offer examples of inspiring professional women and role models. I also intend to follow this thesis with more research on a bigger scale in the future.

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I. Transcription Key

This transcription key is mainly based on the “Jefferson system”¹¹⁵

1, 2	Line numbering
A, B, C	Name of speaker (anonymised and abbreviated)
Word	Translated talk
((word))	Transcriber’s comment on what happened
(word)	Transcriber’s guess at what have been said
()	Unclear talk
(-)	Omitted talk
(.)	Noticeable pause
(0.2), (2.5)	Example of timed pauses
↑word, word↓	Rising and falling of intonation
<u>WORD</u>	High volume, loud
°word°	Low volume, attenuated speech
[word	Overlapping talk
[word	
=word	Latching, simultaneous talk
=word	
wor-	Sharp cut-off
Wo:rd	Prolonged sound
£word£	Smiley voice, humorous tone

¹¹⁵See: Jefferson, G. (2004). Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In G. Lerner (Ed.), *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation* (p 13-31). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

II. Interview Question Templates

Interview questions are designed to give insight into the second and third research questions:

- How do women leaders perceive their own leadership and language practices? How do their colleagues and subordinates react to/perceive these practices?
- What are the significant competing discourses at play in the context? How do they shape the leadership language practices of the three women leaders in their communities of practice?

For the purpose of clarity, I renamed some of the constructs and notions I use in the research to avoid confusion over terminology during the research interview; for example:

- *Styles* instead of *practices*
- *Culture, attitudes, urf, etc.* instead of *Discourses*

Interview questions cover the following areas (these are necessarily in order; they are not distinct and questions are likely to overlap): the recently observed meeting, the perception of the leaders' leadership and language practices, and finally the competing/gendered discourses in the Islamic/Arabic/ Bahraini culture as well as Bahrainco.

II.I. Interview Questions for Women Leaders

The recently observed meeting:

- a. What was the goal/purpose of the meeting?
- b. How well do you think the meeting went/how successful was today's meeting? Did you accomplish your goals/agenda?
- c. Did anything not go according to plan? Was there anything avoided or not discussed?
- d. Generally speaking, what counts as a successful meeting for you?

Probes: Achieving transactional goals versus relational goals: e.g.

- When all transactional goals are met (get business done)
- When everybody participate in problem solving, decision making, etc.
- When everybody is happy and content, etc.

The leader's view/perception of her own leadership language and interactional practices:

- e. How would you describe your own leadership style?

Probes: As a leader, which of the following characteristics best describe you as a leader:

- Strong and strict
- Open minded and flexible
- Direct and formal with team and subordinates
- Indirect, informal and friendly with team subordinates
- Focus on setting goals, getting the work done and meeting your objectives
- Focus on communication, creating team and workplace relationships
- Create and extol a positive vision of what can be achieved in the long run
- Share power and information with team and subordinates
- Make decisions autonomously

- Encourage others to participate in the planning and decision making processes.
 - Rely on standard forms of reward, punishment and sanction to control subordinates.
 - Set an example and inspire your team to act beyond self-interest
- f. Which of the following behaviours and communication skills are most important to achieving/doing leadership effectively? Which ones do you normally use?

Getting the work done:

- Setting g targets
- Assigning tasks
- Delegating
- Defining and solving problems
- Making decisions

Communication:

- Holding the floor
- Being assertive in giving orders and instructions
- Holding to your opinion
- Interrupting
- Listening/sharing the floor
- Discussing
- Making Suggestions
- Persuading
- Consulting
- Justifying/explaining
- Arguing
- Negotiating
- Confronting
- Questioning

Assessment and evaluation:

- Giving feedback

- Criticising
- Complimenting
- Expressing support and empathy

Maintaining workplace relationships:

- Being polite/saving face
 - Telling stories
 - Making small talk
 - Using humour
- g. How representative/indicative was the meeting of your leadership and interactional style? What aspects of your style were highlighted (or not)?
- h. Regarding your language choice/language of communication, what language (Arabic or English) would you normally use with your team or other colleagues? Do you alternate (code switch) between the two? If yes, When and why?
- i. Are Arab and Western managers (males and females) similar or different in their leadership style? (For instance in the literature Arab managers are found to avoid direct questioning, assertions, etc...What do you think of that? Does it apply to Arab managers in Bahrainco? Why and Why not? Is this different for women?)
- j. Which of the following have most contributed to your professional identity and thus your language and leadership style?
- Religion and/or culture (Do you perceive them differently?)
 - Gender (in relation to the above)
 - Working for Bapco
 - Particular department you are working/used to work at
 - Personal experiences; if yes, do you recall important moments or incident where you possibly had a turning point in your professional identity or career
 - Other

The competing/gendered discourses in the Islamic/Arabic/ Bahraini culture:

- a. Is a male manager similar or different from a female manager?
- b. Do you believe that females and males are equal /treated equally in our culture? If no, what are the reasons behind this inequality: our religion? Culture/Urf? History? Other?

In Bahrainco:

- a. Is working in Bahrainco similar or different from working in other companies? How would you describe it?
- b. Does this working culture differ from one division to another?
- c. Do you consider Bahrainco a hierarchical company or an egalitarian? (Where can you find females employees?)
- d. What is your take on the improvements and steps the company is taking towards achieving gender equality? Do you think they are genuine efforts? How do you feel about this change?

II.II. Interview Questions for Other Participants

The recently observed meeting:

- a. How well do you think the meeting went/how successful was today's meeting?
- b. Was there anything avoided or not discussed?

The participants' perception of the leaders' linguistic practices:

- a. How would you describe X's (leader's name) leadership style?

Probe: Which of the following describe best describe X's leadership style (Bass 2002):

Transactional/goal-oriented

- Direct
- Formal
- Focuses on getting the work done, meeting her objectives and dealing with current issues.
- Motivates her team through setting goals and promising rewards for the desired performance.

Relational/people-oriented

- Indirect
- Informal, friendly
- Focuses on fostering workplace relationships, creating team and positive vision of what can be achieved in the long run.
- Inspires her team to act beyond self-interest and stimulate their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

- Relies on standard forms of reward, punishment and sanction to control subordinates.
- Encourages participation and shares power and information with subordinates

b. Which of the following leadership and language practices are normally used by X?

A

B

Giving orders and instructions directly

Giving orders and instructions indirectly

Holding the floor

Sharing the floor

interrupting

Listening

Offering opinions

Inviting others to share their opinions/consulting

Criticising/ Evaluating and assessing others

Giving feedback/explaining

Persuading

Making suggestions

Arguing

Convincing

disagreeing

Approving/supporting

Being confrontational

Being Polite/saving face

Setting targets

Negotiating

Making autonomous decisions

Delegating

Using humour

Making small talk

Telling stories

c. Are Arab and Western managers (males and females) similar or different in their leadership style? (For instance in the literature Arab managers are found to avoid direct questioning, assertions, etc...What do you think of that? Does it apply to Arab managers in Bahrainco? Why and Why not? Is this different for women?)

The competing/gendered discourses in the Islamic/Arabic/ Bahraini culture:

- a. Do you believe that men and women are equal /treated equally in our culture? If no, what are the reasons behind this inequality: our religion? Culture/Urf? History? Other?
- b. For you personally, does having a female manager similar or different to a male one?

In Bahrainco:

- a. Is working in Bahrainco similar or different from working in other companies? How would you describe it (Bahrainco)?
- b. Does the working culture differ from one division to another?
- c. Do you consider Bahrainco a hierarchical or an egalitarian company? (if it is hierarchical, where can you often find females employees)?
- d. What's your take on the improvements and steps the company is taking towards achieving gender equality? Do you think they are genuine efforts? How do you feel about this change?

III. Additional Extracts

This section contains meeting and interview extracts which are important to the analysis, but because of space limitation, I could not include them in the body of the thesis¹¹⁶.

III.I. Badria's Case Study

Extract (1):

This extract takes place in the meeting where the participants are discussing the logos positions.

Key: A= Amal (F), B=Badria, D=Dr Sara (F), O=Omar (M)

D see in that case what we can do is UOD and then we can put Bahrainco and SATCO together (.) like a triangle (.)

(0.5)

A here↑

D you know we can have (.) like UOD (.) because we are organising (.) like logically ah er £not emotionally£ ((laughter from everyone)) and then we can have SATCO and Bahrainco

A where↑

B at the base (.) at the base

D no no no not the base (.) like UOD on top and then just below that (.) SATCO and Bahrainco

B no Dr Sara (.) it's not er it's SATCO now we are talking about SATCO (.) they have to be at the at the [top

A [top

D either you shift the three logos at the bottom (.) maybe if you shift it to the bottom you won't have this writing to the left (.) and you'll have the whole area (.) you can er accommodate what you want

¹¹⁶I did not include the whole meetings and interview transcripts because they are too extensive.

B the problem is that SATCO's er logo is big

((Along discussion slightly off the topic))

B ok ok let's just focus let's focus

D ok

B the the card (.) where we can include SATCO↑(.) do you want to think about it and come back to us (.) tomorrow on it↑

D no no you know the logo you just tell us we we will try to put it [as

B [is it possible to move the whole thing down↑

D (0.2) we can (0.2) yeah we can

B °do you think it will be ok er°

A I mean this is the [er the most er () [solution

D [solution [logical solution

A because we have three logos and er we are saying that the three logos are the same level

D same level yeah

A which means we have to be together

D ok er

A [either on the top or

B [but (.) it has to be SATCO first (.) Bahrainco (.) then the UOD (0.5) ok (.) put them down (0.5) never bring Bahrainco ahead of er [SATCO

A [SATCO

D and UOD is always like er you know

B well (.) £UOD it's up to you£ ((laughter from all))

((Further Discussion))

B hehehe (0.2) ok so: we are done with this (.) you will bring them down and SATCO will be in the middle

D I will show you both options you know whether we can have them on top as well as down

B and for the background again (.) now this will be on the side right↑

D yeah

B and SATCO will be at the [top

O [the top (.) not (--)

B not (--)) ((echoes Omar))

D so we can have something like this you know like because this will go down (.) so we can have er SATCO and Bahrainco here and we can have UOD

BA [yes (.) it should be ok

AD [yeah ok yeah

Extract (2)

This extract takes place in the meeting. Ahmed Rahimi (manager Training) has just arrived to the meeting, very late. Badria is introducing him and briefing him on the project.

Key: B=Badria

B mm (0.2) ok (.) ok (.) so: (.) we have Mr Ahmed Rahimi (.) er manager er Training department (0.1) a new joiner for the arrangement of this seminar (.) Ahmed er this team has been working since er November (.) December (.) on the arrangement for the seminar (.) I have sent you yesterday the leaflet with the details of the seminar (.) in the team er we have Dr Sara from the University (.) University of Design (.) £They have

been the most active parties in the arrangement for this seminar£ (.) and we have er
Miss Ahlam (.) she is just- [Haleema sorry (.) sorry am not good with [names

Extract (3)

This extract is taken from the meeting. Badria is asking Ahmed Rahimi (manager Training) to oversee certain arrangements.

Key: AR =Ahmed Rahimi (M), B=Badria

B I would appreciate that (.) maybe also we need to resend er that email kameela sent (.)
and er

AR yes (.) no I will send it personally myself

Extract (4)

This extract is taken from the meeting. At the end of the meeting and after a long discussion about the logos, Dr Sara brings up the issue of cost to which Badria respond with laughter followed by teasing.

Key: A=Amal (F), B=Badria, D=Dr Sara (F)

D er of the record↑ of the record (.) even she doesn't kno- I talked to liz who was coming
who yesterday got the fabric (.) it's going to be somewhere around a thousand bd (.) less
than around a thousand bd (0.2) because we have if you remember we had said two
thousand (.) at that point of time we were planning to stitch 50 garments (.) now we have
made it 28 so it came down around thousand (.) and if we do it like 50 50 kind of a thing
you know like (.) between Bahrainco and er

BA hehehehe

D between Baharinco and us (.) so we can give her a full [page

BA [£I though it will absorbed 100 %
by you£

D £not at all (.) we have the sketches you can (take) the sketches from us£

BA hehehe

A hehe

Extract (5)

This extract is taken from the interview. Badria is answering my question about her 'leadership style'.

B well sometimes of course (.) generally I avoid arguing (.) I do avoid it because I had been arguing I had been arguing a lot during my early years but at the end by the way you don't reach (--) I am much (mature) now

HA what's the more acceptable style in Bahrainco↑

B see we were (.) Bahrainco and NAPCO¹¹⁷ are (--) we in NAPCO we are more er (0.2) we are more (0.3) more flexible if I could say and less aggressive from refinery people and the ones from Bahrainco

Extract (6)

This extract is taken from the interview. Badria is answering my question about Bahrainco's 'organisational culture'.

B when it comes to discipline sure we are more disciplined we are very disciplined (.) see for example we get annoyed from Dr Sara when she is late when she answers her phone (.) Bahrainco's people are very disciplined in that sense (.) it's not there anymore here in Marketing we have () we have to work from home (.) we work longer hours but we are more flexible but in the refinery there is more discipline (.) I remember we were strict when we were working on a project er er (0.2) they used to er they make sure they come early (.) I mean on time because they are working in Bahrainco (.) I was very proud to hear that er (.1) people er think that Bahrainco employees are disciplined (0.2)

Extract (7)

This extract is taken from the interview. Badria is answering my question about her 'leadership style'. She has just mentioned that she becomes forceful sometimes.

HA What do you mean by more forceful↑ direct in your face kind of-↑

¹¹⁷Napco is the name of another company which Badria worked at in the beginning of her career. Later, there was a merger between Napco and Bahrainco, and Badria officially became a Bahrainco employee.

BA yes if I have an idea I will make sure that they listen to me they (.) they (.) that I pass my (.) pass my idea and make sure that they understand it (.) and I will not be as lean (0.2) ok↑ with my team (.) it depends (.) when I want to pass a message to them ok? for example if I am guiding them ok? I will be leaner (.) I will have them be at comfort (.) I want them to listen (.1) I will deal with them the way I deal with my children (.) If I want to give an advice to my boy (.) if I want them to be the recipient yes I will do that (0.2) but if we are discussing for example a project (.) ok↑ And (0.1) I will allow them to talk but (0.1) if things are not going the way it want it I will be (.) I will be (.) I will be more forceful (.) I will be more demanding

Extract (8)

This extract is taken from the interview with Nadeem (Badria's assistant, female). She is answering my question about Badria's leadership language, but she diverges from the topic to talk about how Badria's life has changed after her cousin became the Chief Executive of Bahrainco.

N yes (.) because they will think that because of her cousin he is her cousin (.) but she became a manager before him (.) see I am very close to her (.) believe that (.) she felt much better before (.) because (.) she is happy for him (.) but sh- when when he start- when he came to this position (.) she said I will have some problems (.) you see↑ although she was getting whatever she wants anything she was asking for a meeting or something with the Chief Executive (.) since he came (.) she couldn't you know ↑(0.2) she was fighting for things (.) going to Chief Executive (.) I want this and this (.) I have been told this and this (.) I want this and this for my department (.) you know she was going for anything (.) when he er came (.) on the contrary (.) she couldn't go because they will say that's because her cousin

III.II. Hanan's Case Study

All of the additional extracts in Hanan's case are taken from the interview data¹¹⁸.

Extract (1)

Hanan is answering my question about her leadership 'style'.

H [I am er (.) I think I mean I (.) I am (.) I mean eas- I mean er I laugh with the (.) engineers (.) my subordinates and (.) I try to have I mean nice (.) working environment (.) but (0.1) sometimes really I get really angry (.) when I see something wrong which I did not expect them to do it wrong (.) and err (.) my angry I mean don't really (.) shout at them or something I mean but er (.) sometimes I feel that er (0.2) I mean I felt for example I mean that day (.) I expect them to do them for setting er set points by units not by percentage (.) this is I **mean this should go without saying** (.) I wouldn't really expect them to (.) do it (.) the other way around (.) (---) no we did it that way (.) how come you did it that way you have never (.) £ you never you worked with (.) on that (.) on set system (.) that you don't know how it works (I mean)£↑ so little bit I felt I mean I embarrassed them (.) but (.) I had to at that time (.) °I mean° (.) I felt I mean I had to tell them a little bit strong word (.) to tell them I mean (.) hey (.) you have to (.) know what you're doing and I mean (.) if you don't know what you're doing you have to tell me

Extract (2)

Hanan is answering my question about her leadership 'style'.

H so sometimes yes (.) I try to be nice with I er am always nice with er especially with the IT people (.) and er they have to be I mean (0.2) s- strong (with) especially mistakes and sometimes (.) I mean I felt they took it er I mean (.) they felt bad about me when I told them (.) but later when I have seen the job has been done I (.) I went back and I said (.) you are great (.) you did very well and (.) forget about it I mean (.) I didn't I mean tell (them/er) (.) I'm sure you can do much better and much better things so (.) I have really to maintain (.) very important to maintain good relations with them so that they can continue (.) working (.) work for me

Extract (3)

¹¹⁸Among the three leaders, Hanan is the one who speaks most critically about Bahrainco, its hierarchical and discriminatory practices, and the pressure she faces to adjust her language in a male-dominated workplace.

Hanan is answering my question about her leadership 'style'.

H well I try as well I mean err (.) I try not to er (.) (-- for this particular project I tried my best to keep away (.) and er delega- ask Amir to handle them (.) so I just go there everyday maybe one hour two hours to check up (.) what has been done (0.1) but er (.) yeah I tried my best to delegate but sometimes I feel I have some good engineers sometimes I don't have

Extract (4)

Hanan is answering my question about her relationship with Amir, the Bahraini engineer in the project.

H he's an er in that project (.) in er he reports to me because (.) I am the senior and he's the er (.) junior (.) junior engineer I mean so he works er for me I mean (.) he is (.) assigned (.) to work for me in that in that project so I asked him to do this (.) this task er and I try to keep it I mean I wanted him to execute most of the job (.) and he had done this (.) er the (-) he did very well (.) but I mean there are things (.) in which he might slightly lack experience that much (.) so he thought that (.) it can be done that way (.) it should be done that way but (.) it was a bit (.) not the right way I mean (0.2) although he was supervising them and they were (.) with him all the time (.) but apparently (.) few things I mean (.) maybe I thought they were recent but (.) I found that it turns out (.) it was long time ago (.) I mean very few things

Extract (5)

Hanan is answering my question about working in the male-dominated department of Engineering.

H er yeah initially I mean when I go and enter new places (.) of course (.) I feel I mean I am watched (.) but er eventually I get used to them (.) and they are make them (.) they get used to me (.) and now I am there (.) don't I mean say (.) dirty jokes or don't I mean

HA okay

H yeah (.) £so now they know there's a female £(.) so they have to behave (.) and I and I feel it's better (.) for the work (.) because sometimes (.) er I mean I came (.) and I I went er (.) I mean when I go to work and go to site (.) I go to places that's (.) completely men

(.) and I I mean initially when I started going to those places (.) they never expect a female to come (.) £so you go and see all I mean (.) dirty pictures on their hehe drawers on their hehehe walls they never expect I mean a female (.) to come (.) and visit that er area (.) but after a while now I think they become I mean more er conscious and er if there is a female that (.) they have to be careful they don't say (.) £as they say what they want to say £ (.) and that was better I think er

Extract (6)

Hanan is answering my question about her use of language with her subordinates.

H you know err we learn a lot (.) from our kids when we bring them up and we (.) no matter how much really hehe your kid is bad (.) but you still at the end want (.) him to be good (.) so you really learn the skill (.) that er (.) to to have someone who is good (.) to have someone who's your subordinate and he is good (0.1) you will not really act like his father who real- who will get angry and will just er (.) walk out of the house [and just er we always

III.III. Fatima's Case Study

Extract (1)

This extract is taken from the meeting data. While Fatima is discussing the opening of the Help center with her team members, salem initiates a humorous sequence.

Key: A=Ahmed (M), B=Badria (F), H=Huda (F), F=Fatima, S=Salem (M),

S £ I was talking to Ahmed earlier (.) about the er (.) the centre that will be launched so: (.) so I think (.) in the first week there will be a huge load on him (.) because (.) in the memo (.) it doesn't specify that Ahmed will be er (.) hehe so everybody was expecting it to be a girl (.) blonde (.) like this (.) hehe everybody will be coming to her

((laughter from everyone))

B £ why blonde↑ what do you mean↑

S [£I mean blonde (---) reception (----)

B [£blonde ((sarcastically))

A [hehehe

H does it have [to be blonde (I mean)↑

B [you mean blonde is prettier than er

S everyone everyone will get down to the er (.) OPD (.) they will gather at [Ahmed's

H [oh my god=

F =£you see we expected that (.) so that's why we chose Ahmed (.) it's ok [he is also handsome (0.1) but unfortunately he doesn't have a long hair

(((laughter from everyone)))

S maybe girls will gather anyway

F maybe (.) but we said we don't we don't won't gatherings

S emm

F so (.) to be frank we don't know what is going to happen (.) I mean er we expected that er (.) is it going to be overloaded (.) is it not to going to be overloaded (.) maybe people don't know about it (.) maybe they know about it (.) maybe err (.) you know er (.) the person himself he will revive this er centre (.) I mean if they found someone helpful (.) they might rush to him for everything small and big

S that's right

F and if they found someone careless (---) (.) no one will er seek that er section (.) at the same time (.) I mean we want him to be (.) unoccupied (.) I mean Hussein¹¹⁹ told me that he wants him to (--) for this centre which means he leaves all his work there (.) a:nd over the er days we will see how the reaction going to be (.) maybe it will be loaded (.) maybe it will light at the beginning (.) maybe nobody knows about it and there is no much er work (.) maybe there is work (.) maybe people expect him to be there twenty four hours (-----) I mean we are telling Ahmed (.) maybe you will be asked (.) to be cooperative (.) and I know he will be cooperative (.) so: (.) £ all you have to do is to whiten the face of HR and hehe so that it works

Extract (2)

This extract is taken from the meeting data. Half way through the meeting, Fatima starts narrating stories about her early days in Bahrainco.

F they would come to our university and choose us (.) and they would give you a scholarship and a job and whatnot (.) in my old days (.) how did I get to know Bahrainco↑ because I was in Canada (.) I met er Jasim AlQasemi Taher AlSaeed if you know them (.) they came to meet us and make us offers (.) I was one of those who said I didn't want to work in the refinery (.) the smell and all that I said no I don't want to (.) but I ended up working with them (.) they told me come try it in the summer (.) so I thought it's good that I found a summer job (.) I worked with them in the summer came back later applied for the banks (.) they all responded that there is no er you don't have experience (.) I was like I just graduated where how would I have experience↑ so I had no choice but Bahrainco (.)£ with an open er hand

¹¹⁹Fatima's direct superior

Extract (3)

This extract is taken from the interview with Fatima. Fatima talks about her family and background.

F I mean our family was (-) (.) I come from an open-minded family (.) my grandfather is Qassim Alqassab¹²⁰ (-----) from my mother's side (.) ok↑ from my father's side (.) it's the same (.) they are all professionals (.) my grandfather was the kind that er (.) my mother's father the other one I didn't get to know him that much (.) he was open minded (.) he was the type that for example (0.2) allow °his daughters marry Sunni¹²¹'s° (.) my aunt married a Mannai¹²² (.) our family was the talk of town how can they allow their daughter to marry a Sunni (.) I have an aunt who is married to an Englishman (.) so we have er (.) our mind is an open mind (.) I mean my aunties studied abroad (.) at a time when people would stop at sixth grade (-----) my mother also was very smart (.) she stood by my father and helped him (.) err they worked hard to get what they have now (.) but they took care of us (.) I mean maybe I and all my sisters had scholarships (.) we were all firsts (.) so education is very important (-----) and all my sisters all of them have high positions (.) and they are all working I tell my father (.) that's it I want to retire (.) he says I didn't pay for our education so that you stay home (.) you have a brain other people would tell me yeah stay home you are Qassim Alqassab's daughter (.) working is not all about the money (.) it's about the person gets satisfaction out of it (-----) and er I think the background helped that my father is understanding (.) and er encouraged us and my mother is the same (.) I mean (.) my mother to the extent that er Haleema (.) when we were young she used to tell me when I first started working (.) don't waste your money (.) save them put them in something that would benefit you in the future (.) buy yourself a land buy yourself stock shares (.) don't spend it on cars or whatever

Extract (4)

This extract is taken from the interview data with Fatima. She is talking about corruption in Bahrainco's recruitment section and how she handles it.

F so we told them we will do internal recruiting (.) for this job and er everybody should know about this job (.) but we do it (.) so send the applications for Huda (.) their CVs (.)

¹²⁰A well-known, wealthy business man in Bahrain

¹²¹Sunni versus Shia; two of the many distinctive sects within Islam.

¹²²From Manama, the capital of Bahrain.

she would send it to them (.) and they would be sent back to you (.) not suitable (.) not suitable (.) not suitable (.) we are interested only (.) er Mohamed is the one (0.1) on what basis you choose Mohamed↑ so I sometimes have to call them up to tell them you people (.) it' obvious what you're cooking (.) you can't tell me that you will take Mohamed because he from the depar- yes (.) but Mohamed knows the work (.) he is from this department with us (.) you know er my people my group my circle

Extract (5)

This extract is taken from the interview data with Fatima. She is talking about her long working experience in Bahrainco and her role in initiating changes towards gender equality in the company.

F few years ago (.) and I was the one who wrote the proposal to change the social allowance (0.1) I told them this was so out-dated (.) they don't se- because in the culture (.) here in Bahrain the man is responsible for the financial aspect of the household (.) not the woman (.) as they say (.) the man even if the woman has a job (.) the man is still responsible for the financial aspect of the household (0.1) I tell them (.) the woman now doesn't spend money on her household only (.) she also spends money on the household of her family (.) on her father (.) on her brother (.) on whatever (.) I mean it is partnership (.) I told them the woman works (.) she gets a salary and her husband gets a salary (.) why doesn't she get the social allowance↑ he argues that when she works in the government (.) the woman doesn't get the social allowance at all (.) she doesn't get social allowance at all (.) so I told him (.) we are not government (.) never mind that the government doesn't give her (.) we (.) give (.) and as long as we give (.) we should give her fairly (0.1) the married is married (.) and it changed later (.) and I started getting the married allowance (.) if I am married (.) and the female employee who is single she gets the single allowance (.) and from then things got better

Extract (6)

This extract is taken from the interview data. Fatima is answering my questions about her use of linguistic practices.

HA you are a superintendent (.) so you have power over your (.) a lot of people so do you usually (.) share power and information or hold them↑ what do you usually do↑

F no (.) I am open

HA ok you are open (.) alright (.) er (.) your decisions usually do you make them with other people (.) or autonomously or ↑

F I take I take their opinion (0.2)

HA for example you have those cases (.) you said I ask a doctor and you ask here and there (.) but then at the end (0.1)

F it will not even be my decision at the end (.) I can't do this out of the [policy

HA [how about the things that you could decide about↑ there are things that you could decide about

F I still ask opinions (.) I still go around (.) and ask (.) have you ever done this ↑did you have a case similar to this in the past ↑err so they sometimes tell me things I don't know for example they tell me yeah no this person always do that or these did that before and they didn't give them and so on (.) so I always go back to them (.) I mean anything I get (.) I send for people (.) for example I send for Ahmed I tell him get me information (.) for example please find out when he left Bahrainco what grade what job and what salary (.) he comes back to me with a story (.) based on that (.) I might suggest something (.) or I take it to my er (.) superior and I discuss it with him (.) he might say that the decision has already been made (.) I mean the case is a first it never happened before (.) for example the case of this person for example (.) the doctor (.) I know that he will say (.) don't do anything (.) don't give him anything (.) if you do you will open the door for others (.) so I try now for example I go talk to Hussein I tell Hussein ok fine (.) this person been ill for twenty years (.) but I I suggest that we give him once and for all that we help him (.) he is fifty years old and er ill and so on (.) I also asked for more information (.) based on that I take a decision (0.1) I mean I don't go tell them I will do this and that to him before that I get approval to do it (.) I took this information (.) they told me their opinion (0.1) er they didn't tell me what to do (.) they told me what they knew (.) so I say (.) based on this (.) I go have a discussion with my boss and we make a decision

HA do you usually delegate a lot↑ assign tasks ↑

F I am trying yes (.) because I will explode if I don't (.) because there are so many things that you would receive er I mean er (-----) Haleema see I try to help as

much as I can (.) I mean er (.) I mean people come to you for help (.) if you can help (.) why not ↑ (0.3) ahh (.) what was the question we diverged from it

HA no I was just asking if you delegate [so (.) I mean

F [I have to because (----) you teach them your way of work for example Huda (.) I ask her do something for example (.) for example I try to teach her how to do memos (.) her English is good (.) so I ask her to do it (.) and then send it to me (.) ok↑ so I print it out (-----) you know (.) I mean I want to help them (.) because I know she is smart and hardworking (.) I mean she can make it to the top (.) she's good so (.) I think she's going to shine one day (.) she is aiming high I mean smart (.) we have few ladies who are smart

Extract (7)

This extract is taken from my interview with Salem. He is answering my question about having a female versus male superior.

HA how about males and females↑(0.2) you said you already tried both

S same I mean (.) there was no difference I mean (.) maybe (0.2) err the er male would be (.) more (.) strong than female (.) the female you see them they are (.) give and take but err (.) the men always orders

HA okay (.) so for you what is more comfortable↑

S of course female

IV. Shadowing Notes

The nature and length of the shadowing process differed from one case study to another. Many factors determined the amount of time I spent with each leader such as the time restriction, the availability and the workload of the women leaders at the time of data collection as well as their cooperativeness and enthusiasm about the research.

IV.I. Badria's Case Study

Badria was the most cooperative leader; we had four five main encounters: an introductory meeting where we met for the first time, a formal interview meeting, and three organisational meetings which I attended at three different occasions. In each encounter, I would walk with her from and to her office and observe how she carried interacted with others.

In our first encounter, Badria seemed very friendly, cooperative and enthusiastic about the research. She talked about the difficulty of making it in a company like Bahrainco. Although this indicates a struggle in her professional career, she generally sounded optimistic and she kept saying that she was a happy person. Generally, Badria seemed a very friendly and relationally-oriented manager. She welcomed people warmly and would often have small talk with them, chatting about family and other non-business related issues.

During the meeting, she emphasised on her identity as a female and a mother and how she brought different and softer qualities to the male-dominated workplace. She also admitted that people at work often criticised her for being emotional, and that she would often respond with 'it is ok to be emotional about something'. This indicates Badria's challenging attitude towards the dominant culture in Bahrainco. She also expressed the need for Bahrainco's culture to change saying 'it is definitely a challenge but hopefully it will change'.

The organisational meetings I attended with Badria were very insightful and they helped me to get a better understanding of the meeting under study. In these meetings, females were dominant, the ones who would initiate topics, ask, interrupt, etc. The few men in the meetings were mostly quiet and talked only when they were asked. Generally, Badria seemed in total control of the meetings, she would hold the floor and allocate turns and try to get people to participate; no one even attempted to interrupt her.

The following are most significant incidents:

- In the first meeting I attended with Badria, Dr Sara was very late (around 20 minutes), so there were some awkward moments of waiting at the beginning. At the end of the meeting,

Dr Sara was asked by Badria and Amal (in a joking manner) to be more punctual next time. In the second meeting, Dr Sara came on time. Upon her arrival, Badria and Amal made a joke about her punctuality, to which she responded with 'oh I couldn't sleep last night because I was afraid I was gonna oversleep and be late for the meeting'. In the third meeting, Dr Sara was late again.

- After the first meeting, there was a small talk between Badria and the two other women from her team. They were talking about her leaving Bahrainco¹²³, how Bahrainco was driving people away, and how they were not happy to come to work anymore. Badria mentioned that she was leaving because she was not happy with certain people in the company. She mentioned an incident where the new manager (male) said to her that it was good she was leaving so that others could get their chance and share of recognition.
- In the third meeting, Badria was getting impatient with the lack of professionalism from the Public Relations (PR) people. When she first arrived, she didn't look very happy; she started asking about Manager PR, whose deputy declared that he was running late. Also, she kept insisting and repeating to Omran (a male PR officer) that they should take some responsibility. After the meeting, on our way to her office, Badria expressed her utmost frustration with PR people, claiming that they were not doing their job and that they just wanted to take credit. She admitted that the only reason she moved the meeting to their building is force them to be involved.

IV.II. Hanan's Case Study

After the interview, Haifa invited me to a company-wide event that took place in Bahrainco's Club. The company's chief executive was there as well as most of other high ranking personnel in the company. This event proved to be a very good opportunity to promote my research as well as observe Hanan outside the meeting settings.

Although the shadowing process took only three hours including a fifteen minutes car drive from the engineering building to the venue, I have gained great insight into Hanan's use of language in a highly informal setting.

¹²³ Right after the data collection period, Badria left Bahrainco to a new company.

Hanan seemed well-known and respected there, she knew almost everybody there. She was mostly carrying out small/ social talk with everyone she meets. Interestingly, I observed that she was mostly informal with managers and general managers. The most significant incident was the teasing/humorous sequence she had with a general manager. She started with social talk , asking about his family and his son, she joked with him saying: 'oh you know your son is very good unlike his father; or he is very handsome unlike his father, etc.'

IV.III. Fatima's Case Study

My interview with Fatima was in no way conventional; it started out very casually, she was very busy and it was the last day before her vacation. She invited me to her office and started chatting. Although I tried several times to explain the purpose of my research, it seemed that she had her own expectations of what our meeting would be about so she took control of the topics despite my attempts to contain and direct the conversation. Our encounter took more than three hours during which she made two phone calls, and various people popped in and out of her office. Later on, Fatima walked me through other employees' offices introducing me to everybody and carrying out small talk throughout.

This experience has given an opportunity to observe Fatima's leadership practices in a different light as she engaged in both formal and informal spontaneous conversations with subordinates and co-workers. I believe the following observations and incidents are significant to my study:

- There is a general lack of planning and time management. Value of time doesn't seem to be an issue in the Human resources department. Fatima was supposed to have an important meeting, which was cancelled because somebody was late. Also, our 'conversation' was not planned nor put in any time frame.
- Fatima talked a lot, much more than she listened. She also predicted what I wanted to hear and tried to accommodate me. For example, she kept offering to give me things to read such as papers of complaints or other documents related to problematic issues she often encountered in her job. I believe she made extra effort; had she just asked me what I needed to know, she would have saved herself time and efforts.
- Fatima's job involves dealing with employees' problems and complaints in a daily basis (e.g. an employee with health issues asking for insurance coverage). She also deals with recruitment of Bahrainis and issues related to their lives as employees.

- Generally, Fatima seems to be sociable, friendly with colleagues and subordinates and has a sense of humour. During our encounter, a colleague passed by (Indian expat) to say hello. She was too friendly with him and seemed very eager to know about his news, his family, and so on. Also, she kept complimenting him and initiating jokes in which he responded to with laughter. This shows great utilisation of small talk and humour.
- In the first 5 minutes of our encounter, she talked about her team members and the nature of their job, which indicates that she values her subordinates and their work.
- During our meeting, Fatima made two phone calls to her subordinates. The first phone call was made to a woman from an older generation whom she had been working with her for a long time. Here, she talked very directly and casually with no hedges asking her to come. The other phone call was made to a younger subordinate (Huda) who was relatively new to the company. In their conversation, Fatima used various politeness and hedging strategies when issuing orders and requests. She also paid her several compliments.
- Generally, Fatima was very critical of hierarchy and other practices in Bahrainco such as nepotism and favouritism.

V. Ethics

Following Aston University's ethical guidelines, I have prepared various documents including information sheets and letters of consents for Bahrainco's management and all the participants of the study. A sample of this document will be presented below.

V.I. Participants' Information sheets

Information Sheet

Title of project: An Exploration of Female Leadership Language: Case Studies of Female Managers in Bahrain.

Project investigator: Mrs Haleema Ebrahim

Contact details: Emails: _____

Phone No:

You are being invited to take part in a research study about leadership language and interactional practices of female managers in Bahrain. This case study research aims at investigating the ways in which female managers in the company have succeeded at senior management level in a largely male-dominated environment by analysing the range of ways they use language with colleagues and subordinates in order to accomplish their business agenda in the context of corporate meetings.

This research is being funded by the University of Bahrain and will be conducted by Haleema Ebrahim, a lecturer at the university and a full time PhD student at Aston University, UK. The study will be under the supervision of Dr Judith Baxter who is doing similar research major UK companies.

Your company has been chosen because of its unique impact on the Bahraini community and working culture as well as its role in promoting equality and empowerment for females in the workplace. The language of the participants will be analysed in order to gather examples of good practice which may eventually serve as role models to other women in the contested environment of Middle Eastern Corporations.

The study will take place in two phases; first, each female manager will be observed conducting a meeting by the researcher (Haleema Ebrahim). These meetings will be discreetly audio- recorded and later on transcribed. In the second phase the managers will be interviewed by the researcher to comment and provide feedback on the meetings. If required, a short comprehensive report on the meetings will be sent to the managers. Since participation in the research is entirely voluntary, consent from all participants is required before starting the project. Also, confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained in accordance with Aston's Ethics and Guidelines. The management and the leaders'

permission will be sought if the researcher wishes to publish the results of the research or present them in conferences, etc.

Thank you for taking part and I look forward to working with you.

Consent Form

I confirm that I have read the information provided about the project and agreed to fully participate in the above study. I also confirm that all the conditions of the research have been explained and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any time.

I understand that this project has been subject to ethical reviews provided by Aston University Ethics and Guidelines and has been allowed to proceed.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

