Cornelia Ilie · Stephanie Schnurr *Editors*

Challenging Leadership Stereotypes Through Discourse

Power, Management and Gender

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Editors
Cornelia Ilie   Stephanie Schnurr
Malmö University   Centre for Applied Linguistics
Malmö   University of Warwick
Sweden   Coventry, Warwickshire
                                       UK

To Augusto, for joining in the question-asking and the answer-questioning (CI)

To Sophie and Lena, who, I'm sure, will grow up to challenge more leadership stereotypes (SS)

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About the Editors

Cornelia Ilie is Full Professor of Linguistics and Rhetoric at Malmö University, Sweden. She held Visiting Professorships at several universities in Austria, Greece, Finland, Italy, UK, Spain and Romania. She is the founder and president of ESTIDIA (European Society for Transcultural and Interdisciplinary Dialogue), Board member of IPrA (International Pragmatics Association) and Member of the Reference Group of Experts (Higher Education and Education For All) of the IAU (International Association of Universities). Her research interests are mainly interdisciplinary and she has published extensively on institutional pragmatics and discourse practices (particularly political, media, business and academic discourses), intercultural rhetoric and dialogic argumentation. In addition to numerous book chapters, refereed journal and encyclopaedia articles, her recent publications include the following authored or edited books: *The Use of English in Institutional and Business Settings: An Intercultural Perspective* (Peter Lang, 2007); *European Parliaments under Scrutiny: Discourse Strategies and Interaction Practices* (John Benjamins 2010); *Evolving Genres in Web-mediated Communication* (Peter Lang, 2012); *Genres and Genre Theory in Transition: Specialized Discourses across Media and Modes* (BrownWalker Press, 2014); *International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015); *Parliaments and Parliamentarism: A Comparative History of Disputes about a European Concept* (Berghahn Books, 2016).

Stephanie Schnurr is Associate Professor at the Centre for Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick. Her main research interests are professional and medical communication with a particular focus on leadership discourse. She has published widely on aspects of culture, gender, identity, (im)politeness and the strategic uses of humour. She is also the author of *Leadership Discourse at Work* (Palgrave, 2009), *Exploring Professional Communication* (Routledge, 2013) and *Language and Culture at Work* (Routledge 2017, with Olga Zayts).

Contributors

Judith Baxter is Emeritus Professor of Applied Linguistics at Aston University, UK. She began her career working as a teacher of English and Drama in UK secondary schools and tertiary colleges. In 2000, she achieved her Ph.D. in the fields of Language, Gender and Education, before gaining a lecturer post at the University of Reading. She moved to Aston University in 2009 to take up a post as a Senior Lecturer, and was promoted to a personal Chair in 2012. She specialises in Sociolinguistics, Gender and Language, the Language of Leadership, and Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA). Judith won an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) grant in 2010 to conduct research entitled, "Leadership Talk and Gender in Senior Management Business meetings". She has published a number of influential journal articles and monographs including *Positioning Gender in Discourse: A Feminist Methodology* (2003), *The Language of Female Leadership* (2010), *Double-voicing at Work: Power, Gender and Linguistic Expertise*, and with Haleema Al A'Ali, *Speaking as Women Leaders: Meetings in Middle Eastern and Western Contexts* (2016). Her work has featured regularly in the media and includes appearances on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*, BBC 2's *Women at the Top* as well as in national newspapers.

Diana Boxer is Professor and Distinguished Teaching Scholar at the University of Florida's Department of Linguistics. She is the author of *The Lost Art of the Good Schmooze: Building Rapport and Defusing Conflict in Everyday and Public Talk* (Praeger, 2011*); Applying Sociolinguistics: Domains and Face-to-Face Interaction* (John Benjamins, 2002) and *Complaining and Commiserating: A Speech Act View of Solidarity in Spoken American English* (Lang, 1993). She is also co-editor with, John Wilson, of *Discourse, Politics, and Women as Global Leaders* (John Benjamins, 2015); and, with Andrew D. Cohen, *Studying Speaking to Inform Second Language Learning* (Multilingual Matters, 2004). She has published in the areas of discourse and pragmatics, sociolinguistics, gender and language, and second language acquisition in such journals as *The Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, Discourse and Society, ELT Journal, Gender and Language, Journal of Pragmatics, TESOL Quarterly, Text,* and *Women and Language*.

Angela Chan holds a Ph.D. in linguistics and is a research fellow at City University of Hong Kong. She has a special interest in the interplay between linguistic forms and interactional functions in business, educational, and social settings in the context of Hong Kong. She has researched and published on related topics including face and politeness, professional identity construction, leadership, giving directives, and repair strategies. Her research has appeared, for example, in *Language in Society, Journal of Politeness Research,* and *Journal of Pragmatics.*

Jonathan Clifton received a Ph.D. in applied linguistics from the University of Antwerp, Belgium. He is now teaching business communication at the University of Valenciennes, France. His research focuses on workplace interaction, notably in terms of 'doing' leadership and talking leader and follower identities into being. He has published widely in such journals as: *Leadership, The International Journal of Business Communication* and so on.

Florencia Cortés-Conde is an Associate Professor at Goucher College, Baltimore, USA. Dr. Cortés-Conde's research interests are centered on issues of identity and culture. Her book on identity and nation, *The Anglo-Argentines in Buenos Aires*, was published in 2007. She was first author on an article on language and women's identity published in *Gender and Language* in 2010. She was published with Dr. Boxer: "Breaking the glass & keeping the ceiling: Women presidents' discursive practices in Latin America". In: *Discourse, Politics and Women as Global Leaders.* Her article "Telling Identities: Criminal Narratives for Local and International Markets in María, Full of Grace (Marston, 2004) and Rosario Tijeras (Mallié, 2005)" was published in *Studies in Latina American Popular Culture* in 2011. She also published: "El crimen nuestro de cada día": retratos de criminalidad en 'Ciudad de Dios'. In: *Identidades, héroes y discursos en la modernidad tardía.* More recently, she published "Yo no soy un criminal: la destrucción de la confianza del estado moderno en 'Nueve Reinas' (Bielinsky 2001)". She currently has a book project on cinema and Latin American identity called *Crime, Punishment and Responsibility in Latin American Cinema.*

Valerie Priscilla Goby Ph.D., is a professor in the College of Business, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates. She has published widely in the fields of communication, IT, and education, in journals such as the *Journal of Business Ethics, Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, Quality Assurance in Education,* and the *Journal of Small Business Management.* She is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* (USA), *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* (USA), and is the Reviews Editor of *Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives* (UAE). She has taught organisational communication, intercultural communication, and organisational behaviour for 30 years at universities in Singapore, Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates, Ireland, and Australia.

Janet Holmes is Emeritus Professor of Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington where she undertakes research on workplace discourse, New Zealand English, and language and gender. She is Associate Director of the Wellington Language in the Workplace project (see www.victoria.ac.nz/lwp/) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand. She has written or edited more than 20 books including *Gendered Talk at Work*, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, now in its fifth edition, *Research Methods in Sociolinguistics* (co-edited with Kirk Hazen),

and the *Blackwell Handbook of Language, Gender and Sexuality* (co-edited with Miriam Meyerhoff and Susan Ehrlich). Together with Meredith Marra and Bernadette Vine, she has co-authored a book *Leadership, Discourse and Ethnicity* (OUP), which examines effective leadership in Māori and Pākehā organisations. With her research team, she is currently investigating the discourse of those involved in the tourism industry and analysing the language used in eldercare facilities in order to assist those seeking work in these areas.

Lennie M. Jones is a Ph.D. student at the University of Florida. She is specialising in sociolinguistics, including discourse analysis, pragmatics and SLA. She holds a J.D. from the University of Chicago, an M.Sc. from EBS Universität and a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. She has lived and worked in the United States, Europe, and Africa, and is proficient in several foreign languages.

Kevin Knight (Ph.D. in Linguistics, MBA, MPIA) is Associate Professor in the Department of International Communication (International Business Career major), Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS), Chiba, Japan where he has also worked in the KUIS Career Education Center. He has more than 30 years of professional experience working for private, public, and academic sector institutions including Sony and the Japan Patent Office. His doctoral research on leadership communication (i.e., discourse) as a basis for leadership development was under the supervision of Emeritus Professor Christopher Candlin and Dr. Alan Jones. In the English for Specific Purposes Interest Section (ESPIS) of TESOL International Association (TESOL), he has served as chair, English in occupational settings (EOS) representative, ESPIS community manager, and co-editor of *ESP News*. He was also a member of the Governance Review Task Force (GRTF) appointed by the TESOL board of directors. As an official TESOL blogger in the area of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) with over 100 posts, he created and launched the *ESP Project Leader Profiles* featuring more than 30 ESP leaders to date with projects on 6 continents. The profiles are listed as a reference in TESOL's Leadership Management Certificate Program Online. For additional information, please see *The Leadership Connection Project* https://leadershipconnectionproject. wordpress.com/.

Joelle Loew is a Research Associate at Warwick Medical School. She is interested in professional and medical communication. After studying at the University of Basel and Cardiff University she completed her M.Sc. in Intercultural Communication at the Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick in 2015. She has worked in event and project management in Switzerland and the US, and has contributed to internationalising the student experience at Warwick as Internationalisation Officer and through teaching intercultural student workshops.

Momoko Nakamura Ph.D., is Professor of English at Kanto Gakuin University, Japan. Her research interest includes linguistic construction of gendered, sexualised identity and historical discursive formation of gendered styles. She is the author of *Gender, Language and Ideology: A Genealogy of Japanese Women's Language* (2014), *Honyaku ga tsukuru Nihongo: Hiroin wa onna kotoba o hanashi tsuzukeru* [Translation and Japanese: Heroines Speak Women's Language] (2013), *Onnakotoba to Nihongo* [Women's Language and Japanese] (2012), *Onnakotoba wa tsukurareru* [Constructing Women's Language] (Received the 27th Yamakawa Kikue Award, 2007), *Sei to Nihongo*: *Kotoba ga tsukuru onna to otoko* [Sex and Japanese: Woman and Man Constructed by Language] (2007), *Kotoba to jendā* [Language and Gender] (2001) and *Kotoba to feminizumu* [Language and Feminism] (1995). She has contributed chapters to *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality* (2014), *The Political Economy of Affect and Emotion in East Asia* (2014), *Femininity, Feminism and Gendered Discourse* (2010), *The Language and Sexuality Reader* (2006), and *Japanese Language, Gender, and Ideology* (2004). She also edited a textbook, *Jendā de manabu gengogaku* [Learning Linguistics through Gender] (2010), and translated into Japanese *Feminism and Linguistic Theory* by Deborah Cameron (1990) and *Language and Sexuality* by Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick (2010).

Catherine Nickerson is professor in the College of Business, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates. Previous to this, she held senior positions in India and in the Netherlands. In 2008 she received the Association for Business Communication's Distinguished Publication Award for her volume on *Business Discourse* (Palgrave Macmillan) and in 2009 she also received the Association's Outstanding Researcher Award. Dr Nickerson's work has been published widely in journals such as the *Journal of Business Ethics, Corporate Communications,* and the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication,* and she has given numerous international conference papers and guest lectures at institutions around the world. Her current research interests include the use of English as an international language in business contexts, the communication surrounding corporate social responsibility, and the communication of leadership.

Nick Wilson is a lecturer in linguistics at Macquarie University, Sydney, where he teaches courses on sociolinguistics, multilingualism and linguistic anthropology. His research focuses on sociolinguistics and identity, particularly in relation to the construction of identity in sports teams.

Olga Zayts is Assistant Professor at the School of English at the University of Hong Kong. Her main research interests are medical communication—with a particular interest in prenatal genetic counselling—and professional interaction. She has published widely in internationally renowned journals and is the author of *Doing Discourse Analysis* (forthcoming, Palgrave) and *Language and Culture at Work* (Routledge, 2017, with Stephanie Schnurr).

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Chapter 1
Scrutinising Recurrent Stereotypes in Leadership Discourse Practices

Cornelia Ilie and Stephanie Schnurr

1.1 Introductory Considerations

Research on the topic of leadership has witnessed a dramatic expansion over the last couple of decades, resulting in the development of a diversity of leadership approaches and theories, evolving from studies exclusively focusing on the traits, roles and effectiveness of the leader, to multilayered investigations of the interactive, relation-building, context-specific leadership-impacting and leadership-impacted practices that involve the participation of many organisational players. Challenging the notion of the all-powerful leader steering the organisation at will, an increasing number of studies (Hosking 2006; Carroll et al. 2008; Crevani et al. 2010; Cunliffe and Eriksen 2011) are focusing on micro-level analyses that bring to the fore shared and relational forms of leadership as part of collaborative and communication-driven action in organisations. Empirical evidence shows how leadership emerges from the dynamics of everyday contextually embedded interactions and processes that involve multiple and interdependent organisational agents. Building on the assumption that "organizations exist only in so far as their members create them through discourse" (Mumby and Clair 1997, p. 181), more recent discursive approaches, also referred to as the 'linguistic turn' in organisational studies (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000), explore and scrutinise leadership development as an emergent relational practice (Carroll and Simpson 2012) of co-construction and negotiation of meaning through situated communication.

On discussing the distinction between managers and leaders, it has been argued that managers "win the game" by understanding the rules, applying them, and

C. Ilie (✉)
Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden
e-mail: cornelia.ilie@gmail.com

S. Schnurr
University of Warwick, Coventry, UK
e-mail: S.Schnurr@warwick.ac.uk

purposely breaking them at times (Nielsen 2009) while leaders 'win' by under-standing that rules change, by anticipating that things move in different directions, and by inspiring their teams to follow—even without evidence (Bolden and Gosling 2006). Recent work in this area has given evidence of the crucial role of language in this leadership game (Clifton 2012), and it has been argued that communication lies at the heart of the leadership process (Tourish and Jackson 2008). Such insights call for a new strand of research that is no longer quantitative, rooted in social psy-chology and focused on what leaders are, but qualitative, oriented towards dis-course and interested in what leaders do and how leadership is enacted.

This volume brings together wide-ranging empirical research that goes behind the scenes to unravel discursive leadership practices as they unfold in situ in a wide range of different contexts, including business organisations, the media, as well as political and sports domains. In all these contexts leadership emerges in different forms and shapes, and the chapters in this book explore different aspects of lead-ership discourse in these different contexts and challenge some of the most pre-vailing stereotypes about what leadership is and how it is allegedly performed. Although they use different kinds of data and different theoretical and method-ological approaches to focus on specific aspects of leadership, they all demonstrate the complexities of leadership in action and challenge existing stereotypes and established thinking about effective leadership. They convincingly illustrate that leadership is highly context dependent and that any stereotyping or attempt at generalising is fraught with difficulties.

The various case studies in this volume move beyond questions of who is a leader and what leaders do, to how leadership is practiced in various communities of practice and how leadership makes change possible. The different cross-cultural and interdisciplinary approaches used across the chapters provide deeper insights into the competing, multi-voiced, controversial and complex identities and rela-tionships enacted in leadership discourse practices. They thereby provide an enhanced understanding of how leadership is discursively constructed, decon-structed and reconstructed in a variety of formal and informal leadership activities from organising and motivating to managing change and making decisions.

1.2   Redefining 'Leadership' and 'Leadership Discourse'

Perhaps because the question of what leadership is, is central to leadership research across different disciplines (Jackson and Parry 2001), it has led to a heated debate among academics (and practitioners) with relatively little agreement. Grint (2010, p. 3) distinguishes between four different ways of conceptualising leadership and argues that many definitions are based on "the *person* regarded as the leader", while others conceptualise leadership as a *process* (focusing on the practices that leaders engage in); yet others take a *positional* approach and "define leadership by simply considering what those in authority do"; or follow a *results* approach and "lock leadership into mobilising a group or community to achieve a purpose".

These different approaches, however, are not necessarily mutually exclusive and some overlap exists.

The concept and practice of *person*-based leadership have been approached over time from a number of perspectives, some of which are complementary or convergent, while others are divergent. However, all these perspectives share the view that leadership involves a process of influence, i.e. by means of which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organisation in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Consequently, leadership is described as an interpersonal process in which a leader influences followers. In many traditional definitions, the basic elements of leadership usually include a leader, a follower, and their relational interactions. This explains why the focus in earlier leadership studies was mainly on why leaders are influential (e.g. Stogdill 1974), while in more recent research the focus has shifted from the leader to the interdependence and relationship between the leader and the followers (e.g. Rost 1997; Van Knippenberg et al. 2004).

A subsequent stage in leadership research was marked by defining leadership as a *process*, which confers on it a dynamic and cohesive dimension deriving from a two-way interaction between leaders and followers, whereby "an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse 2010, p. 3). The process-based perspective on leadership signals a shift from understanding leadership as an individual to viewing it as a relationship. By introducing the concept of 'transforming leadership', Burns (1978) was the first to conceptualise leadership as a social process that involves leaders and followers interacting and working together to achieve common interests and mutually defined ends. By contrast, 'transformational leadership' (Bass 1996), which focuses more on attaining practical organisational objectives, is conceptualised as a reciprocal process, whereby each party is transformed by the other (Dvir and Shamir 2003).

A more recent conceptualisation is the *relational leadership* which is viewed as a process of social influence through which emergent coordination (e.g. evolving social order) and change (e.g. new values, attitudes, behaviours) are constructed and produced (Uhl-Bien 2006, p. 655). This perspective does not restrict leadership to hierarchical positions or roles. Rather than focusing merely on the way in which a leader might relate to his/her followers, the emphasis is on how organisational members, as participants, interactively define and negotiate leadership as a process of organising (Brower et al. 2000; Hosking 2006). As a result, leadership is perceived as contextually constituted throughout the organisation wherever it occurs rather than simply being what 'leaders' do. Complementary to relational leadership is the *leadership-as-action* approach (Carroll et al. 2008; Raelin 2011), which draws attention to the ways in which organisational actors (practitioners) get on with the work of leadership in the context of specific institutional and organisational settings (praxis), highlighting the 'nitty gritty details' (Chia 2004) of routine and practice.

While focusing on the shared and everyday practices of leadership as a contextualised and interactive process with its locally constructed meanings and outcomes, scholars like Fairhurst (2007) have showed how leadership is constituted in and through discourse(s). These discourses, involving many practitioners, serve to

prioritise certain lines of action, encourage particular behaviours, elevate and foreground specific challenges and opportunities, advocate different courses of action, etc. They are not fixed, but are emergent, being constantly remade and re-produced. Furthermore, they are not universal, but are organisationally and institutionally contextualised.

Problematising leadership as a discursive process leads to a consideration of leadership as ongoing sensemaking (Weick 1995; Pye 2005). From a relational leadership perspective, there are certain sets of behaviours which are consistent with the encouragement of the practice of *emerging leadership*: disrupting existing patterns, encouraging novelty and sensemaking, sense-giving activities and stabilising feedbacks. Emerging leadership is exhibited when others perceive a person to be the most influential member of their group or organisation, regardless of the person's assigned formal position. This perspective highlights the importance of sensemaking as a collective enterprise, encouraging and cultivating collaborative work, open communication and a capacity to generate and accommodate change.

By focusing on the shared and everyday aspects of leadership, the above-mentioned approaches highlight the need to approach leadership in depth and in breadth through a focus on the relational and interactional power of language used in the enactment of discursive practices underlying processes of change initiated and carried out by organisational members in specific contexts. Starting from the consideration that "organizations exist only in so far as their members create them through discourse" (Mumby and Clair 1997, p. 181), these approaches envisage discursive activities as either reinforcing existing power relations or challenging them. Studies that have examined leadership from a discursive perspective have found that continuity and change were co-constructed by means of a wide range of interpersonal and interactive strategies legitimising or de-legitimising behaviours and actions. The various chapters in this volume illustrate this as they differ from each other in how they conceptualise leadership. While some of the studies in this book understand leadership as a process (e.g. Schnurr et al., Chap. 5; Clifton, Chap. 3; Wilson, Chap. 7), others focus on individual agents (e.g. Holmes, Chap. 2; Ilie, Chap. 4; Boxer et al., Chap. 9) or on specific positions within an institution (e.g. Nakamura, Chap. 11; Nickerson and Goby, Chap. 10). But in spite of this diversity they all acknowledge the crucial role of discourse as a site and means through which leadership is enacted and negotiated, and where leadership stereotypes are responded to and often challenged and rejected.

1.3   Recent and Current Approaches to Leadership Discourse

While the crucial role of language for leadership has been widely acknowledged for a long time, it is largely since Fairhurst's (2007) seminal work on discursive leadership, that leadership discourse has been established as an important site for

analysis. Acknowledging the central role of discourse for leadership, discursive leadership is interested in understanding how leadership is *done* in and through discourse. With its focus on the specific discursive processes through which leadership is enacted at the micro-level of interaction, discursive leadership research aims to gain "a better understanding of the everyday practices of talk that constitute leadership" (Clifton 2006, p. 203). It is not interested in generating 'grand theories of leadership' as much of the earlier research on leadership in organisational and business studies has attempted to do (see Clifton 2009).

Despite the emphasis in the literature devoted to leaders needing to articulate their vision effectively and communicate it convincingly, there are relatively few studies of how different leaders use the resources of language to do that. Research on leadership discourse is increasingly gaining momentum, and scholars across disciplines have begun to approach leadership from a discourse analytical perspective (e.g. Holmes et al. 2011; Goebel 2014; Choi and Schnurr 2014; Schnurr 2009; Clifton 2006, 2012; Baxter 2010; Svennevig 2008; Larsson and Lundholm 2010; Crevani et al. 2010). This research has mainly focused on business organisations (e.g. Schnurr 2009; Holmes et al. 2011; Larsson and Lundholm 2010), educational settings (e.g. Choi and Schnurr 2014; Wodak 1997), and the political domain (e.g. Fetzer and Bull 2012; Schnurr et al. 2014), but some studies have also been conducted on leadership discourse in NGOs (e.g. Schnurr and Mak 2011), government departments (e.g. Goebel 2014), manufacturing companies (e.g. Svennevig 2011; Schnurr and Chan 2009), and a factory outlet (Ladegaard 2012).

Research in these workplace domains has identified and described several discursive practices through which leadership is enacted and reflected, such as getting things done and assigning tasks to others (e.g. Schnurr and Mak 2011; Svennevig 2008), solving disagreements and conflict (e.g. Choi and Schnurr 2014; Holmes and Marra 2004; Saito 2011), managing meetings (e.g. Holmes 2000; Clifton 2012) and acting as chairs (e.g. Ford 2008), sensemaking (Clifton 2006), gate keeping (van de Mieroop and Schnurr 2014), mentoring (Holmes 2005), and creating a positive working atmosphere in a team (e.g. Schnurr 2009).

The contributions to this volume underscore an increasing interest for an under-represented area of leadership research, namely stereotypes underlying leadership discourse and the context-specific interplay of various leadership discourse styles. Discourse analytical research, like the studies in this volume, promises to be a fruitful way of moving forward towards a better understanding of actual leadership practices in situ. Such studies provide rich insights into the ways in which leadership is enacted during a particular encounter. They thus offer an opportunity for researchers to capture the actual practice of leadership rather than having to rely on participants' recollections of specific incidents. As the various contributions in this volume illustrate, this focus on actual leadership practice relativises and often challenges the many leadership stereotypes that circulate in academic and practitioner realms, and provide a more complex and authentic picture of how leadership is done in situ.

1.4   Structure of the Volume

The contributions of the authors featured in this volume problematise and highlight the implications and challenges of questions like the following:

What are the discourse based interactions and negotiations through which leadership arises and develops in different fields of professional activity, such as business, politics, law, academia and sports?

How is leadership communicating and dealing with change: Acting? Enacting? Reacting?

In what ways do discourses of leadership agency and power overlap or interact?

How are leadership roles discursively shaped and distributed throughout the workplace among organisational members?

Which types of leadership discourse strategies can be seen to reinforce or challenge socio-cultural stereotypes in constraining or enabling action and change?

What are the manifestations of and reactions to gender stereotypes in various leadership discourse practices and at different organisational/institutional levels?

The volume is divided into two parts, each addressing a specific area of leadership stereotypes. The contributions in Part I challenge stereotyping practices in leadership conceptualisation and performance, while Part II provides several case studies specifically focusing on exposing and problematising culture-specific gender stereotypes in leadership discourse practices, and challenging a range of gender stereotypes often associated with leadership.

In Chap. 2, **Janet Holmes** explores how society-wide gender and culture stereotypes interact with traditional 'hero leader' stereotypes (Jackson and Parry 2001) in the context of three New Zealand workplaces. Her particular focus is how the leaders respond to the challenge of managing innovation and change in their particular workplace environment. Her findings call into question traditional gender and ethnic stereotypes, as well as the stereotype of the solo, all-powerful hero leader, and provide evidence of dynamic distributed leadership. She shows that while it may be useful to draw on leadership stereotypes as an analytical starting point, the precise instantiation of leadership is more complex than these stereotypes suggest and is strongly influenced by the context in which the leadership occurs, including the speaker's ongoing dynamic assessment of the relative weight of factors, such as the size, purpose and relative formality of the meeting and the setting, the nature of the topic, and the composition of the meeting in terms of the status, roles and gender of participants.

Chapter 3 by **Jonathan Clifton** also challenges heroic notions of leadership and argues in favour of more distributed forms of leadership. He challenges the stereotypical assumption underlying much earlier leadership research resting on a tripod approach based on leaders, followers, and goals. Conducting an in-depth case study of a decision-making episode during a meeting in a training organisation in France, he shows that leadership is a collaborative effort and that stereotypical claims, which associate leadership with individuals in hierarchical positions who influence others to follow them in achieving certain organisational goals, are hard to

maintain. In his fine-grained analysis of sequences of talk, Clifton shows that rather than being monolithic and static entities, leader (and follower) identities are constantly constructed and negotiated throughout the interaction and often shift on a turn-by-turn basis. Due to this fluid nature of leader identity, he argues for a post-heroic approach to leadership which takes the (heroic) individual leader out of leadership.

Questioning the trait perspective on leadership, **Cornelia Ilie**'s approach (Chap. 4) envisages leadership as an interactive and relational process that occurs in the culture-specific context of an organisation and is marked by the capacity of leaders to deal with glocal challenges and opportunity-creating changes. The focus of her investigation is on the discursively articulated performance of leadership in the context of competition-driven organisational change. The author exposes stereotypes and counter-stereotypes in discourses of leadership in a comparative perspective, scrutinising the ways in which they contribute to constructing and reconstructing corporate and culture-related identities, as well as being impacted by them. Drawing on presentations in letters to employees by the CEOs of two multinational companies, Nokia (Finland) and Ericsson (Sweden), a discourse-analytical and pragma-rhetorical comparative analysis provides evidence for the varying internal and external challenges underlying the discursive construction and reconstruction of leadership aimed at ensuring shared commitment and interconnectedness between a company's values and its competitive performance qualities.

Exploring leadership discourse in two workplaces in Hong Kong, **Stephanie Schnurr**, **Angela Chan**, **Olga Zayts** and **Joelle Loew** (Chap. 5) examine the complex relationship between leadership and culture, and challenge some of the cultural stereotypes that exist about leadership in this particular socio-cultural context and contrast them with insights gained through a fine-grained in-depth analysis of leadership discourse that occurred in actual workplace encounters. The authors demonstrate the importance of looking beyond cultural stereotypes in order to capture the complexities of actual leadership practice. Like Holmes, they argue that leadership is a highly complex and multifaceted concept, and that people draw on a wide range of different leadership styles to meet the situational demands. Leadership stereotypes, in particular those pertaining to culture, are thus fraught with difficulties as they always oversimplify the complexities and dynamics of actual practice.

In Chap. 6, **Kevin Knight** focuses on the conceptualisation process of leadership itself by analysing how leadership is conceptualised by U.S. leaders in semi-structured interviews. Although Knight did not define leadership a priori in his study but rather let it emerge from the data, the leaders in his study, who come from business, law, non-profit, and academia, produced rather stereotypical conceptualisations of leaders as agents of change. He argues that one reason for this finding is the behavioural questions of the researcher which may have influenced participants' replies. The study concludes that leadership conceptualisations should thus be viewed and accounted for in connection with input from multiple perspectives—including practitioners and researchers.

The last chapter in the first part of the book (Chap. 7) is by **Nick Wilson** and explores leadership in the largely under-researched domain of professional sports. Like the other chapters in this section of the book, Wilson's study of New Zealand rugby players also challenges the stereotype of leadership as being located within an individual. His in-depth analysis of leadership discourse in a rugby team questions the assumption that leaders are born, and instead shows that leadership is a skill that is acquired through situated learning within a community of practice, and is conjointly performed among many players. He argues that the emergence of multiple leaders in an organisation is an effective way of structuring leadership, and of responding to the immediate needs of a team.

Part II of the volume focuses specifically on stereotypes around leadership and gender. The four chapters in this section critically discuss and challenge specific assumptions about how men and women arguably do leadership by conducting case studies in a range of different socio-cultural contexts. Taken together, these contributions show that stereotypes around leadership and gender exist around the globe, and emphasise the need for closer scrutiny of actual practice in order to change these common misleading and often discriminatory perceptions.

Part II starts with a chapter by **Judith Baxter** (Chap. 8), in which she shows how newspaper discourse mobilises gender stereotypes of women leaders in the UK. Although women leaders are regularly portrayed as iron maiden, mother and pet (Kanter 1993), Baxter argues that newspaper representations are rarely uniformly reductive but provide gaps and ambiguities that allow for a feminist critique of dominant readings. In her analysis she focuses on three political leaders—German Chancellor Angela Merkel, former Ukraine President Yulia Tymoshenko and British Minister of State, Theresa May—who are often stereotyped in negative ways by male journalists. Reading newspaper articles about the leaders 'against the grain' she illustrates how such an approach leads to the production of more positive and multifaceted constructions of women leaders' identities, which ultimately enables scholars to challenge male journalism that continues to entrap women leaders within narrow, sexualised stereotypes.

Staying in the political domain, the chapter by **Diana Boxer**, **Lennie Jones** and **Florencia Cortés-Conde** (Chap. 9) analyses the discourse of three female political leaders and challenges assumptions about political leadership as male-dominated. Analysing the inaugural addresses, oaths, political speeches, and visual and media representations of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, former president of Argentina, Michelle Bachelet Jeria, president of Chile, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of Liberia, they show that the feminine has become institutionalised in global political culture. These women leaders face common obstacles and challenges with respect to managing and manipulating globalised gender expectations, which they successfully overcome by manipulating gender perceptions through the skilful execution of successful discursive and semiotic strategies. They thereby not only challenge but actually defeat antiquated perceptions of masculine stereotypes dominating political contexts world-wide.

Moving the discussion of leadership and gender stereotypes to the corporate world, **Catherine Nickerson and Valerie Priscilla Goby** (Chap. 10) investigate

what is considered to make a successful leader in the United Arab Emirates. They used a questionnaire to find out whether Emirati nationals prefer leadership styles stereotypically associated with women (such as transformational leadership and collaborative communication) or whether they favour styles more readily assigned to men (such as laissez faire, transactional or paternalistic styles, and competitive communication). Their findings show that Western understandings of leadership may be too narrow to account for the diversity of leadership styles in the Gulf, and also that leaders effectively draw on and combine a wide range of discursive strategies stereotypically ascribed to male and female leaders.

In the final chapter in the volume, **Momoko Nakamura** (Chap. 11) explores the representation of Japanese business women in different online articles. Like the previous chapters in this section, her study critically analyses the ways these women leaders are portrayed and what stereotyped identities are assigned to them. Her findings show that participants in the group-talk articles discursively construct negative stereotypes for women leaders, which were also mobilised in the inter-view–narrative articles with women executives. However, while these stereotypes were used to portray female leaders negatively in the group-talk articles, they were used as a resource to represent the women leaders in a positive light in the other texts. These findings show that stereotypes simultaneously enable and restrict identity construction.

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Part I
Challenging Stereotyping Discourse Practices in Leadership Conceptualisation and Performance

Chapter 2
Leadership and Change Management: Examining Gender, Cultural and 'Hero Leader' Stereotypes

Janet Holmes

2.1 Introduction

The concept of leadership has attracted a great deal of research and, since much of it has been collected using surveys and interviews, the results provide useful information about people's prototypes and stereotypes of good leaders, and about what people consider constitutes 'good leadership'. Many people's notion of the conventional good leader, for example is someone who is authoritative, articulate, decisive, and until recently, typically male.

Among citizens in many Western nations, the ideal leader is also white, despite the election of Barack Obama to the USA Presidency in 2009. As this proviso suggests, however, stereotype and reality are often usually rather different. This chapter explores how three very effective leaders manage organisational change, and illustrates the (ir)relevance of traditional gender and ethnic stereotypes, as well as the stereotype of the solo, all-powerful hero leader. The chapter begins with an outline of the theoretical framework, a critical realist approach which explores how macro-level societal norms are instantiated at the level of micro-level face-to-face interaction. Then the methodology and data collection, involving recorded interviews as well as naturally occurring workplace talk, are briefly described. A detailed analysis of three case studies follows, facilitating discussion of ways in which society-wide gender and culture stereotypes interact with traditional hero leader stereotypes in specific workplace contexts.

J. Holmes (✉)
Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand
e-mail: janet.holmes@vuw.ac.nz

2.2   Theoretical Framework

New Zealand leadership discourse has been a focus of a great deal of research within the Language in the Workplace Project (LWP) team (e.g. Holmes et al. 2009, 2011; Holmes and Marra 2011; Marra et al. 2008), including the work of our Research Associates (e.g. Jackson 2012; Jackson and Parry 2001, 2011; Schnurr 2009; Wilson 2011). Adopting a critical realist approach, the Language in the Workplace Project team has focussed, especially in recent work, on how macro-level societal norms are instantiated at the level of micro-level face-to-face interaction (e.g. Holmes et al. 2011, 2012; Marra et al. 2014). See Fig. 2.1.

Critical realism provides an account of the relationship between wider social structures and individual agency, proposing that individual behaviour (including language) is influenced by outside 'reality' (Bhaskar 2008; Collier 1994; Coupland 2001; Coupland and Jaworksi 2009, p. 17). In other words, our behaviour is constrained by the parameters of broad societal norms and 'inherited structures' of belief, power, opportunity and so on (Cameron 2009, p. 15). These constraints involve institutional norms and ideologies which members of society are aware of, whether they conform to them or contest them (Coupland 2001, pp. 16–17), and they are inevitably the source of stereotypes, including stereotypes of effective leaders. The 'gender order' (Connell 1987) is one example of a strong ideological constraint which influences what is regarded as appropriate behaviour for women and men in different contexts (e.g. Embry et al. 2008; Jackson and Parry 2011; Johnson et al. 2008; McCabe and Knights 2015). The workplace is a prime site for investigating the (ir)relevance of gender as a component in current leadership performances, as I will illustrate.
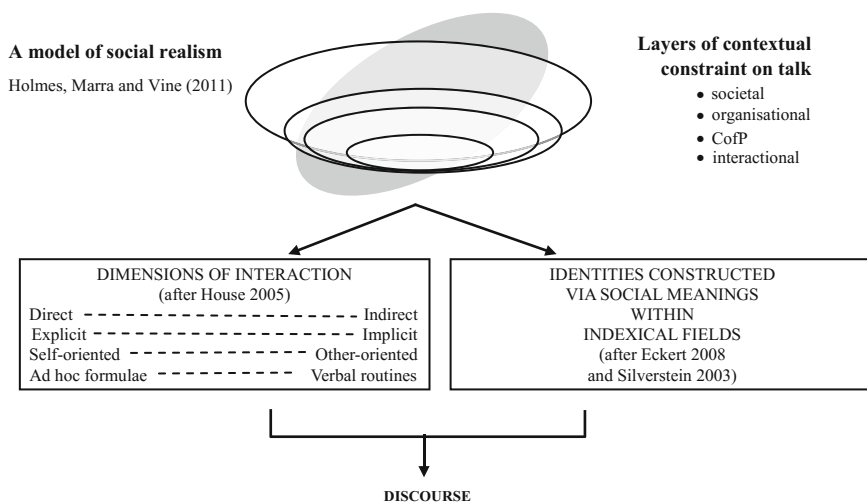

Fig. 2.1 A model of social realism

Racial and ethnic inequalities may also be a component of societal ideologies, and we might talk of the 'culture order' which reinforces the notion that members of some ethnic groups are more suitable for senior and responsible roles than others, or that members of particular cultural groups will endorse more conservative or traditional ways of doing things (e.g. Acker 2006; Macalpine and Marsh 2005; Ward 2008). The literature offers some very articulate and moving accounts of how members of minority ethnic groups have been excluded from positions of power and influence in different societies (Grimshaw 2000; Ibrahim 1994; Kaba 2012; Mandela 1995). Again the workplace offers a specific context to examine the relevance of ethnicity in the construction of leadership stereotypes. Moreover, a focus on how leaders manage organisational change provides a rich context for this analysis, since discursive leadership construction and organisational culture are inextricably intertwined and mutually reinforcing (Fairhurst 2007; Schnurr and Zayts 2012).

The management literature distinguishes many different kinds of organisational change (e.g. structural, technical, cultural, symbolic) and describes many different approaches to managing change (e.g. Darwin et al. 2002; Dawson 2003; Jackson and Parry 2011; Kotter 2007). For my purposes in this chapter, the concepts of structural change and cultural change are sufficient: i.e., where an organisation's structure is radically altered through expansion or reduction or reallocation of roles (structural), and where there is change in the ways of doing things and interacting in the organisation (cultural). Jackson and Parry (2011, p. 18) argue that aspiration (for change) is a crucial component of leadership, stating uncompromisingly: "If you do not aspire to change something and you don't have a good reason for changing it, you cannot and should not lead".[1]

The three leaders discussed below are all involved in radical structural changes, as well as managing cultural changes in their organisations. Such changes inevitably involve workplace discourse. As one of our focus leaders, Penelope, argued, changing workplace culture means changing people's behaviour, including their linguistic behaviour. In one case this meant "stamping out negative, corrosive bad-mouthing and modelling appropriate, positive, courteous behaviour", which she regarded as an essential aspect of constructing a professional identity as an effective leader. Using interactional sociolinguistic analysis (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2007), described in detail in Vine et al. (2008), together with a social constructionist approach, the analysis below examines the different ways in which the three leaders managed organisational change in their specific workplace contexts, with specific attention to gender and ethnic, as well as leadership, stereotypes. First, however, I briefly describe our methodology.

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[1]See also Nadler and Tushman (1990).