Discursive Leadership in Technological Change

Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.
William Blake ‘Auguries of Innocence’

Abstract

This thesis is contributing to a greater understanding of discursive leadership by exploring as it happens *in situ* and by looking more closely at the daily interactional work of leadership actors in the process of technological change.

In this thesis, I argue that many of the existing accounts of leadership in organisational studies have contributed to a widely accepted ‘grandiose’ image of leadership conceptualising the phenomenon as a pre-existing entity and a taken-for-granted privilege of people on the top of organisational hierarchy who are responsible for making the executive decisions. My view on leadership is different. It is less grandiose, more mundane, and fundamentally a reality-defining activity. Being intrigued by daily discursive practices of doing leadership - as moments of providing an ‘intelligible formulation’ of reality - I contribute to the discursive leadership agenda by following a social constructionist path. The ‘linguistic turn’ in social sciences is my point of departure towards embracing the social and linguistic aspects of leadership.

My thesis contributes to the field of management and organisation studies by developing an analytical framework to study discursive leadership as an interactional accomplishment by elaborating and synthesising theoretical insights from organisational sensemaking, discursive leadership and the social studies of technology. The value of this framework informed by the principles of ethnomethodology is that it has the potential for providing a better understanding of how technological change is constructed, negotiated and accomplished through the daily discursive practices of leadership actors who make sense of and give sense to processes of technological change in organisations.

Responding to the empirical challenge of tracing the everyday interactional constitution of discursive leadership, my study is based on an extensive dataset, including meeting observations, interviews, and documents obtained during a twelve-month fieldwork. Drawing on this data, I use a range of interpretive approaches; namely, ethnomethodologically-informed discourse analysis (EDA), conversation analysis (CA), membership categorisation analysis (MCA) and organisational ethnography that enabled me to undertake a painstaking exploration of discursive micro-granularity of members' sensemaking accounts which I used as units of my analysis.

My study advances the existing research on organisational sensemaking by analysing reasoning procedures through which leadership actors construct a meaningful sense of the technological change through accounts. By setting a micro-discursive lens on leadership as a situated discursive practice and giving priority to participants' own sensemaking, I identified a repertoire of discursive devices used by leadership actors to make sense and to give sense to the technological change in an organisation. Through examining the interactional accomplishment of the leadership phenomenon, my research advances the existing work on organisational sensemaking by an empirical demonstration of the organising properties of leadership as 'sensemaking in action'.

My thesis contributes to the discursive leadership field by offering insights into category predication work of leadership actors which enable sensemaking and sensegiving about technological change through the processes of framing and reframing. Three vignettes (each comprising of a set of episodes) demonstrate the membership categorisation work in leadership interaction which includes the following processes: reconstituting a category, characterising a category and generating category constraints thus revealing how technological change is accomplished through discursive practice of leadership actors.

Key Words: discursive leadership, sensemaking, technological change

To my parents

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List of Abbreviations

AAA	American Anthropological Association
AOB	Any Other Business
CA	Conversation Analysis
CBA	Category Bound Activities
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CF	Abbreviation used in the IS filters for applicants with Conditional offer
CLS	Critical Leadership Studies
CMS	Critical Management Studies
CRM	Customer Relationship Marketing
DAMA	Department of Admissions and Marketing
DTD	Digital Technologies Department
EDA	Ethnomethodologically-informed Discourse Analysis
EM	Ethnomethodology
EU	European Union
FCP	Foundational Courses Provider
FTA	Face Threatening Activity
H-CRM	New CRM system
HTML	HyperText Markup Language
IO	International Office
IT	Information Technology

IS	Information System
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MCA	Membership Categorisation Analysis
MCD	Membership Category Device
MRES	Master of Research programme
PAS	University Information System
PG	Postgraduate
PG1	Abbreviation used in the IS filters for particular group of Postgraduate Applicants
PG2	Abbreviation used in the IS filters for particular group of Postgraduate Applicants
PGR	Postgraduate Research applicant or programme
PGT	Postgraduate Taught applicant or programme
PWP	Personalised Web Page
SP	Student Progress
SRA	Social Research Association
SRP	Standardised Relational Pair
TFS	Text-focused Studies
UCAS	The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service in the UK
UF	Abbreviation used in the IS filters for applicants with Unconditional offer
UG	Undergraduate

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Introduction

The White Rabbit put on his spectacles.
"Begin at the beginning," the King said gravely,
"and go on till you come to the end: then stop."
Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,
Chapter XII

This research presents a novel approach to exploring and understanding leadership phenomenon as meaning management enacted through discourse processes. In my research, I utilise a recently developed ethnomethodologically-informed approach to discourse analysis which I combine with membership categorisation analysis, insights from conversation analysis and ethnography to examine linguistic enactment of leadership during the process of technological change. I use an implementation of one particular type of information system – a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in the Northern University - as an empirical example.

Research Background

My fieldwork began in January 2010 and continued for twelve months. During this period, I have been granted an incredibly generous access to the Student Recruitment CRM Campaigns Project which aimed to achieve university-wide integration of business processes and CRM software (further - H-CRM system) for improving university communications further with prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students from enquiry to registration. Longitudinal engagement along with my research site allowed me to collect data from various sources including project team meetings, observations and recordings, interviews with the project stakeholders, and project-related documents. Being committed to produce a rich account of discursive leadership as it is happening *in situ* and in real time, the main analytic focus of this study is on naturally occurring talk and text. Unlike much of the work in leadership studies based on traditional methods of data collections such as interviews and questionnaires, data collected in the framework of this study is not deliberately edited or ‘sanitised’ (Svennevig, 2008); it appears in this thesis close to its use in the original context. Thus, it allows the researcher to observe and examine the ‘quiddity’(Garfinkel, 1963) or the ‘whatness’ (Heritage, 1984) of discursive leadership practices as they occur.

The choice of the research site for my study has been driven by my general interest to technological change, and particularly, to what might be called the ‘enigmatic phenomenon known as customer relationship management’ or ‘CRM’ (Zablah *et al.*, 2004). The mounting body of literature on CRM, including publications in the popular domain, demonstrates that despite the relative novelty of this phenomenon it has already become an important business approach (Raab *et al.*, 2008). CRM is said to represent the culmination of a decade-long shift away from an emphasis on the management of *transactions* to the management of *relationships* (Knox *et al.*, 2010). CRM has proven to be a very interesting and challenging field of study due to the fact that it not only involves integration of different functional areas of organisation such as marketing, sales and customer services (Ngai, 2005), but also intertwines technological change with broader organisational issues including decision-making, power and problem-solving. Given the dramatic increase in corporate investment on CRM-related initiatives around the globe, it is no wonder that the bulk of published academic research on CRM to date is executing what Lyytinen (1992) calls ‘normative’ purpose of research focusing on methodological prescriptions for successful design and implementation of CRM. The majority of existing CRM models show the implementation of CRM-related projects as a neutral, balanced and value-free process, ignoring the social and political nature of CRM adoption. Most academic literature promotes the so-called managerial perspective on CRM by depicting CRM-project stakeholders as passive recipients of technological initiatives. An existing, as it might be called ‘euphoric’, view of CRM in the literature is, perhaps, not surprising considering the lack of studies that address social and organisational aspects of CRM implementation and adoption. Moreover, little attention has been given to alternative approaches that focus on detailed exploration of the actual usage of CRM in particular contexts over time. For example, relatively little is known about how sensemaking processes affect (and are affected by) the multiple stakeholders involved in implementation of CRM-related change initiatives in organisations. This largely unexplored aspect of CRM initiatives triggered my analytic interest to design an empirical exploration which is sufficiently sensitive to capture the sensemaking processes during technological change.

When it comes to my choice of a university as a site for my fieldwork, it was not an unusual move for a researcher who is interested in the exploration of organisational sensemaking to realise that universities have been long recognised as places where sensemaking occurs because they are characterised by a multiplicity of goals, diffused power, seemingly chaotic decision-making processes and professionals protecting their autonomy (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Therefore, in choosing a university as a research site I have followed a path in the field of sensemaking research made by works of Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991), Gioia and Thomas (1996) and Weick (1976).

Over the last few decades, a plethora of academic literature has appeared exploring the transformational process of universities into market cultures (Czarniawska and Genell, 2002; Douglas *et al.*, 2006; Embling, 1974; Graham, 2002; Lichtenthal *et al.*, 2006; Mazzarol, 1998). Today’s higher education institutions are actively looking towards new technologies and business approaches from the private sector, which they could implement for a better understanding of the individual needs of their students and partners. Several studies have shown that advertising campaigns, student satisfaction and quality of service have become key concerns in the context of market-driven educational systems (Douglas *et al.*, 2006; Petruzzellis *et al.*, 2006; Sirvanci, 2004). Part of the academic debate concerns the possible need for higher education institutions to create customer-focused relationships with their stakeholders and partners in order to build a distinctive identity and to sustain competitive advantage in the future (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; LeBlanc and Nguyen, 1997). Many studies have attempted to tackle the issue of the customer-focused relationship on the basis of CRM, which has been extensively researched in recent years (Braganza *et al.*, 2013; Buttle, 2009; Knox *et al.*, 2010; Lipiäinen, 2015; Mendoza *et al.*, 2007; Nasır, 2015; Ngai, 2005; Nguyen and Mutum, 2012; Parvatiyar and Sheth, 2001; Peelen and Beltman, 2014; Reiny *et al.*, 2013; Payne, 2006; Richter and Cornford, 2007). Despite the ample attention to CRM in the research literature, relatively little is known about management of customer-focused relationships in the sphere of higher education (Seeman and O'Hara, 2006). Moreover, several scholars recognise CRM as a term that has been adopted from the business context and does not readily fit into the university’s milieu (Coffield and Williamson, 1997; Schuller, 1995). Areas of ambiguity and uncertainty imposed by CRM-related initiatives in the sphere of higher education might be considered as an occasion for sensemaking and, therefore, represent the fertile ground for exploring organisational sensemaking.

Research Focus and Rationale

Information technology (IT) has been commonly recognised as one of the major factors influencing all parts of society. Advanced information systems enable contemporary organisations not only to make structures and processes more transparent and help increase efficiency and effectiveness but also to learn about their markets and customers. In recent years, there has been a significant growth in studies concerned with different aspects of technological change in organisations (e.g. Kallinikos *et al.*, 2012; Leonardi et al., 2012). Early studies on technological change in organisations (Burns and Stalker, 1961; Hickson *et al.*, 1969; Perrow, 1967; Woodward, 1970) explore links between technology and different organisational forms highlighting the importance of technology in organisational structure and design. However, most of these studies concentrate on a macro-level analysis of technology largely ignoring the impact of technological change upon people within the organisation. This line of enquiry, as do most organisational theories, tends to conceptualise technology deterministically and abstractly, largely ignoring the role of human agency in the process of designing and using technology (Orlikowski and Barley, 2001).

Recent developments in the sociology of technology have enhanced the understanding of the human and organisational dimensions of technological change by viewing technology as a socially constructed cultural product (Bijker *et al.*, 2012). From this perspective, technological change in organisations can be understood as a complex process that entails a mix of technological, social, and organisational interactions and involves multiple stakeholder groups (Gal and Berente, 2008). These different groups of stakeholders may have varying needs, interests, capabilities and different interpretations of the implemented technology and its purpose. The design and implementation of information systems, thus, can been depicted as part of an ongoing political process and the effects of technological changes can be seen as an outcome of the power relations between a broad range of stakeholders (e.g. individuals and departments) regarding selection, implementation and use of new technologies within the adopting context (McLaughlin *et al.*, 1999; Symon, 2008). Cognitive and socio-cognitive approaches have been widely recognised as a particular useful lens to explore the IT implementation efforts in organisations considering their focus on understanding interpretive processes and mechanisms within organisational groups (Orlikowski and Gash, 1994). The main premise underlying such research is that organisational members' acceptance, deployment and actions toward information technologies are mediated by their shared interpretations of these technologies (Gephart, 2004; Griffith, 1999). Therefore, it has been argued that these interpretations can have a significant impact on the success of the implementation efforts.

The ability to create, transform and use information is vital for any organisation in order to grow, adapt and survive. IT plays a central role in organisational change programmes and a lot of transformations in organisations have been achieved through IT. To understand the process of IT-driven organisational change, the relationship between information technology and sensemaking has become an area of growing importance and academic interest (Bloomfield *et al.*, 1994; Fulk, 1993; Hasan and Gould, 2001; Prasad, 1993). It has been argued that the real phenomenon of interest in information technology is not technology *per se* but the ability of individuals to make sense of it (Bloomfield and Vurdubakis, 1994; Davidson, 2006). Weick (1995), for example, considers technology as a crucial part of organisations which can be incorporated into any discussion of sensemaking. The sensemaking perspective on an organisation stems from the assumption that individual members of an organisation create their own subjective reality by constant attempts to understand, to interpret and to construct meaning of what is happening around them in the external organisational environment (Choo, 1996; Weick, 1979; Weick, 1995). Put simply, different actors can make sense of the same technology in different ways. Weick's (1995) sensemaking model, therefore, can act as a frame for understanding the process of organisational change and the behaviours of individuals who are responding to this change on a micro-level while constructing activities of daily life in organisations.

The constructionist approach to organisational sensemaking assimilates recent linguistic theories and emphasises language as sense arguing that reality is formed within language rather than communicated through it. From a social constructionist perspective, sensemaking and language are central to continuous creation and recreation of a particular understanding of the world (Brown, 2000; Brown and Humphreys, 2003; Brown et al., 2008; Watson and Bargiela-Chiappini, 1998). Social constructionist approaches move away from treating organisations as stable, objective and unproblematic entities towards "consideration of the organising processes and forms that 'enact' organisation" (Weick, 1979). Thus, the social constructionist perspective suggests that sense is not readily construed but is actively constructed and negotiated (Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis and Christianson, 2014), therefore, sensemaking can be conceptualised as an ongoing social and discursive process of negotiation (Maitlis, 2005).

A lot of research has been focused on exploring and analysing factors that facilitate or hinder technological change efforts. One of the main identified variables that have been closely linked to the success of organisational change initiatives is the presence of a leading individual, or individuals – in technological innovation literature is usually called a ‘champion’ (Schön, 1963). Several authors have identified a number of different roles played by individuals in the process of technological change, such as gatekeepers (Katz and Tushman, 1983), project champions, business innovators, technical innovators (Achilladelis *et al.*, 1971), and user champions (Curley and Gremillion, 1983). However, all these examples assume a static view of the role; that it is simply a function that actors fulfil. Such a stance is echoing traditional models of leadership such as trait theories of leadership (Mann, 1959; Stogdill, 1948); behavioural approaches to leadership (Adair, 1979; Blake and Mouton, 1964; Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1958) which represent leadership as lodged in single individuals on the top of the organisation.

Mainstream theorising of leadership usually associates leadership with change initiatives and depicts a leader as a proactive and powerful individual who has got an ability to influence followers in a top-down way, securing their enthusiastic commitment and voluntary obedience in order to achieve certain organisational outcomes (Yukl, 1989; Yukl, 2013). There are a lot of contemporary academic texts that emphasise what Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003b) call ‘grandiose’ aspects of leadership, paying attention to the charismatic, heroic, motivational and inspirational sides of this organisational phenomenon (Bryman, 1992; Kotter, 1990). This stream of management literature tends to ignore the more mundane and petty aspects of leadership. Throughout my research, I am using the word ‘mundane’ in its connotation as a ‘lack of excitement’ (www.oxforddictionaries.com) to oppose the ‘grandiose’ image of leadership.

The perspective on leadership suggested in the study is consonant with the social constructionist tradition and proposes viewing leadership not as something that leadership actors *have* but rather an ongoing process of sensemaking and sensegiving which unfolds within the continuous stream of everyday interactions. This study is informed by theoretical development in the field of discursive leadership (Fairhurst, 2007). Assuming that leadership is repeatedly performed in communication and through practice, current research demonstrates the potential of a discourse approach to the study of leadership. This approach is valuable because it opens up an analytic space for alternative accounts of leadership in the process of change, thus generating fresh insights into the ambiguous nature of this phenomenon. It is argued, that by setting a discursive lens to the leadership processes, it is possible to observe the social and communicative sides of leadership that have been largely ignored by mainstream leadership literature (Fairhurst, 2007).

Despite the development of qualitative research on leadership, the vast majority of leadership studies still tend to rely on questionnaires and interviews with managers as the primary source of data collection (Bryman, 2004b). Other methods of data collection such as observations of leadership practice *in situ* (e.g. Larsson and Lundholm, 2010) and shadowing techniques are relatively rare (e.g. Czarniawska, 2007). Several commentators point out that given a lack of accounts of 'daily doing' of leadership which illustrate the mundane leadership activities, most of the images of leadership presented in the contemporary field of leadership are simply incongruent with the realities of work of modern leaders. The area of technological change is not an exception. On the one hand, academic literature on information technology gives very little attention to leadership issues. On the other hand, leadership studies largely overlook technological change as an empirical example. This is the area where I see the primary contribution of my research.

Proposing that mundane side of leadership is an important, but poorly understood area of research, the overarching aim of this study is to explore the 'daily doing' of leadership in situ and in real time in the context of technological change. By examining sensemaking and sensegiving of leadership actors involved in the process of technological change, this study seeks to explicate the discourse processes through which leadership as meaning management is enacted. With particular analytic focus on discursive aspects of daily interactions, this research is focused on developing analytical insights by analysing naturally occurring talk between multiple stakeholders during project team meetings related to the implementation and development of the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system in the Northern University.
Overarching research question that guides this research is

> ***How do leadership actors use discourse to make sense of, and give sense to, processes of technological change in organisations?***

Thesis Overview

This thesis is presented in three main parts.

Part I serves as a theoretical engine providing my study with analytic energy by fusing and intertwining strands from three broad research areas: social studies of technology, sensemaking and discursive leadership which are presented in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Following ongoing research conversations in each field, I chose those that were relevant to the main focus of my research explaining my agreements and disagreements with existing theoretical standpoints. In each chapter, I frame my review of the literature in a way that also highlights shortcomings in existing research methods, thus setting the stage for my methodological contribution. I conclude this part of my thesis by presenting an analytical framework grounded in the principles of ethnomethodology.

Part II presents the research methodology employed in the framework of the study and thus this section bridges Part I and Part III of the thesis. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the fieldwork and discusses a rationale for the methodological choices shaping my thesis including research design, data collection methods, chosen approaches to discourse analysis, the evaluative framework and ethical considerations.

Part III of the thesis is devoted to empirical exploration of discursive leadership following four leadership actors involved in the process of technological change. It comprises of Chapters 5, 6 and 7 each of which introduces a discussion of a particular issue related to the implementation of a new information system in the University.

The thesis concludes by drawing out the wider theoretical and practical implications of the arguments presented. The final chapter presents the summary of theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions of the study and discusses possibilities to move the research conversation forward in the areas of discursive leadership, organisational sensemaking and technological change in organisations. This chapter concludes by outlining suggestions for future research. This section of the thesis also serves as a platform for my reflection on my research journey.

Part I.

Morpheus:
I imagine, right now, you must be feeling a bit like Alice,
tumbling down the rabbit hole?
Neo: ***You could say that.***
Morpheus:
I can see it in your eyes. You have the look of a man
who accepts what he sees because he is expecting to wake up*.*
'Matrix', Script

I have structured this literature review into three thematic sections. Each section represents the central arguments in ongoing theoretical debates in the particular field of the organisation studies: technological change, organisational sensemaking and leadership. I used these themes to equip myself with a theoretical lens in order to create an analytical framework for my own empirical investigation. Appreciating the richness of each of the research conversations underpinning my study, the literature review, presented further, is by no means a claim to be a comprehensive one. It is rather conceived as an attempt to carve each theoretical field in a way that provides a theoretical basis for the research endeavour of this thesis. I structured this part of the thesis in a way that helped me to outline my research question and demonstrate the main theoretical contributions that have influenced and shaped analytical and methodological choices of my study.

I begin with exploring social shaping of technology and how social constructionist thinking is influencing contemporary theoretical approaches to technological change including particular attention to the role of discourse in this process. Then, I direct my attention to organisational sensemaking emphasising its social and ongoing character. My dialogue with organisational literature is continued by referring to the field of leadership studies and reviewing existing theoretical approaches which tend to frame leadership as something very special and 'grandiose'. Addressing the critique of romanticised and heroic views of leadership in academic literature, I draw attention to the analytical possibilities which allow capturing leadership as a mundane daily practice. In order to reveal the mystique leadership, I look at this phenomenon using a discursive lens. This part will be brought to a close by discussion which seeks to draw the literature review together. I highlight the contribution of discursive leadership in exploring and understanding how leadership actors make sense and give sense to the processes of technological change in organisations.

Chapter 1 'It Would be so Nice if Something Made Sense for a Change.'

"It has happened
and it goes on happening
and will happen again
if nothing happens to stop it."
Erich Fried,'What happens'

Introduction

We live in a tech-obsessed world. Just a quick glance at the typical modern office (including the one where I am writing this thesis) allows me to notice a variety of technological equipment (e.g. laptop, iPad, smartphone, etc.) and complementary paraphernalia which is believed to replace any paperwork. Human life as well as life of organisations has been historically and closely intertwined with technology. The role of information technology in organisations and its implications for organisations have been in the spotlight of academic attention since the Leavitt and Whisler's (1958) path-breaking study set the stage urging managers to prepare for inevitable changes in the nature of their jobs caused by information technology.

Over the past three decades, there has been an increasing focus to what Bijker (1995, p.3) has referred to as 'social shaping of technology and technical shaping of society.' Now organisation studies have a close interest in how new technology not only dramatically shapes and re-shapes the working routines and processes in contemporary organisations but also how it is shaped by them in return. Nowadays, there is a plethora of studies showing that academics are intrigued not only by relationships between technology and society in general, and organisations in particular, but also by the ways in which new techno-based ethos affects a changing sense of self (Gergen, 2001).

This section of the literature review is guided by the review question:

> *What does the existing organisation studies literature reviewed for the purpose of the research suggest regarding contribution of social constructionist perspective to the understanding of technological change in organisations?*

In what follows, I first illuminate the ways in which social studies of technology can inform this exploration which is both fascinating and important. I focus my analytical lens particularly on the discussion of daily aspects of technological change in organisations, given surprisingly little attention to these aspects in existing literature, which is predominantly focused on dramatic and exceptional sides of the change process. After that, I go on exploring the role of discourse in understanding technology-organisation relationship. Then, I discuss the technological change in organisations in relation to new information technologies and demonstrate that this process can be seen as the fertile ground for sensemaking.

Technological Determinism and Social Studies of Technology

> *Morpheus:*
> ***Throughout human history, we have***
> ***been dependent on machines to survive.***
> ***Fate, it seems, is not without a sense of irony.***
> *Matrix, Script*

Over the past thirty years, organisation studies have witnessed a growing debate over how technology in organisations should be studied and what role it plays in organisational change. Most of the studies in the area of technological development of organisations have been traditionally predicated on dichotomous notions of 'technical' and 'social' (Bloomfield and Vurdubakis, 1994; Leyshon and Thrift, 1997). I will discuss this in turn acknowledging the strength and limitations of each of the perspectives. But at the outset, I briefly consider the definition of the term 'technology' as the cornerstone of the discussion.

Talking about technology, which has been an essential part of human life for the millennia, we can refer to a wide variety of phenomena from simple individual artefacts to complex technological systems. As Bijker *et al.* (1993, p. 3) remarked: 'Technology' is a slippery term' which carries 'a heavy interpretative load'. The simplistic definition of technology is usually referred to as 'physical objects and artefacts created by humans' (Hollenback and Schiffer, 2010). The definition of technology has been advanced by works of sociologists (e.g. Bijker *et al.*, 1987, p. 4; MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1985, pp. 3-4) and archaeologists (e.g. Schiffer and Scibo, 1987, p. 4), who adopted an alternative view of technology as activities, processes, something concerning what people know and what they do. Existing definitions of technology suggest that studies of technology can have different foci depending on an appropriate dimension stressed in the research.

Early works on technological change in organisations have been developed based on the technology-led management practices that conceptualised technological development as one of the drivers of organisational change and an autonomous force impacting organisations (Burns and Stalker, 1961; Hickson *et al.*, 1969; Perrow, 1967; Pfeffer, 1982; Simon, 1977; Woodward, 1970). Now there are countless studies examining technology as an independent variable having an impact on decision-making (e.g. Andersen, 2001; Friedman and Goes, 2000; Huber, 1990), company investments (e.g.

Brynjolfsson and Hitt, 1996), organisational performance (e.g. Chang *et al.*, 2010; Sari, 2010), competitiveness (e.g. Alvarez and Marin, 2013; Fagerberg, 1996; Khare *et al.*, 2011; Niosi, 1991), human resources practices (e.g. Powell and Dent-Micallef, 1997; Siqueira and Fleury, 2011). Each of these very different accounts of relationships between technology and organisations, as many others conducted in similar research tradition, could be encapsulated in the notion of 'technological determinism' which has long been considered as a more superior analytical enquiry revealing technical properties of technology and their implication for society (Bloomfield and Vurdubakis, 1994; Thrift, 1996).

The central methodological and theoretical claims of these studies assume a linear, cause-effect connection between new technologies and organisations, usually represented simply as a collection of physical components and ties, and organisational outcomes. Markus (1988) states that the essence of the technological imperative can be succinctly captured by the word 'impact'. The technological determinism perspective views technology as an exogenous force which constrains, demands, determines and controls the behaviour of individuals and organisations (Pfeffer, 1982). Moreover, as Bloomfield and Vurdubakis (1994) point out, most of the accounts take for granted the assumption that technology development proceeds in a linear manner and therefore, new technologies appear to be superior compared to earlier alternative versions.

Works of technological determinists are now widely questioned and receive strong critique because they tend to side-step the social and political processes (Bloomfield and Vurdubakis, 1994; MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999; Winner, 1977) of technological development and streamline the influence of technology in organisations driven by, as Leyshon and Thrift (1997, p. 318) put it, 'a passion for absolute certainty and order.' With its tendency to a cause-and-effect oversimplification, a 'hard' technological determinism fails to appreciate the complexity and ambiguity of social change (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999). Adding to these arguments, Orlikowski and Barley (2001) emphasise that most studies informed by technological imperative perspective not only tend to conceptualise technology deterministically and abstractly but also largely overlook the role of human agency in the process of designing and using technology. Just as Bertolt Brecht wrote in the late 1930s: 'General, your tank is a powerful vehicle… but it has one defect: it needs a driver.' This stance corresponds to one suggested by Latour (1996a, p. 78), 'All [technological] projects are stillborn at the outset. Existence has to be added to them continuously, so they can take on body, can impose their growing coherence on those who argue about them or oppose them.'

As a response to the limitations of the existing accounts on technological development and change, a substantial body of literature has emerged concerned with the social shaping and social co-construction of technology (Bijker, 1995; Bijker, 2009; Bijker *et al.*, 1987; Bijker and Law, 1992; Bloomfield *et al.*, 1994; Grint and Woolgar, 2013; Hughes, 1983; Latour, 1996; MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1985; McLoughlin, 1999; Pinch and Bijker, 1984). Being built on a wide range of sociological and historical approaches, social studies of technology place technology, as McLaughlin *et al.* (1999) put it, 'firmly' within the realm of the social: behaviours, interactions, interpretations and so on (Barley, 1986; Fulk, 1993; Orlikowski, 2000; Robey and Sahay, 1996). Social studies of technology offer analytical tools and concepts that generate a rich repertoire of insights about technological change in organisational settings. Bijker *et al*. (2012) suggested three broad categories of social studies in the field of technological change: social construction of technology (e.g. Bijker and Law, 1992; Blume, 1997; Elzen, 1986; Grint and Woolgar, 2013; MacKenzie, 1990; Pinch and Bijker, 1984); systems approaches (later large-scale technological systems) (e.g. Hughes, 2004) and actor-network theory (Callon, 1986; Latour, 1996b; Law and Callon, 1992). Leaving aside epistemological and methodological differences between these perspectives, it is important to emphasise what they have in common. All these approaches share a conception of the social and the technological as mutually constitutive, thus breaking the traditional boundaries of what can be included in an analysis of technology and social organisation. In other words, scholars recognise that new technologies co-construct or enable social contexts into which they are introduced, and any effects of the new technologies are mediated by a variety of social processes (Leonardi and Barley, 2008). For example, similar to other historians and sociologists of science and technology, Thomas Hughes, the author of the book, awarded the Dexter Prize by the Society for the History of Technology, argues that technology is not something distinct from social relations, culture, politics, economics or science (Hughes, 1983; Hughes, 1986). From the social constructionist's perspective, technology, as 'a carrier and mediator' of relations, meanings and interests which are socially constructed, is always open for a variety of interpretations and, therefore, always 'in the making' (McLaughlin *et al.*, 1999, p. 6). Furthermore, MacKenzie and Wajcman (1999) powerfully demonstrate how meanings of technology are constituted in and through the activities of particular individuals and social groups.

This significant body of social studies of technology proves to be extremely useful in addressing the shortcomings of technological determinism and shedding light on what has been seen as the ‘black box’ (Latour, 1987) of technology by including the role of human agency and social choice (i.e. users’ practices, beliefs and agendas) in shaping effects of new technologies (Holmström and Robey, 2005; Orlikowski, 2000; Poole and DeSanctis, 2004). Social constructionist studies also convincingly demonstrate how particular social actors and groups ‘ascribe, dispute, exclude and cohere the sense and meaning(s) of technologies’ (Heath and Luff, 2000, p. 7). Some social constructionist researchers privilege social practices over material ones in their explanation of technological change (Knorr-Cetina and Mulkay, 1983; Woolgar, 1988). Here, organisational scholars who follow the ‘material turn’ in the social science (Hicks and Beaudry, 2010b; Leonardi and Barley, 2008; Orlikowski, 2007; Pinch and Swedberg, 2008) would certainly take issue with what they labelled as ‘radical’ constructionism (Kallinikos *et al.*, 2012, p. 5) or technological ‘voluntarism’ (Leonardi and Barley, 2008, p. 159) accusing social constructionist scholars of taking ‘a slippery ontological slope’ (Kallinikos *et al.*, 2012, p. 4) in their radical commitment to the social dimensions of technology (Winner, 1993). They argue that social constructionist researchers who championed ‘voluntaristic’ perspective (e.g. Boudreau and Robey, 2005; Constantinides and Barrett, 2006; Schultze and Orlikowski, 2004) created blind spots by downplaying the role of technology itself in social change, and by overlooking the specific ways in which the features of particular artefacts are entangled in the social practices (Leonardi and Barley, 2008; Knorr - Cetina, 1997; Pickering, 1995). Other critical voices highlight that social studies of technology not only portray material culture in a passive way, but also tend to reduce things to meanings or social relations thus, metaphorically speaking, ‘robbing’ things of their physicality, and what is more, of their ability to change our lives (Hicks and Beaudry, 2010a; Hollenback and Schiffer, 2010; Jones and Boivin, 2010, p.345).

However, if we are to increase our understanding of the role of technologies in organisations, we need to bring attention to the ways in which individuals use technologies in their daily organisational conduct. As Heath and Luff (2000, p. 8) point out:

> ‘Indeed […] we know so much about the social organisation of technology in one sense, yet so little about the part it plays in everyday organisational activities and interactions’.

Even though interest in daily apparently unremarkable work activities has gained a certain gravity in recent years (e.g. Barker, 1993; Barley and Kunda, 2001; Heath *et al.*, 2000; Heath *et al.*, 2004; Hindmarsh and Llewellyn, 2010; Kunda, 1992; Llewellyn, 2008; Llewellyn and Hindmarsh, 2010b; Luff *et al.*, 2000; Roy, 1960), the use of technologies within the practicalities and constraints of organisational members’ ordinary daily activities is still remaining to be of marginal analytical importance in social studies of technology (Heath *et al.*, 2000; Leonardi and Barley, 2008). This is where my study aims to make a contribution.

Technological Change and Organisational Discourse

My stance on technological change taken in this research is encouraged by Mills' (1959) work on the 'sociological imagination', Collins' (2003, p. v) plea to provoke a 're-imagined world of change' and works by other scholars (e.g. Pettigrew *et al.*, 2001; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002) calling for 're-thinking' and 're-conceptualising' of organisational change. Borrowing from Collins (2003), technological change can be thus conceptualised:

> 'not as an exception to the norm of stability, not as an outcome that is known in advance and discussed in retrospect, […] but as […] a fuzzy and deeply ambiguous process, which implicates both author and subject in the quest for new and different ways to understand one another.' (p.v)

Elaborating further on ideas from social constructionism, at this point I would like to refer to Grant *et al.*(2005, p. 7) who highlight that in order to respond to the call for re-imagining the process of technological change 'one needs to engage with it as a discursively constructed object.' The potential of such analytical engagement with discourse analysis for advancing our understanding of technological change process has been already convincingly demonstrated by a number of commentators (e.g. Boczkowski and Orlikowski, 2004; Brown, 1998; Heath *et al.*, 2004; Heracleous and Barrett, 2001; Symon, 2005; Symon, 2008). Applying a range of discourse analytic approaches, these researchers are able to analyse and interpret a variety of technology-related issues in ways that would not have been otherwise achievable.

Before moving forward in enumerating and discussing benefits of discourse analysis for exploration and examination of technological change, I will carefully define what is meant by discourse in the framework of this study. In doing so, I will respond to remarks by van Dijk (1997b, p. 1) who considers discourse 'a rather "fuzzy" notion', in line with Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 6) who highlight 'terminological confusion' around discourse and discourse studies. The problem of defining the term 'discourse' is by no means trivial. As Iedema (2007, p. 941) emphasises, the way in which discourse is conceptualised 'determines whether and how our own research becomes visible as social practice.' Acknowledging that the term 'discourse' is used in many varying ways, I will select the definition according to what fits best to the analytical enquiry of this study driven by the overarching research question.

The theorisation of discourse has attracted a great deal of attention in contemporary social science. The explosion of interest to discourse is usually attributed to the so called ‘linguistic turn’(Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000a, p. 137) in the social sciences which has been facilitated by various factors, including a growing disillusionment with positivist approaches in social sciences, the rise of new approaches such as critical theory, hermeneutics and post-structuralism, and the emergence of a distinctive field of discourse analysis within the discipline of linguistics. The array of theoretical and analytical approaches (e.g. sociology, linguistics, cultural anthropology, philosophy, social psychology) has contributed to establishing analytical credibility and status of discourse studies (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Deetz, 1992; Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 1972; Gumperz, 1982; Lash, 1990; Shotter, 1993; van Dijk, 1997a; van Dijk, 1997b).

In the field of organisation studies, the linguistic turn has led to a rising tide of interest to the intimate relationship between language and organisation (Daft and Wiginton, 1979). The increasing number of publications has brought discourse on the forefront of research conversations, and contemporary organisational analysis has recognised discourse as a vital feature of organisational life (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000a; Boje, 2001; Fairhurst and Putnam, 2004; Grant *et al.*, 1998; Hardy, 2001; Keenoy *et al.*, 1997; Oswick *et al.*, 2000; Putnam and Cooren, 2004; Wodak, 1996). Considering that studies of discourse in organisations have been variously conceived, Grant *et al*. (1998) point out that the definitions of discourse are heavily influenced by the theories and concepts underpinning the type of analysis being pursued. Therefore, perhaps unsurprisingly, every attempt to define what is meant by discourse is subjected to the cut and thrust of academic debate. However, despite the obvious variegation of definitions, these studies collectively follow the linguistic turn expressing a shared awareness of constructive and functional capacities of language thus challenging the continuing domination of ‘the language-as-mirror logic’ (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000b, p. 140). This creative potential of language, which allows studying complex organisational phenomena, will be my point of departure in defining the term ‘discourse’.

Although I do support the general critique of a conventional understanding of the relation between language and social reality, which emphases the representational capacity of language, my main analytical interest is focused on studying social practices – on language use in specific social contexts - rather than on developing philosophical investigations of the nature of language. Elaborating my understanding of discourse, I am cognisant of work of the discourse analysts who believe in ‘the productive, functional, interactive, and context-dependent nature of all language use’ (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000b, p. 141), and particularly, in my work I refer to discourse analysis informed by the field of ethnomethodology, specifically, ethnomethodologically-informed discourse analysis (EDA), and sub-fields of conversation analysis (CA) and membership categorisation analysis (MCA). At this point, I borrow from Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 7) their use of discourse, as they put it ‘in its most open sense’, covering ‘all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds’, but most importantly, their understanding of discourse as language use in a social context, and I will present a more detailed discussion of the discourse analytical method applied in this research in the methodological chapter.

When it comes to the positioning of my study in the broader field of discourse analysis, academic literature suggests various ways of investigating distinctions between different versions of discourse analysis. For example, three broad categories of discourse studies generally addressed in the academic literature are functional, interpretive and critical (Grant *et al.*, 1998; Heracleous and Barrett, 2001; Mumby and Clair, 1997). The functional stream of discourse analysis concerns with the instrumental of language-based communication by social actors (Doolin, 2003; Ford and Ford, 1995). The interpretive perspective focuses on the role of language in meaning construction processes (Boje, 1991; Czarniawska and Gagliardi, 2003; Gabriel, 2000), while critical discourse analysis illuminates issues of power and understanding of relations of social domination (Fairclough, 1993; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2004). Although I consider this distinction as valuable, it generally signals quite a limited spectrum of analytical options thus restricting my research possibilities. Therefore, I follow Alvesson and Kärreman (2000b) in their conceptualisation of ***d***iscourse *(a lower-case ‘d’ discourse)* and ***D***iscourse *(a capital-case ‘D’ Discourse)* not because they provide a better map of the discourse analysis field, but because ‘they provide an interesting way to talk about what is happening’ in discourse-oriented research programmes (Deetz, 1996) and thus offer more research opportunities that are not grasped by other reviewers of discourse analysis (e.g. Keenoy *et al*., 1997).

The strand of research labelled as *d*iscourse (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000b) or text-focused studies – TFS (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011) refers to micro discursive approaches in discourse analysis (e.g. sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, semiotics, speech act schematics, interaction analysis) which focus on ‘the study of talk and text in social practices' (Fairhurst, 2007, p. 6) and understand discourse as a language in use and talk-in-interaction, albeit in various analytical ways. In the framework of my study, the research question suggests an understanding of language use 'in relationship to the specific process and in social context in which discourse is produced' (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000b, p. 1133), therefore, my research falls within more micro approaches of discourse analysis which take seriously the close-range level of discourse (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000b; 2011). By contrast, using the term *D*iscourse or Paradigm-type Discourse Studies – PDS, Alvesson and Kärreman (2000b, 2011) refer to Discourses conceived in the Foucauldian way (Foucault, 1972; Foucault, 1977) as historically developed systems of thought in which power and knowledge relations are established. Foucault-inspired Discourse studies (e.g. critical and postmodern discourse analysis) provide valuable insights in the conceptualising of 'self' as neither fixed nor essentialised, in explaining the inseparability of self and society, as well as illuminating the individualising effects of power by examining various forms of power and influence. While these studies provide an important avenue for research, they examine discourse as 'shaped' by 'something else' (Putnam and Cooren, 2004, p. 325) for instance, by ideologies, power, or political struggles, and therefore they will be excluded from the analytical focus in my research. I will use a lower-case*'d' d*iscourse (with reference to TFS) throughout the thesis.

Making Sense of New Information Technology

There is a growing body of literature concerned with the technological change in general, and with the acquisition and implementation of information technologies (IT) in particular (Karahanna *et al.*, 1999; Lewis *et al.*, 2003; Orlikowski, 1996). It is widely recognised that IT has penetrated almost every sphere of contemporary society permeating both the private and public domains. A number of studies showcase that the emergence of new digital technologies transforms the nature of work by eliminating some type of work and creating new forms of it. Observing this trend, several academics heralded the rise of ‘post industrialism’ (Bell, 1973), ‘information society’ (Castells, 1996; Lyon, 1988) and ‘knowledge economy’ (Stewart, 1994). During the 1990s, intensive discussions about ’network organisations’ (Goddard, 1994); ‘cyber organisation’ (Barnett, 1995); ‘virtual organisations’ (Byrne, 1993); ‘boundaryless organisations’ (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996), ‘lean structures’ (Womack *et al.*, 1991) and ‘new forms of surveillance and control’ (Zuboff, 1988) have raised important questions about relationships between IT and organisations thus contributing to a more developed and sophisticated understanding of techno-organisational change. At this juncture, it is worth mentioning that quite often in organisation studies’ literature, the terms ‘technological change’ and ‘techno-organisational change’ are used interchangeably. In my study, I apply the term ‘technological change’ which encompasses my understanding of technological change and organisational change as ‘mutual processes’ (McLaughlin *et al.*, 1999, p. 7). In most of the accounts mentioned above, IT is often associated with images of inevitable progress and obvious benefits, and is believed not simply changing but significantly transforming organisational reality. The implementation of IT change has been treated as something intentional, unproblematic that follows upon the planning activities and something that concerns just a few people on the top of the organisational hierarchy. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that these studies have been criticised for their simplistic, linear and neat understanding of technological change (Clark, 1987; Leonard-Barton, 1990).

New twists have been added to the field of IT and technological change by works informed by social constructionism (e.g.Knights and Murray, 1994) and gender studies (e.g. Faulkner, 2001; Lohan and Faulkner, 2004; Martin, 1991). For example, feminist technology studies have pioneered the focus on the user of the technology representing her not as a passive recipient of technologies but as an active and important change agent in the IT change process (Webster, 1993; Webster, 1996). Writers taking a social constructionist position reveal a socially constructed nature of information technology and view the development of IT ‘as the constitution of meaning and knowledge’ (Knights and Murray, 1994, p. 240). For instance, consistent with a social constructionist approach, Symon (2008, p. 93) suggests that organisational consequences of IT technology design ‘are not objective, observable outcomes but constructed meanings’. Thus, it can be argued that when organisations find themselves facing technological change, existing shared and individual meanings are challenged (Ericson, 2001), and organisational members engage in negotiations of an acceptable version of what is going on, as previously constructed meanings are exposed to reconstruction (Weick, 1979).

According to McLoughlin and Badham (2005) this focus on negotiation of meaning emphasises the contested character of the IT change process. Put differently, the technological change in organisations can be understood as part of an ongoing political process, and effects of the technological change can be seen as an outcome of the power relations between a broad range of stakeholders (individuals and departments) regarding selection, implementation and use of new technologies within the organisational context (Silva and Backhouse, 2003). This point has been reinforced by Symon and Clegg (2005) who convincingly demonstrate that the social constructionist view of technology opens new avenues encouraging more reflexive and politically aware approaches to the IT change process. According to Lin and Silva (2005, p. 49), the management of information systems adoption can be seen as “a social and political process in which stakeholders frame and reframe their perceptions of an information system.” Knights and Murray (1994, p. 157), likewise Brown (1998), attract attention to the highly politicised nature of the IT change process viewing it as a ‘contested terrain of political activity’. Similarly, Symon and Clegg (2005) point out that participating in the process of IT change organisational members use particular constructions of reality aiming to fulfil particular political functions such as resisting the change, managing the image of the change, legitimating actions, protecting career change and satisfying external demands. All in all, as McLoughlin and Badham (2005, p. 828) argue, political theories of technological change eschew ‘traditional unilinear and one-dimensional thinking’ about technology and organisations focusing instead on complex, unpredictable and context dependable social processes. However, the main focus of the political perspective is on power dimensions and organisational members’ interests, therefore, it is less sensitive to the process of meaning construction and/or destruction as well as to the process of assigning meaning to things and events in the process of IT change (Ericson, 2001). If we are to embrace the complexity of IT change in organisations, it is necessary to understand the processes of generating individual and shared meanings. This is where insights from the sensemaking literature are becoming particularly useful.

With the introduction of new technologies in organisations, people are forced to process and manage an increasing load of complex, ambiguous and uncertain information. As described by Weick (2001c), growing uncertainty and complexity triggered by technological change process affects what people notice and ignore, as they try to punctuate the flow of new information in predictable ways . The sensemaking perspective allows conceptualising relationships between new technologies and organisations as an arena of ambiguity, uncertainty and instability where different interests are at play. Weick (2001c) has captured this idea arguing that one of the most significant properties of new technologies is their equivocality. By highlighting equivocal nature of technology as something which can be recondite, uncertain and complex, Weick (2001c) emphasises that new technologies are open to several possible or plausible interpretations. The variety of interpretations that are often ambiguous and misleading brings novel problems for managers affecting organisational structure and processes. Ambiguity implies that people engage in sensemaking because of their confusion of too many interpretations. In the case of uncertainty, people engage in sensemaking because they are ignorant of any interpretations (Weick, 2001c). Therefore, considering the issues of ambiguity and uncertainty imposed by new technologies, any technological change can be seen as an occasion for sensemaking (Gioia and Thomas, 1996; Gioia *et al.*, 1989; Weick, 1995) as organisational members involved in interpretation of the situations when dealing with ‘events, issues, and actions that are somehow surprising and confusing’(Maitlis, 2005, p. 21). This call for a sensemaking perspective in exploring technological change is a crucial point of departure in my study. I will return to a more detailed discussion of sensemaking later in the literature review.

Conclusion of Chapter 1

I started this chapter by recognising difficulties in defining what precisely counts as technology. Organisation scholars address this challenge by using a variety of theoretical approaches. I took a broader perspective on the nature of technology in relation to the organisation and focused my line of discussion on two existing theoretical standpoints; namely, technological determinism and social constructionism. The former depicts technology as the driving force of technological change while the latter is based on the assumption that technology and society simultaneously shape each other. Taking the social constructionist perspective, I recognise that people make, use and assign meanings to technology in different ways. Therefore, I argue that in order to extend the understanding of the relationship between technology and organisation, an analytic attention should be driven towards exploring how meaning is created and re-created in the process of technological change. In this chapter I also followed the call for re-imagining the process of technological change as a discursively constructed object, and drew attention to a limited number of studies addressing the situated practices of technology. In my next chapter, I will introduce a discussion about technological change, as the process infused by uncertainty and ambiguity, in a field of sensemaking research.

Chapter 2 Daily Rounds of Organisational Sensemaking

> ***"A little fuzzy, a ghost picture, but something***
> ***That would stay with us, the way we hurried***
> ***Down the dirty road, the stars, the silence…"***
> *Rodney Jones, 'TV'*

> ***"Why," said the Dodo, "the best way to explain it is to do it."***
> *Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapter III*

Introduction

I would like to start this section by acknowledging the person to whom I am indebted for my initial interest in meaning making generally and sensemaking in particular. Perhaps surprisingly, this person is not Karl Weick, who has undoubtedly inspired my quest for systematic knowledge about sensemaking in organisation and strongly influenced my analytical endeavours (Weick, 1979; Weick, 1995) with his independent line of reasoning and originality of thoughts. The person I am alluding to is Viktor Frankl. He is one of the first researchers who explored the ways which enable people to maintain meaningful and active existence, albeit conducting his research in an extreme way by chronicling his experience of being an ordinary prisoner in an Auschwitz concentration camp. Father of logotherapy (*logos* in Greek denotes '*meaning*'), whose philosophical stance is echoing Kierkegaard's *will to meaning* (emphasis added), has been incredibly famous in psychological circles and almost invisible in the field of organisation studies. For Frankl (2006), man's primary motivational force is a search for meaning. He argues that the lack of meaning is the paramount stress which can result in an existential crisis of meaninglessness (Frankl, 2006). This emphasis on meaning echoes a stance taken by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) who also emphasises the importance of meaning in people's life and for whom humans are fundamentally defined by systems of meaning. The question of how individuals give meaning to the unknown with its long history in psychological literature has recently attracted the attention among scholars from other disciplines, including organisation studies. The intensification of interest to processes of individual meaning making is brought to light in another phenomenon – sensemaking - which, according to Weick (1995, p. 4), is 'well named because, literally, it means the making of sense.' In recent years, the academic literature addressing the sensemaking phenomenon has been growing exponentially. Now, sensemaking, as a distinct field of research, is encompassing a variety of theories and empirical work (e.g. Brown, 2000; Cornelissen, 2012; Gephart, 1992; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Gioia *et al.*, 1994; Hernes and Maitlis, 2010; Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis and Christianson, 2014; Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010; Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012; Weick *et al.*, 2005a).

This section of the literature review is guided by the review question:

> *How does the existing organisational sensemaking literature reviewed for the purpose of the research address the process of construction of intersubjective meaning during technological change?*

In what follows, I will highlight the social side of sensemaking and explore the analytical dialogue between sensemaking and social constructionism literature. In the previous chapter, I have demonstrated that taking the social constructionist perspective allows me to establish links between technology and meaning making in organisations. In this section, I aim to situate this conversation in the sensemaking literature illustrating some theoretical and methodological gaps in addressing existing links between the sensemaking phenomenon and technological change

Searching for Meaning - Individual and Social Sensemaking

> ***"If there's no meaning in it," said the King,***
> ***"that saves a world of trouble, you know,***
> ***as we needn't try to find any. And yet I don't know,"***
> ***he went on, spreading out the verses on his knee,***
> ***and looking at them with one eye;***
> ***"I seem to see some meaning in them, after all."***
> *Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,*
> *Chapter XII*
>
> ***Anybody who isn't confused here***
> ***Does not understand what is going on***
> *Office epigram*
> *Cited by Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992*

The quest for meaning in organisational life comes to the forefront if we are to understand organisations from a sensemaking perspective as 'constituted by systems of meanings and social processes of making sense, during which meanings are assigned to things and events' (Ericson, 2001, p. 113). Weick's pioneering work (1995, p.4) offers a quite simple definition of sensemaking as 'the making of sense'. Perhaps, this explicit simplicity and vagueness of the definition not only has led to various conceptualisations of the sensemaking phenomenon in the research field but has also opened the door to a growing critique pointing its limitation for operationalisation of sensemaking in organisation studies (e.g. Seligman, 2000). Within the organisation studies literature, there are a bourgeoning number of diverse theoretical and empirical studies on sensemaking, for instance, Christianson *et al*. (2009), Clark and Geppert (2011), Cornelissen *et al.* (2014), Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991), Maitlis and Christianson (2014), Maitlis and Lawrence (2007), Monin *et al*. (2012), Sonenshein (2007), Thomas *et al.* (1993), just to mention a few. Growing interest to sensemaking in organisation studies is, perhaps, not surprising as sensemaking has been widely recognised as 'a central activity' in organisations which lies 'at the very core of organising' and which enables various important processes and outcomes (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014, p. 58). An increasing number of scholars examine relationships between sensemaking and organisational processes such as organisational learning (Kayes, 2004; Thomas et al., 2001), innovation and creativity (Hill and Levenhagen, 1995; Ravasi and Turati, 2005; Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012).

One of the major debates in the field is revolving around major ontological assumptions whether sensemaking 'takes place within or between individuals' (Maitlis and

Christianson, 2014, p. 62). Similarly to Frankl (2006) and Geertz (1973), a number of scholars explore sensemaking on the intrasubjective and individual level (Elsbach *et al.*, 2005; Hill and Levenhagen, 1995; Klein *et al.*, 2006b; Louis, 1980; Starbuck and Milliken, 1988; Taylor, 1999). From this perspective, sensemaking is broadly understood as 'a more private, singular' (Weick, 1995, p. 5), and cognitive activity (Larson and Christensen, 1993) of an individual who encounters unexpected, ambiguous, and/or novel moments, and tries to ascribe meaning to them by extracting and interpreting cues from the environment (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis and Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1995). By cues, Weick (1995, p. 50) means 'simple, familiar structures that are seeds from which people develop a larger sense of what may be occurring.' For instance, in his study on revolutionary change in organisations, Taylor (1999) observes that people realise their sensible reality differently and, therefore, sensemaking varies from individual to individual. In line with a number of sensemaking studies that treat the terms 'sense' and 'meaning' interchangeably, Drazin *et al.* (1999, p. 293) explain 'meaning – or sense – develops about the situation, which allows the individual to act in some rational fashion; thus meaning – or sensemaking – is a primary generator of individual action.' Several researchers (e.g. Frost and Morgan, 1983) suggest that individuals make their world intelligible to themselves; in other words, make sense of situations and/or things by 'reading into' them patterns of subjective meaning. Grounded in the social cognition literature, the individual (intrasubjective) approach to sensemaking examines how individuals interpret and respond to ambiguous and equivocal situations by referring to a wide range of frameworks including interpretive schemes (e.g. Bartunek, 1984), cognitive schema (e.g. Bingham and Kahl, 2013; Labianca *et al.*, 2000); cognitive frames (e.g. Kaplan, 2008; Pratt, 2000), cognitive maps (e.g. Bougon *et al.*, 1977), schemata (e.g. Hopkinson, 2001). From this perspective, sensemaking can be defined as the process of placing stimuli into a mental framework to ascribe meaning to and direct interpretation of the unknown experiences (e.g. Louis, 1980; Starbuck and Milliken, 1988). For instance, in his study on symbolic processes in the implementation of technological change in a health maintenance organisation, Prasad (1993) examines how creating favourable mental frameworks about a new computer system allows progression from the 'pre-computerisation' stage towards the 'adoption' stage of the technological change process. According to Balogun and Johnson (2004, p. 524), change initiatives cause 'cognitive disorder'; in other words, a 'gap' between organisational members' expectations and their new experience (Lüscher and Lewis, 2008) which triggers the reframing of existing interpretive schemes. Bartunek (1984, p. 356) observes two ways of changing interpretive schemes; in other words, cognitive schemata that maps our experience of the world (Giddens, 1990; Schutz, 1967; Weick, 1979). The first one - 'first-order change' - can be described as 'incremental modifications in present ways of interpretation' (Watzlawick *et al.*, 1974) or 'as a shift in norms, structures, processes and goals'(Gioia *et al.*, 1994). Another one, a form of 'second-order' change involves radical alterations in interpretive schemes or, as Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) put it, 'a cognitive reorientation of organisation.' Along similar lines, Kaplan (2008) explores the role that cognitive frames played in shaping strategic choices during a period of high uncertainty. Conceptualising on Goffman's (1974) 'schemata of interpretation', Kaplan (2008, p. 736) states that cognitive frames can allow individuals 'to organise their understanding of the environment,' as actors have each got cognitive frames about 'what kinds of solutions would be appropriate.' In her analysis of two technological projects, Kaplan (2008) suggests that cognitive frames play a critical role in shaping the strategic choices. One of the main contributions of Kaplan's study is bringing social theories of framing to the fore (Benford, 1993; Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow *et al.*, 1986) and, thus, illuminating a dynamic and contested process of framing, which suggests that the cognitive frames of individuals can shape organisational actions only when they are shared and collectively enacted. As Kaplan (2008, p. 737) herself points out that frames are both 'individual and social.' However, in Kaplan's model, similar to other studies (e.g. Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991), sensemaking is seen as taking place within individuals, thus, it does not satisfactory represent a mutually constructed process of meaning making.

Undoubtedly, research inspired by Weick's (1995) classic text on sensemaking has made a significant contribution to the field of organisation studies challenging the orthodoxy of the decision-making perspective that has comfortably dominated in organisational analysis. By making a serious effort of shifting analytical focus to how individuals create meaning and make sense of organisational life, these studies present a reaction on early normative models of rationality (Beach and Lipshitz, 1993; Hirsch *et al.*, 1987; Stubbart, 1989) and respond to existing decision-making concepts, such as the 'garbage can', in which cognition was considered in a mainly behavioural, boundedly rational way (Cohen *et al.*, 1972; March and Olsen, 1976). However, despite their many advantages, studies discussed above equate to sensemaking only with the intrasubjective (Wiley, 1988), individual (cognitive) level, and for me there is a rug. Situating the conversation about sensemaking in organisational context allows me to notice significant blind spot in such conceptualising of sensemaking as the social character of cognition remains neglected. Cognitive perspective, which is focused on sense embodied in actors, is missing what Weick himself (1995, p. 39) calls ‘the social substrate’ of sensemaking, when sensemaking is ‘regarded as unfolding between individuals’ (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). This understanding is critical considering that in organisations the cognitive and the social are closely intertwined. Furthermore, as Allport (1985, cited in Weick, 1995 p. 39) reminds us, studies that focus on sensemaking as an individual activity tend to overlook the presence of others whether it is ‘actual, imagined, or implied’. Put differently, presuming that individuals make sense on their own, they are, nevertheless, influenced by thoughts, feelings and behaviours of others. Therefore, what needs to be carefully addressed is the assumption that sensemaking in organisations is grounded ‘in both individual and social activity’ (Weick, 1995, p. 6), and sense is constructed intersubjectively when organisational members jointly engage in deciphering the meaning of unexpected events and ambiguous issues.

Elaborating from Weick’s (1995, p. 409) observation that sensemaking unfolds ‘in a social context of other actors’, a number of organisation scholars address a collective side of sensemaking (e.g. Boyce, 1995). Collective sense implies a shared understanding of reality and collective sensemaking can be seen as ‘the process of constructing this shared understanding of reality’ (Boyce, 1995, p. 130) which allows people ‘to comprehend the world and act collectively’ (Maitlis, 2005, p. 66). In contrast to the cognitivist approach to sensemaking (Klein *et al.*, 2006a; Starbuck and Milliken, 1988) which is focused on shared schemata within the social group, the social constructionist view of sensemaking privileges sensemaking as an ongoing social process of producing, negotiating and sustaining a sense of shared meaning (Boje and Rosile, 2003; Hopkinson, 2001). Even though I have been initially inspired by research, which examines sensemaking as a psychological or cognitive process operating at an individual level, I will not review this theoretical strand in detail because it is outside the scope of my discussion, and my study will be connected to these theories in a very limited extent. In contrast, I will focus on research exploring the social nature of organisational sensemaking (Gephart *et al*., 2010; Maitlis, 2005; Weick *et al*., 2005). I put the gravity of my research on the intersubjective level of organisational sensemaking (Weick, 1995; Wiley, 1988), which I believe, will allow me to frame important conceptual and analytical points of my study, and I will refer to theories on individual (cognitive) sensemaking throughout the literature review only with the purpose of making some of my points more salient.

My analytical stance taken in the study is consonant with sociological perspectives on sensemaking offered by scholars who conceptualise organisational sensemaking as a ‘fundamentally social process’ (Maitlis, 2005, p. 21) occurring between organisational members who interpret their environment in and through interactions with others. In other words, I am taking as my baseline the view that no one makes sense in isolation, and thus I am departing from purely psychological orientation of sensemaking which has been recognised as the kernel of Weickian conceptions of sensemaking (Taylor and Van Every, 2000). My insights about the social nature of sensemaking are also inspired by the words of Žižek *et al*. (2006), who states that ‘We, humans, are not naturally born into reality. In order for us to act as normal people we need to interact with other people who live in the space of social reality. Many things should happen as we need to be properly installed into symbolic order.’ One of these ‘things’, although Žižek does not say this directly, in my understanding is sensemaking. Highlighting the social nature of sensemaking, Gephart *et al*. (2010, p. 284-285) define it as ‘an ongoing process that creates an intersubjective sense of shared meaning through conversation and non-verbal behaviour in face to face settings where people seek to produce, negotiate, and sustain a shared sense of meaning.’ According to Schegloff (1992, p. 1296), intersubjectivity presumes that the world is ‘known and held in common by some collectivity of persons.’ Moving on to a level of intersubjectively experienced reality allows linking my discussion to the domain of research drawing on ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), a ‘more likely home for sensemaking’, as Weber and Glynn (2006, p. 1640) put it, which conceives sensemaking as ‘an intersubjective process accomplished through conversation and social interaction’ (Gephart *et al.,* 2010, p. 281).

At this juncture, it is perhaps necessary to briefly summarise my epistemological standpoint which is informed by ideas of social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Assuming that reality exists independently of human cognition and is socially constructed allows me to conceptualise organisation as socially constructed in daily actions. However, my stance, in a sense, is different to Berger and Luckmann (1966) who concentrate on personal, phenomenological knowledge of reality in order to understand the process of construction. In contrast, I focus on the inherently intersubjective nature of human experience, and follow Czarniawska-Joerges (1992, p.35) looking ‘at construction in order to better understand reality.’ Reflecting on this difference, I refer to ethnomethodologically-informed approaches seeking for valuable analytical insights which help me to tackle with my research project. It is important to point out at this juncture that my study has not been originally conceived as an ethnomethodologically-grounded one. I have arrived to ethnomethodology quite late in my research journey driven by methodological challenges and curiosity of ‘taking the cover off’ (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 117) taken-for-granted organisational life. Therefore, most of the discussion about how I applied approaches informed by ethnomethodology for the analysis of discursive data is located in the methodological section of the thesis. In what follows, I briefly summarise some of the key ethnomethodological concepts that have guided my endeavours, in a way that I assume as sufficient to maintain the coherence of analytical discussion at this point of my thesis. I will be referring to various aspects of ethnomethodology in more detail in other relevant sections throughout the thesis.

Inspired by Schutz’s (1967) hypothesising on mundane intelligibility of social life and intersubjectively shared world of individuals, Garfinkel (1967) - the father of ethnomethodology - studied the interpretive methods (ethno-methods) used by ordinary people to make sense of their everyday reality. According to Garfinkel (1967, p. 11), ethnomethodology is ‘the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organised artful practices of everyday life.’ Arguing for centrality of ‘accountability’ in people’s interactions, Garfinkel (1967) suggests that people engage with each other searching for an explanation of what is going on and make their experience of reality accountable to each other. Accountability achieved by ‘members’ (in Garfinkel’s term) becomes an accomplishment of everyday life. Thus, accounts produced by individuals are critical from the ethnomethodologically-informed point of view, as they are not simply ‘*describe* the world, but… they reveal its *constitution*’ (Whittle *et al.,* 2014a, p.75, emphasis in the original). Importantly, for Garfinkel (1967) accounts are fundamentally occasion-based or situated. In other words, if we are to comprehend or to make sense of what has been said by someone, we need a situation which supplies a social context for the utterances, where a social context comprises ‘sets of methods and the logic of accounting’ (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 119). Taylor and Van Every (2000, pp. 10-11) note that ‘the situation is not merely given; it is constituted by the accounts that occur it … the accounts are not just in and about the situation; they are it.’

Similarly to Gephart *et al.* (2010), I argue that attention to the situated practices of sensemaking in forms of accounts can enhance understanding of the key concepts of sensemaking and related domains. In contrast to Fiss and Hirsch's (2005) study, which proposes combining framing and sensemaking to create the meaning of events, ethnomethodologically-informed perspective views sensemaking as 'a basic process that produces framing and frames' (Gephart *et al*., 2010, p. 298). I will continue more detailed discussion on the importance of sensemaking accounts for my research in the methodological section.

The ethnomethodologically-informed perspective on sensemaking allows responding to limitations of Weick's depiction of sensemaking presented in his powerful classical piece '*Sensemaking in Organisations*' (1995). Theorising about sensemaking, Weick (1995, p. 51) recognises that the social context is crucial for sensemaking pointing out that students of sensemaking 'need to think context'. For him, however, context means 'local contingencies' (ibid, p. 51), and this position has been widely criticised claiming that being 'a theory of seemingly local practices' sensemaking tends to overlook 'the role of larger social, historical or institutional contexts' and 'appears to neglect, or at least lack an explicit account of, the embeddedness of sensemaking in social space and time' (Weber and Glynn, 2006, p. 1639). Along a similar line, Taylor and Van Every (2000, p. 251) are right in arguing that 'making sense… is not an accomplishment in a vacuum, it is not just context-free networking.' What this conversation highlights is that in social sciences, as Boden (1994) puts it, the notion of 'context' remains a 'core yet quite confused concept.' In this sense, an ethnomethodologically-informed perspective is particularly illuminating as 'micro-level sensemaking practices produce the macro social order' (Gephart *et al.,* 1990, pp. 44-45) and 'the tiniest local moment of human intercourse contains *within* and *through* in the essence of society, and vice versa' (Boden, 1994, p.5, emphasis in the original). In other words, if we follow Giddens' (1987, p. 155) notion that 'the modern world is a world of organisations' then we might observe its embedded and interconnected accomplishment as 'the local achievement of its constituent members' (Boden, 1994, p. 78).

Temporal Aspects of Sensemaking

> ***"Let the jury consider their verdict," the King said,***
> ***for about the twentieth time that day.***
> ***"No, No!" said the Queen. "Sentence first – verdict afterwards."***
> ***"Stuff and nonsense!" said Alice loudly.***
> ***"The idea of having the sentence first!"***
> ***"Hold your tongue!" said the Queen, turning purple.***
> *Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,*
> *Chapter XII*

The idea of retrospective sensemaking, informed by the work of Schutz (1967) is considered by Weick (1995, p. 24) as 'perhaps the most distinguishing characteristics' in his conceptualisation of sensemaking. Similar to Weick (1995), several sensemaking scholars highlight that people can enact changes in their existing patterns of thinking and acting if these changes make sense in relation to their previous experience and understanding (Bartunek, 1984; Gioia, 1986; Gioia *et al*., 1994; Weick, 1995). For instance, for Gioia (1986, p. 61), making sense means 'stepping outside one's lived experience and analysing it retrospectively.' For Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010, p. 551), sensemaking is the process of social construction which 'occurs when discrepant cues interrupt individuals' ongoing activity, and involves the retrospective development of plausible meanings that rationalise what people are doing.' Although I agree with Weick (1995) and Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) up to a point, I cannot fully accept the Weickian classical perspective which tends to narrow sensemaking down to retrospection. Even though the retrospective sensemaking approach has been taken to prefigure major theoretical models in the field of organisational sensemaking, there is an emerging body of research that reflects on its limitations in exploring situations that require novel understandings and forward-looking thinking (Gephart *et al.*, 2010; Gioia and Mehra, 1996; Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012). Being less investigated and under-theorised, the growing stream of research seeks to restate sensemaking as less backward-looking by identifying and distinguishing other temporal dimensions of meaning construction processes such as present-oriented and future-oriented perspectives (e.g. Cornelissen and Clarke, 2010; Gephart *et al*., 2010; Gioia *et al*., 1994; Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012; Weick *et al*., 2005). It is argued that 'prospective' (Gioia, 1986) or 'future-oriented' sensemaking (Gephart *et al*., 2010) underpins a variety of organisational processes including strategy making, planning of organisational change, and innovation. For example, Stigliani and Ravasi (2012) offer a study of prospective sensemaking examining material and conversational practices which support the transition from the individual to the collective level of sensemaking. They emphasise that prospective sensemaking ‘underlies all activities associated with planning and initiating change in organisations’ (Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012, p. 1233). Some researchers consider expanding the sensemaking domain by taking into account both prospective and retrospective dimensions of temporality in the discussion about the phenomenon (Gioia and Mehra, 1996; Kaplan and Orlikowski, 2013; Wiebe, 2010) thus promoting a ‘more holistic temporal perspective’ on sensemaking (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014, p. 96). An assumption that sensemaking has got various temporal orientations invite the need for further conceptualising of an organisation which can be defined as an open-ended sensemaking resource used in talk to explain behaviours, prescribe and justify sanctions, and give organisationally relevant meanings to the phenomena using a combination of retrospective, present and prospective sensemaking (Gephart, 1978; Gephart *et al*., 2010).

Attempts to conceptualise the temporal nature of sensemaking have tended to bifurcate in two streams of research. On the one hand, many of the published accounts of sensemaking research depict sensemaking as an episodic process. It is, perhaps, not surprising considering that scholars used to refer to Weick’s (1995) classical formulation of sensemaking as their starting point. The Weickian perspective explores sensemaking which is triggered by the situations when meaningful interactions collapse or are disrupted. This approach suggests that sensemaking starts ‘with chaos’ (Weick *et al*., 2005, p. 411) and with the necessity of restoring the meaning, and consequently, it ends when the meaning is restored (Gephart *et al*., 2010), or, as Weick *et al.* (2005, p.411) put it, when the meaning ‘is forcibly carved out of the undifferentiated flux of raw experience’ that surround any (organisational) actor. A good metaphorical example that can help to illustrate an occasion for sensemaking in Weickian terms is, perhaps, Alfred Hitchcock’s movie ‘*The Birds*’ (1963), where unpredictable intrusion of birds disturbs the symbolic order, and existing reality is literally turned apart (Žižek *et al*., 2006). This disintegration of reality opens the possibility for sensemaking.

Building on the insights from macro perspective of cosmology, a branch of philosophy which explores the orderliness of the universe by focusing on issues of time, space, change and contingency, Weick (2001a) observes that these issues are also integrated in the micro level of everyday life. People’s assumptions about coherence of events in time and space, and an orderly manner of change help them to make sense of what is happening and to act respectively. This, according to Weick (2001a), constitutes a ‘cosmos’. Disruption of everyday cosmologies sets the stage for a sudden loss of meaning, a ‘chaos’, an interlude when people start questioning a rational and orderly system of the world. Weick (2001a, p. 105) has coined the term - ‘a cosmology episode’- to conceptualise this particular phenomenon of interrelated collapse in understanding and procedures of sensemaking. The electronic world of organisations where incomplete, cryptic representations of events coupled with limited data processing capacity of people makes it harder for people to produce an accurate perception of the reality and thus provides a fertile ground for escalation of cosmology episodes.

The Weickian epistemological standpoint regarding sensemaking temporality differs in important ways from the one informed by ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967). In contrast to Weick’s conception of sensemaking, the ethnomethodological perspective depicts sensemaking as a foundational ongoing process of human action that is ‘producing and sustaining a sense of shared meaning’ (Gephart *et al*., 2010, p. 284). The view on temporality of sensemaking, informed by ethnomethodology, suggests that there is *no time out* (emphasis added) for sensemaking; it is always taking place, without beginning and end (Gephart *et al*., 2010; Leiter, 1980; Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). According to Leiter (1980), in the everyday world, the production of shared social reality and the sensemaking practices are ongoing, and if they are undisturbed, then the factual ‘sense’ of the social world is taken for granted. When the continuous enactment of social reality - that is, ongoing activity of organising Weick (1979) - is disrupted, the subject attempted to use repair practices in order to restore a sense of shared meaning (Gephart *et al*., 2010; Leiter, 1980). Gephart *et al*. (2010, p. 284) define sensemaking as ‘a foundational process of human action that is describable, ongoing, and compels attempts at restoration as required.’ What is more, the ethnomethodologically-informed standpoint suggests that the ‘sense’ of the social world is a product of people’s conversation, and therefore, people’s talk is a place where people construct or restore a sense of shared social reality using sensemaking methods (Leiter, 1980).

Sensemaking Occasions

> ***"So you think you've changed, do you?"***
> ***"I'm afraid I am, Sir," said Alice. "I ca'n't remember things as I used-***
> ***And I don't keep the same size for ten minutes together!"***
> ***"Ca'n't remember what things?" said the Caterpillar.***
> ***"Well, I've tried to say 'How doth the little busy bee',***
> ***But it all came different!" Alice replied in a very melancholy voice.***
> *Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,*
> *Chapter V*

Hernes and Maitlis (2010) observed that the sensemaking literature tends to focus on *occasions of sensemaking* (emphasis added) rather than on *the sensemakers* themselves. Scholars have a strong interest in the situations of uncertainty that make the sensemaking process more visible including situations of surprise (Louis, 1980); opportunity (Dutton, 1993), discrepancy (Orlikowski and Gash, 1994). A considerable body of research applies Weick's model of sensemaking to examine how shared meanings to various extents can enable sensemaking under pressure in turbulent conditions (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010). To date, there is a plethora of research in sensemaking literature, which studies dramatic events triggered by the breakdown, collapse, or disruption of meaning due to unusual organisational or environmental events (Cornelissen, 2012; Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010; Quinn and Worline, 2008; Weick, 2010; Weick *et al.*,2005). This includes studies on sensemaking in and about organisational crisis (Gephart, 1993; Perrow, 1984; Shrivastava, 1987; Weick, 1988), natural disasters (Weick, 1993) and organisational restructuring (Balogun and Johnson, 2004). These occasions, according to Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) are characterised by interruptions of individuals' ongoing routines and 'ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution' (Pearson and Clair, 1998, p. 60) providing, therefore, powerful occasions for sensemaking. For instance, Weick (1993b) discusses the Mann Gulch fire disaster suggesting that the inability of the firefighting crew to access sensemaking resources, such as social anchors, salient cues, verbal and non-verbal communications as well as a lack of trust to each other and team leaders, has resulted in the collapse of collective sensemaking, and most of young smokejumpers lost their life as a consequence of a growing panic and deficient sensemaking. Weick (1993b) explains the organisational dysfunction at Mann Gulch as a failure to organise for sensemaking. In other words, the crisis situations, which are characterised by the absence of social processes make collective sensemaking almost impossible (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010; Weick and Roberts, 1993).

Another important piece of sensemaking research is Weick’s (1988) seminal paper on the enactment perspective on sensemaking processes in crisis situations. This paper with its core theme of enacted sensemaking has become significant not only for crisis management in particular but for the development of sensemaking research on organisational change more broadly (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010). Weick’s (1988) study is insightful by moving beyond the simplistic understanding of industrial crises as predominantly caused by technological faults towards appreciation of the complexity of possible causes including, what Maitlis and Sonenshein call (2010, p. 551) ‘a strong human element’. Similarly, in the field of technological change, Feldman (1989) observed the tendency of exaggeration and idealisation of the technological dimension at the expense of symbolic and nontechnical aspects. Unearthing insights about nontechnical aspects of technological change not only enhances the understanding of the everyday reality of work in organisations but also suggests that ‘any technology can simultaneously hold different meanings for individuals and groups in organisations’ (Prasad, 1993, p. 1426).

Although research on crisis sensemaking offers useful insights in addressing problems of managing and preventing crises, there are several potential limitations highlighted in the existing sensemaking literature. For example, Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) remarked that exclusive focus on crisis limits sensemaking to situations where meaningful interaction has collapsed. Weick (2010) himself urges us to consider the potential threat of oversimplification of the sensemaking process in the existing analysis of crisis sensemaking. What is more, obviously, life in organisations is not only about of crises, disasters, the turmoil of changes and other extreme events. Ambiguity and uncertainty are becoming inherent features of daily mundane organisational events. Therefore, what is ultimately at stake in the conceptualisation of sensemaking as it happens in the turbulent situations, I suppose, is an understanding about the mechanisms that support the ongoing practice of non-crisis daily sensemaking activities. Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of research providing insights on such mechanisms in organisation studies. One of the most noticeable examples is a study conducted by Maitlis (2005) who puts the gravity of her research on exploration of non-crisis conditions of sensemaking. Maitlis (2005) observed that most existing sensemaking studies have been conducted exploring the phenomenon in extreme circumstances or under intense pressure, predominantly over quite short time periods. Therefore, relatively little is known 'about how heterogeneous sets of sensemaking parties interact in ongoing and quite ordinary sensemaking processes over extended periods of time' (Maitlis, 2005, p. 23).

I borrow my next analytical move from Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) who explored the possibility of a natural extension of the sensemaking literature on crisis by incorporating insights from studies on sensemaking and organisational change. Reflecting on little explicit integration of these theoretical streams in the academic literature, they highlight a number of important similarities between sensemaking studies of crisis and change including comparable contexts of ambiguity and confusion in which both phenomena unfold as well as the frequency of their occurrence.

A review of the sensemaking literature suggests that studies examining how people make sense of organisational change has gradually become one of the most fruitful streams in the sensemaking literature (e.g. Balogun and Johnson, 2004; Bartunek *et al*., 2006; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Isabella, 1990; Labianca *et al*., 2000; Maitlis, 2005). These studies offer various perspectives on how people make sense of organisational change. According to Tsoukas (2005), the most salient perspectives to date include the traditional ones: the behaviourist (e.g. Kotter, 1996) and the cognitivist (e.g. Huff, 1990), and a discourse analytic approach (e.g. Grant *et al.*, 2004).

Behaviourists view change as primarily episodic and occurring in successive steps (e.g. Lewin, 1951). Thus, the behaviourist way of looking at organisational change narrows it down to the study of observable behaviour at different points in time. What is more, behaviourists presuppose that human behaviour can be altered by the change agent who is always positioned outside the changing object. These studies tend to privilege stability, routine and order, and conceive of change as *happening to* organisations at different stages of their existence (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002, emphasis in the original). This line of thinking tends to emphasise the superiority of managers and their plans, intentions and requests for the functioning of the organisation. However, analytical focus on organisational members' behaviour seems insufficient to explain change process because the crucial question *why* (emphasis added) people behave differently remains unanswered. As Tsoukas (2005, p. 97) argues: 'This question cannot be answered unless we make sense of how people make sense.' Compared to the behaviourist perspective which suggests that people's behaviour can be changed by introducing respective reinforcements, the cognitive approach offers a different lens for understanding change by focusing on intentional action of individuals. Cognitivists put the analytical spotlight on 'meaning' rather than on human behaviour, exploring the possibility of understanding how people think through an examination of cognitive maps, schema, scripts and frames as I have discussed in the previous sections. At this juncture, a reference to another important study conducted by Kaplan (2008) will be particularly useful. Analysing investment choices during a period of high uncertainty, Kaplan (2008, p. 745) provides a granular/micro level perspective on how change takes place by developing the framing contests model which suggests that adaptation occurs 'not at the organisational level, but rather at the project level in the day-to-day, often conflictual, interactions associated with choices about investment.' Kaplan's model proves to be particularly insightful in terms of moving beyond a traditional static sense of cognition towards exploring micro-dynamics of change '*inside'* an organisation (Kaplan, 2008, emphasis in the original) as well as challenging existing top-down sensemaking and sensegiving approaches (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Pfeffer, 1982).

Setting an analytical lens to a discursive perspective on change is significant not only because it allows focusing on meaning, but it allows view meaning as being 'manifested in the way people act' (Tsoukas, 2005). For discursivists, the reality is fundamentally constructed through the ways individuals talk and use sign systems. From a discursive perspective, organisational change can be conceptualised as the process of constructing and sharing new meanings and interpretations of organisational activities through 'the ways people talk, communicate and converse in the context of practical activities, and collectively reassign symbolic functions to the tasks they engage in and the tools they work with' (Tsoukas, 2005, p. 102-103). Assimilating various theories related to language and discourse, including but, of course, not limited to deconstruction (e.g. Derrida, 1976), multivocality (e.g. Bakhtin, 1981), discourse theory (e.g. Foucault, 1972), a discursive perspective on change places greater emphasis upon language as sense and sees reality as formed within, rather than communicated through language.

The development of discursive perspective on change has received its spin from development of the ideas of social constructionism in social sciences (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Social constructionism has offered a novel way in addressed growing concerns among organisation scholars towards traditional (i.e. behaviourist and cognitivist) theoretical frameworks of organisational change. It has been argued that these frameworks, first of all, do not adequately represent complex, ambiguous and equivocal experiences for organisational members in the processes of organisational change (Lüscher and Lewis, 2008). And, secondly, mainstream accounts often become objects of critique for treating organisational changes as exceptional rather than natural (Hernes and Maitlis, 2010).

As social constructionist perspective on meaning making is permeating the literature of organisational change, it allows conceptualise meaning as ‘negotiated, contested and mutually constructed’ (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014, p. 66). Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991, p. 434), for instance, reject the idea of purely rational, prescriptive change effort which ‘happens by decree’, and emphasise the process of social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) by highlighting the role of consensus building, which is activated when alternative interpretations of the meaning of a change event are created and negotiated. Along the same lines, Dutton *et al*. (2001, p. 717) address organisational change as ‘a more emergent and pluralistic process.’ While Gioia (1986) observes that any substantive change leads to the revision and alteration of meaning systems, Ericson (2001) reminds us that when organisations find themselves facing dramatic change both individual and shared meanings are exposed to reconstruction.

In their seminal paper on a strategic change effort at a university, Gioia *et al.* (1994) assign a significant role to sensemaking process in the initiating and unfolding of strategic change. It is argued that the understanding of a new experience requires ascribing meaning to it (Gioia *et al.*, 1994), and the meaning of change is created and legitimated by the sensemaking process (Dutton and Duncan, 1987). In other words, it can be argued that sensemaking is involved in meaning construction and reconstruction when people attempt to develop a meaningful framework for understanding changes in their existing patterns of thinking and acting (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991).

Consonant with understanding of sensemaking as a process of social construction, it is argued that the construction of shared meaning plays a significant role in organisational change (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010). Intriguing elusiveness of shared meaning and social processes, through which meaning is shared, have attracted significant amount of interest among sensemaking scholars (e.g. Balogun and Johnson, 2004; Labianca *et al*., 2000; Maitlis, 2005; Weick, 1995). Certain kinds of shared meaning, such as commitment (e.g. Christianson *et al*., 2009; Weick, 1979), identity (e.g. Corley and Gioia, 2004; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991;Weick, 1993) and expectations (Kayes, 2004; Weick, 1993) have been recognised as important areas of research in both crisis sensemaking and change sensemaking literature. Some recent work has begun to examine possible relationship between technology and the sensemaking process addressing the construction of shared meaning as a particular pertinent to discussion about technological change (Gephart, 2004; Weick, 2001c; Zuboff, 1988). For instance, Weick (2001c, p.143) states: ‘As technologies become more complex than any person can comprehend, groups of people will be needed to register and form collective mental models of these technologies.’ In organisation studies, shared meaning is often considered as an important prerequisite for collective action. However, I am taking a cautious position towards this assumption, and I agree with Czarniawska-Joerges (1992) who points out that this assumption is true to a limited extent. First of all, a number of scholars demonstrate that a collective action is possible even when the meaning is partly shared (e.g. Sonenshein, 2010; Swidler, 1986). Secondly, when a collective action occurs, people share the experience more than meaning (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992). Therefore, talking about shared meaning, I don’t imply ‘a completely overlapping, agreed-upon understanding’ (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014, p. 66), rather I cautiously refer to *shared elements* (emphasis added) of meaning or, in other words, understandings, which are close enough or equivalent (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014) that can allow coordinated (Donnellon *et al.*, 1986) or collective action (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992).

Sensemaking scholars increasingly recognise roles of different actors involved in the microprocesses of organisational change addressing the question: ‘Who gets involved in shaping sensemaking in organisations and the impact of this involvement on sensemaking process (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). However, the existing research literature on organisational sensemaking is exploring the sensemaking phenomenon mainly from the top management perspective (Ericson, 2001; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Gioia and Thomas, 1996; Gioia *et al.*, 1994). This perspective is rooted in the dominant assumption which assigns top managers with the primary role in formulation and implementation of change initiatives. Sensemaking literature broadly supports the claim that managerial sensemaking is a critical foundation for successful implementation of change initiatives (Balogun and Johnson, 2004; Labianca *et al.*, 2000; Lüscher and Lewis, 2008). For instance, a strong link between the manager’s sensemaking and their commitment or resistance to change has been identified in the work of Labianca *et al*. (2000).

At this point, I refer to Gioia and Chittipeddi's (1991) research as an example of a study which has been conceived on the basis of this assumption and, therefore, focused on how CEOs and/or top management develop a sense of an altered vision of organisation and communicate this evolved vision to organisational stakeholders during the initiation of strategic change. However, one of the main findings of the study suggests that sensemaking '…involved not only the President and his top management team, but also the internal and external stakeholders and constituents' of the organisation (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 442). This observation allows broadening a range of social actors influencing micro processes of meaning construction that underlie organisational change. However, the contribution of other individuals' sensemaking to these processes often remains underestimated (Gioia and Thomas, 1996) with some exceptions such as a study conducted by Balogun and Johnson (2004) on organisational restructuring and sensemaking of middle managers.

Sensemaking and Sensegiving

> ***“I know what you’re thinking about,”***
> ***said Tweedledum; “but it isn’t so, nohow.”***
> ***“Contrariwise,” continued Tweedledee,***
> ***“if it was so, it might be; and if it were so,***
> ***it would be but as it isn’t, it ain’t. That’s logic.”***
> Lewis Carroll,
> Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There,
> Chapter IV

Starbuck and Milliken (1988, p.51) associate sensemaking with a wide range of explanatory processes, such as comprehending, understanding, explaining, attributing and predicting based on the proposition on the ground that all these processes ‘involve placing stimuli into frameworks (or schemata) that make sense of the stimuli.’ However, Weick (1995) advocates the uniqueness of a sensemaking perspective and arguing that sensemaking is fundamentally different from these explanatory processes. At this juncture, another reference to Frankl’s (2006) book seems to be particular useful. Frankl (2006) points out that the answer to the question about the meaning in life consists in actions towards real and concrete life’s tasks that are unique for each individual. This emphasis on action is not dissimilar to what is emphasised in sensemaking literature and important for my further discussion about organisational sensemaking, as the understanding of sensemaking goes beyond ‘pure’ cognitive interpretation processes (Gioia *et al*., 1994; Thomas *et al*., 1993; Weick, 1995) and involves the active authoring of frameworks for understanding (Weick, 1995; Weick *et al*., 2005). As Weick (1995, p. 30) remarks: ‘action is a precondition for sensemaking.’ In other words, action is crucial for sensemaking as sensemaking involves interpretation in conjuncture with action. In organisational sensemaking literature, the concept of enactment introduced by Weick (1979) underscores the idea that ‘organising is an activity’ and organisational members intentionally or unintentionally produce social order or ‘craft organisations as they try to make sense of and respond to their environments’ (Leonardi and Barley, 2010, p. 20). According to Smircich and Stubbart (1985, p. 726), enactment means ‘a combination of *attention and action* (emphasis in the original) on the part of organisational members.’ They also point out that the ‘action component’ is important for any discussion about sensemaking processes as organisation. Explaining his conceptualisation of enactment, Weick (2001b, p. 193) argues that enactment, as a sensemaking activity involves ‘generating the raw data which is eventually transformed by other processes into information and action.' Weick (2001b) suggests that the understanding of the enactment processes as the generation and bracketing of raw data can enhance the understanding of how organisations *do* (emphasis added) the interpretation of their environment. Furthermore, Weick's (1995) use of the word 'enactment' preserves the fact that organisational members produce part of the environment by creating new features of the environment that did not exist before by establishing categories and coin labels for previously undefined time, space and actions, and these features become the constraints and opportunities they face. In other words, the enactment perspective implies that organisation members create not only their organisation, but also their environment.

Weick (1995) suggests seven characteristics to serve as a guideline for an enquiry into sensemaking. According to Weick (1995, p. 17), sensemaking is understood 'as a process that is: (1) grounded in identity construction, (2) retrospective, (3) enactive of sensible environments, (4) social, (5) ongoing, (6) focused on and by extracted cues, and (7) driven by plausibility rather than accuracy.' What is more, each of these characteristics incorporates two key aspects of sensemaking - action and context (Weick, 1995). Thus, Weick's concept of sensemaking 'highlights the action, activity, and creating that lays down the traces that are interpreted and reinterpreted' (Weick, 1995, p. 13). Sensemaking is usually seen as being accomplished through three main 'sensemaking moves': noticing cues, creating interpretations and taking action (Daft and Weick, 1984; Rudolph *et al.*, 2009; Thomas *et al.*, 1993). Maitlis and Christianson (2014, p. 67) reflect this defining sensemaking as:

> 'a process, prompted by violated expectations, that involves attending to and bracketing cues in the environment, creating intersubjective meaning through cycles of interpretation and action, and thereby enacting a more ordered environment from which further cues can be drawn.'

Furthermore, Taylor (1999) points out that those things which are usually noticed are things that are 'novel' or people or behaviour that are unusual or unexpected. According to Kiesler and Sproull (1982, p. 556), in organisations, members pay attention to and encode salient events such as unpleasant information (e.g. unanticipated problems, new regulations), extreme information (e.g. predictions of best and worst outcomes), intense and unusual information (e.g. disruptions of routine), sudden information (e.g.

emergencies). Wrzesniewski *et al.* (2003, p. 102) suggest the notion of interpersonal sensemaking observing how 'interpersonal cues from others' help employees make meaning from their jobs, roles, and selves at work.' Smircich and Morgan (1982, p. 258) refer to cues as point of reference arguing that they have got an important implication for understanding leadership which 'lies in a large part in the generating of a point of reference, against which a feeling of organisation and direction can emerge.' What is more, as Smircich and Morgan (1982) observe, control over which cues will serve as a point of reference is an important source of power in organisations. Cues are also crucial for their capacity to evoke action. Therefore, noticing cues, extracting them, interpreting them and directing people's attention to them can be seen as critical leadership activity allowing leadership actors to make sense of the reality. Furthermore, enactment, according to Weick (1995), is the ability of leadership actors to act. To put it differently, if we accept enactment as a sensemaking activity, which is critical for transferring a presumed order into a tangible one, then that is what leadership actors *do* (emphasis added) might explain their success in terms of creating actions as conditions for further actions (Shotter, 1993). Along similar lines, Taylor (1999) argues that the examination of the sensemaking processes provides a necessary analytical leverage in understanding the role of leadership in organisational change. According to Taylor (1999), leaders should understand the general patterns of how organisational members make sense of organisational events if they are to influence their sensemaking processes and thus, manage organisational change. I will continue elaborating this discussion about leadership in my next chapter. At this juncture, before moving further, it is important to introduce the concept of *sensegiving* which has been widely discussed in the sensemaking literature and which, as existing literature suggests, is closely linked to leadership.

The sensemaking literature explores people's search for meaning by means of sensemaking-related constructs, including sensegiving (e.g. Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991), sensebreaking (e.g. Pratt, 2000), sensedemanding (e.g.Vlaar *et al.*, 2008), sense-exchanging (Ran and Golden, 2011) and sensehiding (Monin *et al.*, 2013). Many researchers have become interested in the evolution of shared meanings in organisations arguing that understanding of how these meanings shift and coincide can enhance the understanding of organisational change unfolds (Ericson, 2001; Gray and Ariss, 1985). Assuming that an acceptable version of what is going on - i.e. shared meaning (agreement) - is achieved through negotiations among organisational members, particular attention has been given to the way of influencing the organisational members' construction of meaning in the change process (Weick, 1979). The sensemaking literature explores the process of influencing the construction of shared meanings by introducing the concept of *sensegiving* (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis and Lawrence, 2007).

Most of existing definitions of sensegiving in sensemaking literature define this phenomenon as a form of social influence. For example, according to Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991, p. 442), sensegiving is 'the process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organisation reality.' This definition has been taken by Pratt (2000) as the point of departure in his ethnographic study of Amway distributors' sensegiving. Based on his observation of organisational sensegiving practices, Pratt (2000) argues that when these practices are successful, members positively identify with the organisation. In contrast, when sensegiving practices fail, members tend 'to deidentify, disidentify, or experience ambivalent identification with the organisation' (Pratt, 2000, p. 456). Consonant with conceptualisation of sensegiving as a process of influence is the definition suggested by Maitlis and Lawrence (2007, p. 57) according to which sensegiving is 'an interpretive process in which actors influence each other through persuasive and evocative language.'

Gioia *et al*. (1994) argues that sensemaking and influence are interdependent and reciprocal processes taking place during organisational change. Along similar lines, Maitlis and Christianson (2014, p. 59) point out that sensemaking and sensegiving usually serve as 'explanatory mechanisms' of the organisational change. In their seminal study, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) demonstrate that the essential processes involved in the instigation phase of change can be meaningfully described in terms of sensemaking and sensegiving. According to Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991), the sensemaking/sensegiving cycle correlates with periods of change dominated by *understanding* and *influence* processes (emphasis in the original), as well as cycles characterised by instances of cognition and action. They argue:

> 'the sensemaking phases are those that deal primarily with understanding processes and the sensegiving phases are those that concern attempts to influence the way that another party understands or make sense' (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991, p.443)

Furthermore, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991, p. 444) treat sensemaking and sensegiving as companion processes which ‘often overlap or can occur more-or-less simultaneously’, cautiously pointing out that over time sensemaking/sensegiving interplay can become almost indistinguishable and these processes can even converge together.

Some scholars focus their analytic attention on examining the conditions that motivate organisational actors to engage in sensegiving – ‘triggers of sensegiving’ (Maitlis and Lawrence, 2007, p. 59; Whiteman and Cooper, 2011). Maitlis and Lawrence (2007), for instance, identified triggers such as issue salience, perceptions of incompetence or inexperience, ambiguity, and complexity. Whiteman and Cooper (2011) examined sensegiving as a process which links individual sensemaking processes across organisational actors in team activities. Their study is particularly interesting as it contributes to existing sensegiving literature in a number of ways. First of all, it extends research on sensegiving triggers started by Maitlis and Lawrence (2007). Whiteman and Cooper (2011) demonstrate the role of local ecologies in triggering sensegiving among organisational actors. By local ecologies, they mean topography, ecological processes (e.g. climate, weather, fire spread) including their material and temporal dimensions (Whiteman and Cooper, 2011, p. 894). Secondly, Whiteman and Cooper (2011) explicitly emphasise the importance of *sensegiving and receiving* (emphasis added) processes during the emergency and crisis for the development of the organisational actors’ ability to ‘reflect-in-action’ (Schön, 1983).

Maitlis (2005) has made a valuable contribution to sensemaking research exploring patterns of interaction in organisational sensemaking and sensegiving activities of leaders and stakeholders. However, in her research, Maitlis (2005) tends to treat ordinary sensegiving activities quite descriptively. To illustrate this point, I will refer to a quote from her study where she states:

> ‘Examples of sensegiving activities included contesting a proposal, calling a meeting, explaining a situation, issuing a warning, expressing an opinion, writing a report, justifying a view, promoting a position, gossiping, and taking minutes. Some sensegiving activities were unique to leaders, such as presenting an executive director’s report to a Board, but the majority were common to leaders and stakeholders’ (Maitlis, 2005, p. 29).

For me, as a researcher who places the central analytical focus on studying a detailed order of ordinary organisational activities, certain questions remain unanswered after reading the list of sensegiving activities offered by Maitlis (2005). For instance, ‘How exactly does ‘writing a report’ look like?’; ‘How exactly is ‘explaining of a situation’ happening?’; ‘What exactly is ‘gossiping’?’; ‘Why is gossiping a sensegiving activity and not a sensemaking one?’ Thus, sensegiving activities themselves, using the words of Llewellyn (2008, p. 766), ‘seem to slip through the analyst’s grasp.’ This is where conversation about sensemaking and sensegiving can be expanded by observing both processes as they unfold in spoken language or written texts, in order to capture what might be called ‘the quiddity’ and ‘just whatness’ (Heritage, 1984) of sensemaking and sensegiving .

Discursive Resources and Practices in Sensemaking

> ***"Then you should say what you mean," the March Hare went on.***
> ***"I do," Alice hastily replied; "at least-at least I mean what I say-***
> ***that's the same thing, you know."***
> ***"Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter.***
> *Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*
> *Chapter VII*

'Words matter'. This simple statement, introduced by Weick (1995, p.106) contributes to the understanding of sensemaking, broadly suggesting that people use words to talk about the world, and thus they generate sense of their ongoing experience. Weick (1995, p.106) develops this thought further arguing that 'if people know what they think when they see what they say, then words figure in every step.' However, for Weick, language transformation is fundamentally a pathway to behavioural transformation rather than constitutive function of the reality. For instance, in relation to organisational change processes, Weick (1995, p. 108) points out 'that, to change the group, one must change what it says and what its words mean.' Seligman (2000, p. 365) elaborates Weick's (1995) description of sensemaking further, suggesting that 'each person derives sense in part from the words and actions of others, and produces a sensible action and discussion that contributes to the sensemaking of others.' Some other scholars have joined this conversation pointing out the criticality of communication *in* and *for* (emphasis added) sensemaking (Balogun and Johnson, 2004, Ford and Ford, 1995; Heracleous and Barrett, 2001). It is argued that communication is an essential process of sensemaking (Weick *et al*., 2005) in which people *collectively* (emphasis added) make sense of the circumstances and the events that affect them (Taylor and Van Every, 2000). Looking more specifically, if we are to follow Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris' view (1997, p. 4) assuming that 'no 'organisation' exists prior to communication' and 'organisations are talked into being and maintained by means of the talk of the people within and around them', then people should keep talking in the process of organising, particularly when things do not make sense. The study of the Tenerife disaster (Weick, 2001d, p. 143) illustrates this point demonstrating that when people communicate 'a complex system becomes more understandable… and more linear, predictable, and controllable.' In contrast, when the environment discourages conversation, as discussed in another Weick's study on the Mann Gulch disaster (1993), people might lose their 'social anchors' and 'remain strangers' to each other. Thus, they have limited access to sensemaking resources, which results in increased stress, loss of contextual information, less meaning, more complexity and overall collapse of sensemaking (Weick, 1993; Weick, 2001d).

A growing number of scholars conceptualise sensemaking as a discursive process (e.g. Boyce, 1995; Cornelissen, 2012; Gephart, 1993; Hill and Levenhagen, 1995; Watson and Bargiela-Chiappini, 1998; Whittle *et al.,* 2015) emphasising the centrality of sensemaking and language in the continuous construction of particular understandings of social reality. In contrast to cognitivist scholars who are interested in examining cognitive frames, schema, maps and schemata by assuming that sensemaking occurs in someone's head, these researchers explore discursive processes of meaning construction and production of accounts (e.g. Maitlis, 2005; Mueller *et al*., 2013; Whittle *et al.*, 2015), stories and narratives (e.g. Boje, 1991; Brown, 2004; Sonenshein, 2006) and metaphorical communications (e.g. Cornelissen, 2012). For Gephart (1993, p. 1485), for instance, sensemaking is 'the discursive process of constructing and interpreting the social world.' Bringing the social constructionist perspective to the fore, he argues that 'sensemaking occurs and can be studied in the discourses of social members – the intersubjective social world – rather than simply occurring in their minds' (Gephart, 1993, p. 1470). Along the same lines, Balogun and Johnson (2004, p. 524) consider sensemaking as 'a conversational and narrative process through which people create and maintain an intersubjective world.'

With the growing number of sensemaking studies exploring sense as constructed in language, stories and narratives are increasingly understood to be a part of the sensemaking process (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). Much of the existing academic literature has a general disagreement what stories and narratives are. For instance, Dalcher and Drevin (2003, p. 140) define storytelling as 'a narrative recounting with the unlocking of patterns and plot.' Czarniawska (2004) makes a distinction between a narrative and a story by defining the former as a chronological account and the latter as an emplotted narrative. For Boje (2001, p. 1), narratives are plotted, directed and staged to produce a linear, coherent and monological version of past events whereas stories are 'self-deconstructing, flowing, emerging, not at all static.' It is argued that treating narratives and stories differently is crucial not only for understanding their interweaving in creating transformative dynamics in organisational change but also for understanding the richness of organisational sensemaking (Boje, 2001; Boje, 2008). Stories are often seen as vehicles for sensemaking in organisation (Hopkinson, 2001; Weick, 1995). As a part of the sensemaking apparatus, stories are performed among organisation members to make sense of an equivocal situation and can act as cognitive maps supporting organisational sensemaking (Boje, 1991). For instance, Weick (1995) identified six diverse vocabularies of organisational sensemaking including ideology (vocabulary of society), third-order controls (vocabularies of organisation), paradigms (vocabularies of work), theories of action (vocabularies of coping), tradition (vocabularies of predecessor), stories (vocabularies of sequence and experience). Considering these vocabularies as key resources for sensemaking, Weick (1995) argues that they are constantly in play, and when any two of them become connected in a meaningful way, then moments of meaning occur. For Weick (1995, p. 131), 'stories are cues with frames that are also capable of creating frames… Stories that exemplify frames and frames that imply stories are two basic forms in which the substance of sensemaking becomes meaningful.'

Furthermore, stories according to Weick (1995) are crucial for sensemaking for two reasons. First of all, they facilitate the diagnosis of the situation tightening a causal sequence of events. Secondly, in the case of interruption they can reduce the pressure and slow the escalation of complexity thus decreasing the arousal that can interfere with sensemaking. Other functions of stories include aiding comprehension, suggesting a causal order for events, guiding action before routines are formulated, enabling people to talk about absent things, allowing building a database of experience, enabling people reconstruct earlier complex events, transmitting and reinforcing third-order controls by conveying shared values and meaning (Weick, 1995). For example, a study conducted by Taylor (1999, p. 527) convincingly demonstrates that 'the stories people tell about organizational change reflect their sensemaking about the change.'

With the narrative turn in social science (Czarniawska, 2004; Czarniawska and Gagliardi, 2003), narrative enquiry has been used in the social and management research as an acceptable approach for studying sensemaking. In this research stream, sensemaking is often defined as a narrative process, which makes the unexpected intelligible, and helps individuals map their reality (Brown *et al*., 2008; Weick, 1995). Considering that 'most organisational realities are based on narration' (Weick, 1995, p.128), narratives circulating in an organisational environment have been long recognised for their capacity to shape people's sensemaking. In the field of narrative-based research, there have been a growing number of studies of narrative sensemaking (e.g. Boudes and Laroche, 2009; Currie and Brown, 2003; Patriotta, 2003). For instance, Sonenshein (2010) observes that both sensemaking and related constructs (e.g.

sensegiving) are closely related to narratives. In their review of existing sensemaking literature, Maitlis and Christianson (2014) point out that research on narratives represents the largest body of research on discursive aspects of sensemaking. It is argued that one of the main benefits of conducting narrative research, which is consistent with a core premise of sensemaking, is the possibility to reveal not only ‘who is involved and what they are doing but also the meanings that they are constructing in the process’ (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014, p. 81).

Collectively, studies discussed above suggest that if we are to enhance understanding about organisational sensemaking, we need to locate sensemaking in the talk of organisational actors. Sensemaking literature, reviewed for the purpose of the study, suggests that while studies examining stories and narratives have made visible contributions to the field of sensemaking especially in understanding the phenomena in the context of organisational change; studies that examine sensemaking in everyday work interactions are still very rare (Kwon *et al.,* 2014; Larsson and Lundholm, 2013; Whittle *et al.,* 2015).

Conclusion of Chapter 2

In this section, I began my discussion of the sensemaking phenomenon by reviewing literature on individual and social aspects of sensemaking. I introduced the ethnomethodologically-informed perspective on sensemaking which allows me to explore micro-level sensemaking practices. After that, I discussed temporal aspects of sensemaking introducing two ongoing research conversations in this area. The first one is concerned with the retrospective and prospective nature of sensemaking. The second one explicates existing debates about whether sensemaking is an episodic or ongoing phenomenon. The former represents a classical Weickian understanding of sensemaking; the latter is informed by ethnomethodology and suggests that there is no time out for sensemaking. Further, I pointed out that while sensemaking studies tend to explore sensemaking mostly in crisis situations, there is a growing body of research in organisational change. I bridged the discussion about sensemaking and organisational change by introducing a social constructionist perspective, whereby, similar to other social constructionists, I argue that organisational change can be understood as the process of construction and sharing new meanings and interpretations. Furthermore, I moved to the discussion about how the construction of shared meanings and interpretations can be influenced. I introduced the concept of sensegiving and observed that in organisation studies literature, sensegiving is usually associated with leadership. I concluded this chapter by conceptualising sensemaking and sensegiving as discursive processes of meaning construction. In the next section, I will place a discussion about meaning construction in the wider literature on leadership with particular focus on discursive leadership.

Chapter 3 The Unmagical Invitation to Leadership

Expect aurora borealis
in the long foray
but no cascade of light.
Seamus Heaney, North

Introduction

We live in a time which is characterised by an enormous interest to leadership in academic and professional literature. Despite a much generated interest in leadership, there is very little agreement among leadership academics and practitioners on precisely what leadership is. Considering a vast array of conceptualisation of leadership phenomena and a variety of approaches to study it, it seems logical to start this chapter with an overview of the main theoretical developments and reflect on their limitations while carving the theoretical framework of this study and constructing a working definition of leadership for the framework of the research.

This section of the literature review is guided by the review question:

> *How can a discursive lens contribute to the conversation about leadership in the context of technological change?*

To answer this review question, the current section will be organised in the following way. First of all, I will address and review issues and problems with defining ‘leadership’ phenomena in existing theories. Then I will critically review the central arguments of the diverse literature on leadership in order to situate my approach in the leadership literature. For the purpose of my research journey, I offer a short, and I believe, sufficient explanation of leadership phenomenon drawing from the early theories of leadership and the contemporary approaches broadly framed as ‘leadership psychology’, and reflecting on their strengths and shortcomings. To support this journey, I will paint a picture of the leadership landscape using broad brush-strokes to provide the background for my research, and then I will put some contours around my research interest, which goes in stark contrast with the widely accepted in the mainstream literature ‘grandiose’ (Alvesson, 2013) image of leadership. After that I will adjust the analytical lens bringing a social constructionist perspective in focus to discuss how leadership is linked to the management of meaning and discourse in organisations. I will demonstrate how theoretical and conceptual ideas of discursive leadership allow capturing the leadership phenomenon ‘as it happens’, and thus provide the possibility to advance our knowledge about leadership in organisations.

Theories of Leadership – Old Wine in New Bottles?

> ***“What wretched terror***
> ***Grips you, the Superhuman! Where is your soul’s calling?***
> ***Where is the heart that made a world inside, enthralling:***
> ***Carried it, nourished it, swollen with joy, so tremulous,***
> ***That you too might be a Spirit, one of us?”***
> *J.W. von Goethe, Faust*
>
> ***“The*** **Superman is** ***the meaning of the earth.”***
> *Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, Prologue*

Despite the fact that the leadership theory and research has been widely recognised in academic literature as a vital cornerstone of organisational science (Brooks, 2009; Dinh *et al.*, 2014), the field of leadership studies is characterised by the lack of consensus on precisely what leadership is. As Pye (2005, p. 35) points out: ‘Conceptualising leadership presents a challenge which is akin to capturing the ethereal qualities of ‘the moon on the water’: you know it when you see it, but it absolutely defies capture.’ According to Dubrin’s (2000, cited in Pye, 2005, p.32) estimations, there are around 35,000 definitions of leadership in the academic literature. In the absence of a unanimously accepted wellspring of leadership, the emergence of a very broad spectrum of definitions of the phenomenon is perhaps not surprising. A lack of consensus in the field of leadership studies regarding the definition of the leadership phenomenon is succinctly summarised in Alvesson and Spicer’s (2011, p. 13) apt words as ‘the ongoing struggle to define what leadership is.’ On the surface, it might seem quite daunting to get foot in this ‘ongoing struggle’ with an attempt to discuss the ‘contested’ (G.T. Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014) concept characterised with such apparent ambiguity. However, I am entering the field of leadership driven by certain analytical curiosities which are inspired by Smircich and Morgan (1982, p. 257) who view the understanding of the phenomenon of leadership ‘as a means for understanding the phenomenon of an organisation.’ I am also encouraged by the words of Levine (1993) who considers the underspecified formulations and contradictions as ‘a vehicle’ through which the researchers can address difficult conceptual problems of the phenomenon under investigations. As Fairhurst (2007) points out, researchers define leadership in consonance with their ontological commitments. In what follows, I demonstrate some existing definitions of leadership in relation to the theories that contribute to conceptualisation of the phenomenon in a way relevant to my research project.

Most mainstream leadership theories that emphasise the role of individual attributes of the leaders such as traits (e.g. Gibb, 1947; Judge *et al.*, 2002; Mann, 1959; Stogdill, 1948), behaviour (e.g. Borgatta *et al.*, 1954; Larsson and Vinberg, 2010; Lewin and Lippitt, 1938), style (e.g. Adair, 1979; Blake and Mouton, 1964; Fiedler, 1967; Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1958) have been developed and received great popularity in the time when stable bureaucratic hierarchical settings were supreme. Leadership is conceptualised as a set or properties possessed by special people who are identified as leaders (Jago, 1982). The main focus of theorising is not on the nature of leadership phenomenon *per se*, but on developing criteria for distinguishing leaders (i.e. highly self-motivated, proactive, ambitious, responsible, well-organised, etc. individuals) from non-leaders (i.e. bored, tired, passive and even alienated people) and on providing prescriptions for achieving more effective leadership by its constant improvement. However, voluminous studies are seeking for one best way to lead and demonstrate a little consensus regarding what makes an effective leader. Other significant limitations of these studies can be referred to treating leadership as a variable phenomenon, a concentration on relatively few leadership constructs (Jago, 1982) and their ignorance of meaning making as a key skill of effective leaders (Pondy, 1989; Smircich and Morgan, 1982).

Other standard texts on leadership include the relationship-based theories of leadership that are focused on transaction and exchange between leaders and followers. Definitions of leadership developed through the use of transactional leadership paradigm (e.g. Rank *et al.*, 2009) highlight rational processes and instrumental aspects of exchanges (e.g. rewards, punishment and/or resources) between leaders and followers in achieving high performance and/or innovation. In contrast to transactional theories, transformational leadership theories assume that followers can be transformed into loyal and devoted organisational citizens when leaders demonstrate inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration (e.g. Bass, 1985; Bass, 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Tichy and Devanna, 1986). These theories portray leaders as strong, proactive and persuasive individuals with an ability to influence, convince and motivate their followers in order to achieve organisational aims and objectives/outcomes in a voluntary and non-coercive manner (Barker, 2001). Transformational leadership theories are often criticised for their vague, ambiguous and non-systematic approach to the underlying influence processes as well as their conceptual overemphasis on dyadic leader-follower processes (Yukl, 1999). Another weakness has been highlighted by

Alvesson (2013) who observed that transformational leadership theories' concerns for leader agency outweigh their concerns for follower agency. What is more, glossed over by positive and at times overenthusiastic claims, negative effects and detrimental consequences of transformational leadership have not been given much attention in the literature (Kärreman, 2011).

The boost of interest to charismatic leadership, according to Bryman (2004b, p. 731), provided a 'fulcrum' for the field of leadership studies. A growing number of academics and practitioners bestow encomium upon leaders attributing organisational success to their extraordinary charismatic abilities (e.g. Bryman, 1992; Conger, 1991; Conger and Kanungo, 1987; Conger and Kanungo, 1988) just to mention a few. Recently published literature reviewed by Dinh and colleagues (2014) convincingly demonstrates that neo-charismatic theories, followed by transformational and charismatic leadership represent the dominant form of interest among scholars in the new millennium. This might suggest that these directions of research sound very appealing, more attractive and even more rewarding for academics (Alvesson, 2013) as people generally love associating themselves with something grandiose rather than less remarkable, trivial and mundane.

In various ways, leadership studies assign charismatic leaders with special characteristics such as a high degree of self-confidence (Bass, 1985); high energy, expressiveness and enthusiasm (Bono and Ilies, 2006), excellent communication skills and active image building. For example, charismatic leaders are described as having a profound and extraordinary effect on their followers (House, 1977) who, in turn, perceive leaders as role models possessing superhuman qualities (Willner, 1985) and heroes who 'are larger than life' (Nahavandi, 2012, p. 182).

While making an important contribution to the field by providing insights about the nature of the exceptional influence some leaders have on followers (e.g. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela), theories of charismatic leadership, nevertheless, are characterised by conceptual ambiguity and a lack of consistency (Kempster and Parry, 2013). Other areas of critique, for instance, include a limited explanation of 'how' charisma is institutionalised (Bryman, 1992) and lack of analytical attention to group-level leadership processes (Meindl, 1990). A number of scholars offer a critique of charismatic leadership studies emphasising their limited appreciation of social conditions (Alvesson, 2013), complexities of organisational reality (Kempster and Parry, 2013), and blurred and ambiguous follower identities (Collinson, 2006). At this juncture, the ironic comment made by Alvesson (2013, p. 173) seems quite appropriate as he points out that what is ‘good’ for hero mythology perhaps is ‘too good’ considering the realities of the business world. This is a pertinent observation which is echoing other critical comments towards charismatic theories pointing out their inaccurate portraying of leadership as a grandiose accomplishment, which is rarely achievable (Alvesson and Spicer, 2011; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003b).

Collectively, leadership theories mentioned above seem to be metaphorically speaking - old wine in new bottles - given their ultimate preoccupation with theorising leadership as an individual activity usually carried out by a formally appointed leader at the top of the organisational hierarchy. In other words, these leadership models present a perspective lodged in a single individual, a leader with outstanding personal qualities. Thus, being in a sense, largely ‘monologic’, as Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014, p. 5) put it, they run counter to recent developments in a leadership field that tends to challenge the centrality of a single-person activity in leadership and shifting the focus towards leadership as a collective social process (Crevani *et al.*, 2007; Fitzsimons *et al.*, 2011). This rapid upsurge in interest in the collective side of leadership has resulted in the abundance of terms that have appeared in research literature describing these new perspectives of the leadership phenomenon as democratic (Woods, 2004), distributive (Brown and Gioia, 2002), dispersed (Gordon, 2010; Ray *et al.*, 2004), collaborative (Huxham and Vangen, 2000 ; Rosenthal, 1998), co-leadership (Vine *et al.*, 2008), collective (Denis *et al.*, 2001), shared (Carson *et al.*, 2007) and distributed (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006). By far, the most widely accepted concepts are those of shared and distributed leadership, which are often used interchangeably. These approaches provide a useful means for more integrated and systemic discussion about leadership and, perhaps, their most important contribution is in understanding of leadership as a social or collective phenomenon. A distributed perspective makes emphasis on leadership as *practice* (emphasis added), and defines it not as a product of the leader’s attributes (i.e. traits, competencies and skills) but as the interaction between people and their situation (Spillane *et al.*, 2004; Spillane and Orlina, 2005). However, started with a promising preference for a relational ontology, these theories stop short of challenging the underlying assumptions of the existing leadership theory and lean towards descriptive and normative ways of addressing the leadership phenomenon (Bolden, 2011). Similar to the leadership theories that assign ontological primacy to individual agents, distributed leadership theories reveal conceptual weaknesses, which reflect their essentialist orientation. Ontological commitment to essentialism is evident to the current research in the field of distributed leadership articulating inevitability of leadership as essentially grounded in leaders and followers (Bolden, 2011; Drath *et al.*, 2008; Grint, 2005; Spillane *et al.*, 2004).

Given limitations of essentialist thinking, which restrains the development of the leadership theory, a much broader ontology of leadership has been called forth; the one that can accommodate theories in which leadership is seen as socially constructed. Not surprisingly that over the past twenty years there has been the significant intensification of interest in the social constructionist agenda in leadership. The relevance of construct***ionist*** thinking to leadership studies has been advocated in works of Cunliffe (2008); Grint (2005), Fairhurst and Grant (2010), Shotter (1993), Sjostrand *et al*. (2001), Wood (2005). At this juncture, it is perhaps worth mentioning that in leadership literature the term 'construct*ionism*' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) and 'construct***ivism***' (Piaget, 1954) are quite often used interchangeably (Drath and Palus, 1994). Throughout my work, I use the term 'construct***ionism***' referring to the ideas of Berger and Luckmann (1966) on how reality is socially constructed, rather than the Piagetian theory of perception. In other words, I view construct***ivism*** as concerning with subjectivity and involving the cognitive processes by which individuals construct interpretations of the world. Construct***ionism*** for me represents intersubjectivity referring to communicative acts in which people interactively make the world in common (Gergen, 2001). I have also borrowed from (Pearce, 1995, p. 98) his understanding that 'construct***ivists*** foreground perception while social construct***ionists*** foreground action.' When it comes to positioning my study within the social constructionism field, by adopting a discursive-constitutive perspective I have sought to place it within the latter signalling that in my research leadership is analysed not as the cognitive product of social interaction but rather as a 'continuous accomplishment' which is produced and reproduced in the ongoing interaction of leadership actors.

There is growing number of critical voices that problematise taken-for-granted basic assumptions of unreflective mainstream leadership perspectives, and suggest that heroic, individual and authoritarian leadership norms ought to be challenged (Alvesson, 2013; Knights and Willmott, 1992; Fairhurst, 2007; Meindl, 1990). For instance, informed by the well-established field of critical management studies (CMS), scholars from critical leadership studies (CLS) entertain alternative ways of thinking about leadership by confronting existing hegemonic perspectives and assumptions which they consider as being remote from the realities of the business world (Alvesson and Spicer, 2014; Sinclair, 2007). CLS studies, for example, oppose mainstream leadership writings through a programme of suspicion, exploring how power, exploitation and alienation can be enacted in subtle and sometimes invisible ways within leadership dynamics (e.g. Collinson, 2011). Collectively, CLS scholars instil scepticism in upholders of existing leadership theories by demolishing beautiful images and enchanting vocabularies which dominate in the mainstream leadership literature, and thus they open new avenues for leadership scholars to think critically about the subject matter (Alvesson, 2013; Alvesson and Spicer, 2014; Collinson, 2014).

Without any attempt of dethroning the individualistic paradigm and belittling its contribution to the development of leadership theories mentioned above, my own arguments comply with Fairhurst (2007) in her observation that these theories, which she refers to using an umbrella term *leadership psychology*, tend to underplay social, cultural and linguistic aspects of leadership. What is more, taking a broadly social constructionist stance (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 2001), allows me to take issue with the existence of leadership as a distinct concept. In other words, if we problematise the inevitability of leadership and take the possibility of its ‘non-existence as a distinct phenomenon’ seriously (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003b, p. 359), then searching for the ‘essence’ of leadership (Grint, 1997; 2000) suggested by essentialist ontology makes no sense. Instead, as many scholars have already concluded, the attention should be given not to ‘futile’ searching for *the* definition of leadership (Fairhurst, 2007, p. 6, emphasis in the original) but to the processes by which certain things, and not others, are categorised as leadership (Pondy, 1989), and to developing different ways of looking at leadership phenomena (Drath and Palus, 1994). As Fairhurst (2007) puts it succinctly, rejecting essentialist theory means embracing a socially constructed view of leadership.

At this point it is important to acknowledge the ongoing debate in the organisation studies literature whether or not differences between leadership and management exist (Kotter, 1990; Mintzberg, 1973; Zaleznik, 1977). On the one hand, there is a tendency to separate and differentiate these two concepts as, for example, in works of Bennis and Nanus (1985), Hickman (1990), Schein (2004), Young and Dulewicz (2008) and Zaleznik (1977). On the other hand, there is a more balanced view suggesting that this differentiation does little to advance the understanding of leadership as people do not fall neatly into these two stereotypes (Bass, 1985; Ford and Harding, 2007; Rost, 1991).

However, as Schedlitzki and Edwards (2014) and similarly Yukl (2013) observe, this research conversation while offering differing perspectives on the distinction between leadership and management has largely been facilitated by and sustained around theoretical definitions of the concepts and has not been supported by empirical investigation. I will not exercise the leader/manager distinction in my study and will not review relevant literature further, as the analytical focus of my research is different and will not connect to this debate in any detail. Instead, I am taking a stance similar to Pye (2005) and arguing that for me a difference between leadership and management is not significant as my primary focus is on the processes of 'doing leading'. Therefore, consistent with my research question, for the purpose of my study, I apply the notion of a 'leadership actor' (Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014) encompassing broadly formal and informal leaders, followers, managers and other stakeholders. By using this term, I also show my disagreement with what might be seen as a quite simplistic view taken-for-granted by the majority of scholars who work in the leader-centred tradition assuming that leadership is something which is held by individual managers and, therefore, can be described by the individual leaders' traits, abilities, competences and actions. My analytical interest draws attention to what occurs *between* (emphasis added) 'leadership actors' rather than what these 'leadership actors' have. Along similar lines, Binney *et al*. (2009, p. 4) argued, leadership is 'what happens between people in a particular moment or situation. Leadership is a social process – the result of interactions between and within individuals and groups. It is both very personal and a product of groups and the overall business and organisational context.' In the framework of this study, I refer to leadership phenomenon as:

> 'a co-constructed product 'of sociohistorical and collective meaning making, […] negotiated on an ongoing basis through a complex interplay among leadership actors, be they designated or emergent leaders, managers, and/or followers' (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010, p. 172).

If we are to consider that leadership is brought into existence by leadership actors making sense from their ongoing interactions, the question that needs to be addressed how these meaning making practices can be captured methodologically-wise. In what follows, I would like to discuss some methodological preferences of the existing leadership studies and reflect on their limitations in accomplishing my analytical enquiry. This discussion will be continued in necessary details in the methodological section.

Leadership and Qualitative Research

The current status of the field of leadership research is characterised by methodological diversity (Bryman, 2004). However, until the late 1980s, leadership theories have been predominantly tested using quantitative techniques (i.e. questionnaires, surveys, experiments) with just a few exceptions. One of them is Pettigrew (1979), who conducted a qualitative case study in a private British public school using qualitative interviews, documents and archival material to explore the impact of leadership succession on the course of the school's history. The supremacy of quantitative enquiry is perhaps unsurprising considering that the leadership field has been long dominated by theoretical concepts, which studied leadership as a relatively stable and ontologically variable phenomenon.

Without doubt, these studies provide rich evidence supporting some important analytical claims of the major leadership theories. However, they are often criticised for their detachment from the complexity and uncertainty of organisational reality (Dinh *et al.*, 2014), overemphasis on salient behaviours and outcomes (Shondrick *et al.*, 2010), ignoring variability that occurs in leader-follower decision-making (Johnson *et al.*, 2012) and narrow focus masking the dynamics of the leadership phenomenon (Dihn *et al.*, 2014). The quantitative research in a leadership field tends to examine the nature of leadership through the prism of the question of 'what' is required while keeping the questions of 'how' leadership is enacted unanswered. As Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003, p.364) criticised such research for assuming 'too much' neglecting ambiguity of the phenomenon under study, suppressing the variety and diversity of the social world 'for the sake of fitting' analytical procedures.

According to Alvesson and Spicer (2011), although there is evidence of the development of qualitative research on leadership, the vast majority of leadership studies tend to over rely on interviews with managers as sources of data collection. A lack of attention is given to other methods of data collection such as observations of leadership practice or shadowing, which are very rare cases (e.g. Czarniawska, 2007). Moreover, the role of other leadership actors, including subordinates, colleagues or followers remains under-researched. In addition, the research agenda in the field of leadership studies tends to privilege a researcher-imposed view of leadership over lay actors' constructions of the phenomenon (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010).

Boden (1994) observes the tendency in social science theories of an organisation to produce ‘slogans’ about what people do, and thus to gloss over the complex processes by which multidimensional social phenomena are constructed. A reference to a painting ‘*Evening at Llanberis*’ by Cornelius Varley (1781-1873) is particularly pertinent at this point of the discussion, as it can provide some useful insights into the field of leadership research. In Varley’s work, his elimination of detail creates a sense of mystery and grandeur. Similarly, in the field of leadership studies, existing techniques and methods of data collection and analysis tend to portray the leadership phenomenon as ‘grandiose accomplishment’ which is, as I noted above, inaccurate and rarely achievable (Alvesson and Spicer, 2011; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003a). Therefore, it can be argued that complex and mesmerising aspects of the leadership phenomenon are still to be discovered and explained. The line I am taking in my study responds to Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003a, p. 364) call for ‘intimacy in relation’ to and ‘depth of understanding’ of a ‘potentially problematic’ phenomenon such as leadership ‘at the expense of abstraction, generalizability, and the artificial separation of theory and data.’

Developing an advanced understanding of a wide range of aspects of the leadership phenomenon requires extensive, in-depth, close-range studies with an analytical focus on leadership as it is practised in daily interactions. Such studies are still relatively rare, perhaps due to the difficulties of access and laborious processes of data collection and analysis. However, observation of existing literature suggests that research interest to a fine-grained level of analysis in leadership studies is gradually increasing (e.g. Vine *et al*, 2008; Wodak *et al*., 2011). While most of the leadership research applies to common levels of analysis such as the person, dyadic (leader-follower), group and/or organisational levels, a number of researches explore the possibility of using different levels of analysis – such as ‘an event’ (e.g. Ballinger and Rockmann, 2010; Hoffman and Lord, 2013), where an event refers to time-bounded episodes that happen in a specific time and place. This conceptualisation of ‘an event’ has got its merits in moving the discussion about the leadership phenomenon beyond studying it as the competences and actions of individual managers. The empirical exploration of leadership has also been advanced by studies applying non-conventional methods of research, which moves the focus away from the specific individuals. For instance, Wood and Ladkin (2008) offer an exploration of leadership phenomena and its context by using the medium of photography, which allows them to capture a leadership process in a specific space. ‘The leaderful moment’, as Wood and Ladkin (2008) term it, illustrates the importance of the symbolic context of leadership by putting it centre stage.

According to Alvesson (2013), if we are to answer the fundamental question ‘What does leadership look like in practice?’ new assumptions on how to do leadership research deserve serious treatment avoiding what Crevani *et al*. (2010, p. 78) call ‘simplistic stance’ taken by mainstream scholars in the past. In line with this argumentation introduced by Crevani *et al*. (2010), by ‘simplistic stance’ I understand a way of thinking based on quite abstract statements about what formal and informal leaders do and think in order to lead their followers towards the achievement of more or less shared goals. If we are to believe these statements, then leadership is ultimately the phenomenon which can be associated with outstanding personal qualities of leaders and their heroic aspirations rather than organisation and specific contexts and circumstances. Therefore, perhaps, one of the most significant developments in the field of leadership research has been achieved recently in redefining leadership in terms of processes, practices and interactions (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003a; Carroll *et al*., 2008; Crevani *et al*., 2010; Fairhurst, 2007; Wood, 2005). Attributing a new emphasis on the social construction of leadership phenomenon, these studies acknowledge the limits of conventional, essentialism-inspired research which has been long preoccupied with rigid and linear interpretations of leadership.

Leading Change

> ***“Cheshire-Puss,” [Alice] began, rather timidly…***
> ***“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”***
> ***“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.***
> ***"I don’t much care where-----" said Alice.***
> ***"Then it doesn’t matter which way you go," said the Cat.***
> ***"-----so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation.***
> ***"Oh, you’re sure to do that," said the Cat,***
> ***"if you only walk long enough."***
> *Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland,*
> *Chapter VI*

In organisation studies, the notion of change tends to be closely linked to leadership suggesting that leadership is about the creation of change (e.g. Kotter, 1990). The process of leading change has been addressed by several strands of academic literature including strategic leadership (e.g. Bolden *et al*., 2011; Dubrin, 2000; Rowe, 2001; Yukl, 2013), resistance leadership (e.g. Zoller and Fairhurst, 2007) and problem-solving (e.g. Grint, 2008). I will focus on those which are relevant to the main purpose of my study. One of the strands is related to studies on organisational (technological) innovation and closely associated to the research on the process of championing change (e.g. Howell and Higgins, 1990). Such research is built on a premise that the success of technological innovation hinges on the presence of a champion, who can be broadly defined as an individual who ‘attempts to introduce or create change in a product, process, or method’ within an organisation (Anderson and Bateman, 2000, p. 549). The literature on innovation tends to depict champions as ‘active innovators’ (Howell and Higgins, 1990, p. 321) often highlighting their capacity to inspire and enthuse others, to show a high degree of self-confidence, and to display persistence in the promotion of their vision. This literature, while being useful for developing some understanding of the role of leaders in technological change and innovation, obviously echoes mainstream studies on charismatic and transformational leadership discussed above (e.g. Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Conger and Kanungo, 1987). Therefore, it can be criticised for thinking about leadership as a unique quality displayed by an individual usually at the top of an organisation, thus supporting existing a leader-centric approach in leadership literature.

Another strand of literature addressing the microprocesses of organisational change is presented by works on issue selling (Dutton and Ashford, 1993; Dutton and Duncan, 1987; Dutton *et al*., 1983; Dutton *et al*., 2001; Dutton *et al*., 2002). An issue is a development, event, or trend perceived as potentially having an impact on the organisational performance (Dutton *et al.*, 1983). Issue selling, according to Dutton *et al*. (2001) can be defined as the process by which individuals affect others' attention to and understanding of what matters for change initiatives to be activated. Recognising issue selling as a critical activity in an early stage of a general change process, these studies extensively explore and examine how individuals outside top management groups can shape the organisational change process by directing and allocating attention to particular issues (Dutton and Ashford, 1993; Dutton *et al.*, 1983). Until recently, scholars are predominantly focused on behaviour of issue sellers, and issue selling was considered as a process which involves moving issues 'up' to the top management team (Dutton, 1988; Dutton and Ashford, 1993). However, studies conducted by Bansal (2003) and Howard-Grenville (2007) demonstrate that change actors can facilitate organisational actions not only by selling issues 'up' but also 'down' and 'across' the organisation. What is more, by emphasising abilities of change agents to synthesise and interpret information from diverse sources as well as to influence others' interpretations of issues, issue selling is addressed as 'a mechanism' (Howard-Grenville, 2007, p. 561) in ongoing, 'more emergent and pluralistic' change processes Dutton *et al.* (2001, p.717).

In their study on issue selling, Dutton *et al*. (2002) echoed the research of Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) and Weick (1995) by focusing on intrasubjective, individual level of sensemaking and demonstrated how organisational members use sensemaking to navigate organisational contexts. Based on the assumption that individuals interpret contextual cues when deciding whether or not taking some type of action is sensible, Dutton *et al*. (2002, p. 355) viewed 'contextual sensemaking' as a basis for individual's judgement, decision or action in issue selling efforts. Moreover, Dutton and colleagues (2002, p. 367), in line with other scholars, recognise that 'reading and working the context', as a form of ongoing contextual sensemaking, is a vital issue selling activity of change agents that helps them to compose patterns of organisational change and influence this change over time. Consonant with the work of Weick and Quinn (1999, p.375), the issue selling perspective according to Dutton *et al*. (2001) supports the understanding of change as 'ongoing, evolving and cumulative' rather than episodic. Thus, it might be suggested that the analytical focus on microprocesses of issue selling can explain more general change processes. An important insight borrowed from literature on issue selling for my research project is its ability to challenge the dominant view of change agents as heroes at the top level of organisations by directing attention to the often-unnoticed ‘less visibly heroic, behind-the-scenes work and efforts’ of change agents below or outside the top management group (Dutton *et al*., 2001, p. 732).

With the growing acceptance that much of human understanding of change occurs by ascribing meaning to a new experience or concept through application of symbolic or metaphorical representation (e.g. Gioia *et al*., 1994), leaders have become widely conceptualised as ‘managers of meaning’ (Smircich and Morgan, 1982, Pettigrew 1979). For example, for Pettigrew (1979) leaders are managers of meaning who actively manipulate with values, beliefs, language and rituals in the process of infusing organisations with purpose and commitment. This pattern of theoretical evolution has paved the way for more meaning-centred models of leadership (Drath and Palus, 1994; Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014; Pondy, 1989; Shotter and Cunliffe, 2003; Smircich and Morgan, 1982). As Fairhurst (2007) argues ‘leadership as the management of meaning… is a sensemaking, reality-defining activity in which leaders define what is important, communicate about the meaning of events, and seeks consensus’.

This understanding of leadership as the management of meaning differs from previously discussed approaches to leadership by shifting the analytical focus to ‘what leadership actors *do* (emphasis added) when confronted with the uncertain and unexpected’ (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014, p. 11). If we follow Smircich and Morgan (1982, p.258) in their understanding that ‘leadership is realised in the process whereby one or more individuals succeed in attempting to frame and define reality of others’, then the central task of leaders might be seen as the creation of ‘intelligible formulations’ of ‘where we are now and where we might go next’ as Shotter and Cunliffe (2003, p. 20), Shotter (1993, p. 148) suggest. These formulations, developed in dialogue with others, work to give ‘shape and directions to the actions of other participants in the organisation’ (Shotter and Cunliffe, 2003, p. 20).

Fairhurst (2007, p. 56, emphasis in the original) remarks that ‘the most elegant’ formulation of this approach as *practical authorship* has been suggested by Shotter (2003). From this viewpoint, leaders are more than just ‘readers’ of situations, they are practical authors who when faced with ‘unchosen conditions’ create ‘a landscape’ of enabling – constraints…a network of ‘moral positions’… and are able to argue persuasively’ for this ‘landscape’ with those for whom it applies (Shotter, 2003, p. 149).

Bryman (2004a, p. 754) observes, that leadership studies rarely discuss ‘the lofty and slightly nebulous notion of managing meaning’ thus portraying it as the sole province of the top managers who are in charge for organisational change. Along similar lines, (Robinson, 2001, p. 88; Shotter and Cunliffe, 2003) points out that research on leadership ‘floats ethereally above the humdrum of organisational life’. If we follow Fairhurst’s (2005, p. 165) call for a more complex understanding of leadership as the ‘management of meaning’, then setting the analytic lens to *discursive leadership* not only demonstrates the potential to correct this problem, but also ‘adds much-needed’ specificity to the research conversation about leadership and organisational change by embracing what might be called ‘protean tendencies’ (Fairhurst, 2007, p.ix) of leadership. Discursive leadership, according to Fairhurst (2007), is more than just another approach to leadership. Instead, it represents ‘a foundation for many new lines of research into leadership’ (Fairhurst, 2007, p.ix) focusing on organisational discourse, both ***d***iscourse *(a lower-case‘d’ discourse)* and ***D***iscourse *(a capital-case ‘D’ Discourse).* I have discussed the difference between these two in Chapter 1.

Following the ‘linguistic turn’ in social sciences (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000), discursive leadership locates the leadership phenomenon in communication and discourse. A discursive view focuses on the constructed and contestable aspects of leadership interactions and departs from leadership psychology on both ontological and epistemological grounds (Fairhurst, 2007). Exploring leadership phenomenon through the lens of a discourse analysis demonstrates that ‘leadership patterns are always co-defined’ (Zoller and Fairhurst, 2007, p. 1339). Discursive leadership assumes that leaders manage and provide meaning through language (e.g. Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991), and leadership as the management of meaning ‘may shift and distribute itself among several organisational members’ (Zoller and Fairhurst, 2007, p.1339). Thus, discursive perspective makes significant contribution to understanding the leadership phenomenon by providing opportunities to map out and examine some of the most fundamental questions that are not easily approached with more traditional perspectives.

A variety of discursive approaches applied in the leadership domain have shown discourse as a resource for making sense and leading in modern organisations. These studies include Critical Discourse (e.g. Wodak *et al.*, 2011); Narrative Perspectives (e.g. Fairhurst and Hamlett, 2003; Fairhurst, 1993); Conversation Analysis (e.g. Clifton, 2006; Fairhurst, 2004; Fairhurst, 2007); Interactional Sociolinguistic (e.g. Vine *et al.*, 2008). One of the early examples is research conducted by Knights and Wilmott (1992). In their study of a UK assurance firm, Knights and Wilmott (1992) don't focus on specific forms or styles of leadership behaviour. Instead, they use a piece of recorded conversation to demonstrate how leadership is discursively accomplished in the process of interaction.

There is an emergent research agenda that seeks to study how organisational change is accomplished through discursive leadership practice (e.g. Carroll and Simpson, 2012, Larsson and Lundholm, 2013, Whittle *et al*., 2015; Wodak *et al*., 2011). The study conducted by Wodak and colleagues explores the consensus-building process in a multinational corporation (Wodak *et al.*, 2011). The main contribution of this study is in articulating the role of linguistic resources in the enactment of the leadership process. Five leaders' discursive strategies (Bonding, Encouraging, Directing, Modulating and Re/committing) are identified, and the study demonstrates their impact on achievement of the desirable outcomes of the meetings. Whittle *et al.* (2015) advance existing work on managerial sensemaking by examining the role of categorisation practices in discursive leadership during the period of strategic change. Their study shows how a strategic change initiative is 'founded on the discursive leadership skills of 'frame-breaking' and 're-framing' through category-based knowledge and reasoning' (Whittle *et al*., 2015, p. 378). However, studies on the linguistic enactment of leadership still seem to be elusive. This call, paraphrasing Rumi (1995), 'excites' my intellectual spirit, and I would like to respond to it in my thesis.

Conclusion of Chapter 3

In this chapter, I have first reviewed different approaches in leadership studies broadly covered by the label of leadership psychology and explored what they have in common and what differences exist among them. Then I examined the relationship between social constructionism and leadership highlighting important implications of this relationship for leadership research. A central claim that arose from this examination assigns language and discourse with an important role in social construction of leadership, thus locating leadership in the interaction between leadership actors rather than in the characteristics of individuals, usually at the top of organisational hierarchy. I also reviewed literature which links leadership and change, introducing the growing body of studies recognising meaning making as the essence of leadership. Considering the assumption that leaders manage and provide meaning through language, I discussed how the exploration of the leadership phenomenon through the lens of discourse analysis opens up new ways of knowing and talking about leadership. Thus, I emphasised that the discursive perspective makes a significant contribution to understanding the leadership phenomenon by providing opportunities to map out and critically examine some of the intriguing questions about meaning making that are not easily approached with more traditional perspectives.

Analytical Framework: Bridging Discursive Leadership and Technological Change

Drawing on theoretical insights from organisational sensemaking, discursive leadership and the social studies of technology presented in previous sections of my thesis, I will present an analytical framework for explaining how discursive leadership and technological change are mutually implicated. Although discursive perspective offers a great promise for the development of an understanding on how leadership contributes to various aspects of organisational life, to date the literature on linguistic accomplishment of leadership in technological change in organisations is still in its infancy. This is where my study aims to make a contribution.

In the opening chapter of my literature review (Chapter 1), I argued that discourse-based approaches to study organisational change lend support to the view of technological change as a discursively constructed process. There is a growing body of literature which offers language-oriented perspectives on technological change and thus contributes to the 're-conceptualisation' of this phenomenon (e.g. Boczkowski and Orlikowski, 2004; Brown, 1998; Heracleous and Barrett, 2001; Symon, 2005, 2008). Collectively, these studies demonstrate the significance of discourse in relation to technological change in organisations both in terms of 'how we think about and understand' technological change and 'how we might go about researching and practising change' (Grant and Marshak, 2011, p. 210). In line with recent developments of language-oriented perspectives in the field of organisational studies which have begun to advance our understanding of change as being constituted through language use and interactional practices (e.g. By *et al.*, 2011; Oswick *et al.*, 2005; Preget, 2013; Tsoukas, 2005), talk is now recognised as 'an important resource in "doing" change management work' (Preget, 2013, p.340). However, among the increasing number of studies which explore the role of discourse in shaping social order in everyday organisational conduct, technological change is used very rarely as an empirical example and analysis of technological change through the study of language-use remains a relatively underutilised avenue of enquiry. Therefore, the potential of research which focus on the study of accounts and talk-in-interaction to understand the processes and practices of technological change is not yet fully realised.

Before proceeding further, at this juncture I will first outline the main principles of ethnomethodology (EM) and what they bring to the analytical discussions about technological change. Being coined by Garfinkel, the term ‘ethnomethodology’ conveys ‘the focal interest in how, through members’ ethno (folk) methods in terms of their everyday mundane knowledge and reasoning procedures deployed by them, they ‘make sense of’ and ‘act on’ the situations in which they are involved’ (Samra-Fredericks and Bargiela-Chiappini, 2008, p. 654). Heap (1976, p. 107) offered a succinct definition of ethnomethodology (EM) as a field of study alluding to it as ‘a descriptive science of sensemaking and practical reasoning.’ Usually understood as ‘a diverse body of scholarship comprising a collection of splintered subfields’ (Whittle *et al*., 2015, p. 402), EM shows how people, referred by ethnomethodologists as ‘members’ (Garfinkel, 1967), ‘practical sociologists’(Coulon, 1995, p. 2) or as ‘competent practitioners’ (ten Have, 2004, p. 75), organise their social existence (i.e. reproduce social-moral orders) through ordinary mundane sensemaking practices and ordinary language (Samra-Fredericks, 2010b). Thus, as Czarniawska-Joerges (1992, p. 117) metaphorically puts it, EM takes ‘the cover off everyday life.’ In other words, the theoretical importance of EM-informed research lies in its conceptualisation of social phenomena – ethno-methods – defined as the ordinary methods that individuals use to give sense to and at the same time to realise their ordinary actions (Coulon, 1995). The perspective informed by EM enables researchers to study social fact ‘production’ in its accomplishment – ‘in flight’ (Garfinkel, 1967) – within the interactional process, as Whittle *et al*. (2014a, p. 87) explained.

There are several important assumptions that can serve in a sense as a demarcation line between ethnomethodology and conventional social theories. First of all, for ethnomethodologists, social reality is created by the actors or ‘members’, and it is not a pre-existing entity (Coulon, 1995, p. 17). In other words, from the ethnomethodological perspective, social facts are accomplishments of the members (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970). Secondly, ethnomethodologists aim to attend more closely to ordinary experiences of their research participants, while conventional sociologists tend to ignore the practical experience of the social actors considering them as irrational beings (Coulon, 1995). Another fundamental ethnomethodological assumption that goes in contrast with the conventional concepts of sociology is related to that of process. Where sociologists develop their theoretical frameworks based on the pre-established assumption of ‘stability of the object’ or ‘facts of life’, ethnomethodologists see the process of ‘permanent tinkering’ (Coulon, 1995, p. 17) ‘through which the perceivedly stable features of socially organised environments are continually created and sustained’

(Pollner, 1974, p. 27). Furthermore, Boden (1994, p. 31, emphasis in the original) stresses that ethnomethodologists 'never "study organisations" in the conventional sense… they are animated by a curiosity for *the organisation of experience* and the "extraordinary organisation of the ordinary."' Thus, the ethnomethodological approach studies organisations not as stable substances with fixed properties but rather as an ongoing process that is constantly 'in the making' (Langley and Tsoukas, 2010). The ongoing social processes of sensemaking and interacting, through which 'social facts' are produced, are in the heart of ethnomethodology (Leiter, 1980; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Whittle *et al.*, 2014a). Thus, for EM talk does not 'simply *reflect* underlying organisational attributes… but actively *brings them into being'* (Whittle *et al.,* 2014a, p.89). In this sense, the ethnomethodological perspective is valuable for understanding technological change by showing how the process of *bringing* technological change *into being* 'gets done practically by members' (Whittle *et al*., 2014a, p. 89).

The most progress on this score has been made by empirical 'workplace studies' which follow the ethnomethodology canon (Garfinkel, 1967) calling for attention to be paid to the situated practices of technology that make it recognisable for what it is (Heath and Luff, 2000; Luff *et al.*, 2000). Building on the pioneering research of Garfinkel (1967) in ethnomethodology (EM) and works of Sacks (1984; 1992), Schegloff (1968; 1991; 1997) in conversation analysis (CA) (sub-field of EM), 'workplace studies' mentioned above are principally concerned with the exploration of the interactional character of *in situ* social actions and activities. According to Rawls (2008, p. 703), these studies are premised 'on an alternative theory of social order, in which contingent details are considered theoretically significant.' In other words, the workplace studies tradition sets analytical lens on a very fine level of detail to reveal how 'real-time work activities are produced in light of distinctive organisational contingencies and accountabilities' (Llewellyn, 2008, p. 763). The analytical rigour of such research derives from their continuing commitment to examine how organisational members *themselves* (emphasis added) are orienting to social activities in accomplishing organisation (Heath and Luff, 2000). As Llewellyn (2015, p. 157) explains: 'Ethnomethodologically-informed workplace studies "prioritise members" practical reasoning and the local constitution of practical actions.'

In driving analytic attention towards the real-time, 'fine grained' details of the situated and interactional accomplishment of organisational activities, 'workplace studies', which have yet to gather momentum, demonstrate that these details are critical to extending an understanding of the use of technologies in everyday organisational environment (Heath *et al.*, 2000; Heath and Luff, 2000; Llewellyn and Hindmarsh, 2010b). As Leonardi and Barley (2010, p. 14-15) argues, ‘interpretations of a technology are potentially limitless and can only be understood *in situ*; therefore, ‘understanding the process by which interpretations arise over time in the course of everyday actions is crucial for developing a more complete view of how technologies are socially constructed’. Thus, through revealing organisation as an inter-subjectively recognised order, the workplace studies contribute to contemporary organisation theory by providing insights into the ways in which technologies are embedded and dependent upon practical activities within the ordinary daily practices in contemporary organisational settings. Furthermore, the workplace studies demonstrate how an ethnomethodological interest to the situated use of language in the form of spoken and written communication can benefit our understanding of technological change as talk-in-interaction. I offer a more detailed discussion about the differences in conceptualisation of language-use in discourse analysis informed by ethnomethodology and other approaches to discourse analysis in the methodological section of my thesis.

By revealing the constitution of organisational reality, the ethnomethodologically-informed research agenda offers the important contribution to understanding the process of organising which is inextricably linked to sensemaking (Weick, 1995). I offered the in-depth discussion about sensemaking which lies ‘at the very core of organising’ (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014, p. 58) in Chapter 2 of my thesis. Rawls (2008, p. 709), for instance, points out that: ‘The situated need to make sense, to mutually orient objects and actions imposes order requirements on participants. Objects and actions are recognisable, and hence meaningful, only when they can be seen as orderly within a particular context of situated actions. As Garfinkel says, ‘order = meaning’ ([1948] 2006)’. In other words, from the EM perspective, people accomplish orderly social conduct through an ongoing and never-ending process of sensemaking by using their stock of cultural knowledge and a variety of taken-for-granted methods (Coulon, 1995; Mueller *et al.*, 2013; Rawls, 2008; Whittle *et al.*, 2014a). The ethnomethodological focus on how members produce and maintain social reality allows bringing together sensemaking and discourse in terms of analysis of members’ sensemaking accounts, which are practical, consequential and constitutive of the social world (Mueller *et al.*, 2013; Whittle *et al.*, 2014a). Talk then ‘does not simply “describe” the world, but *actively constitutes it* in ways that make it possible to sensibly act’ as Whittle *et al.*

(2014a, p. 88, emphasis in the original) explained. Therefore, analytical attention to the situated practices of sensemaking in forms of accounts, informed by EM, has much to offer to enhance our understanding of the micro discursive aspects of technological change.

Many fruitful analytical insights have been developed at the interface between EM and leadership (Iszatt-White, 2011; Kelly *et al.,* 2006; Whittle *et al.*, 2015). In Chapter 3, I discussed that my interest in leadership is different from the ones that offered by the mainstream and critical management studies; therefore, I followed recent theoretical developments in the leadership field which focused on work leadership actually 'does' in a given organisational setting - a move that pays attention to leadership *as a situated practice* (Iszatt-White, 2011). In doing so, I gain support from the ethnomethodologically-informed agenda for leadership research whereby leadership is understood as a situated accomplishment in the taken-for-granted and everyday routine of working life, and set my analytical lens on the exploration of how leadership emerges as 'an observable practice' that is employed in the world of leadership actors (Kelly *et al.*, 2006, p. 184). Contrary to the view that leaders are always the ones who are strong, forceful, charismatic and, positive agents of change, the EM perspective views leadership as emerging in the interaction of leadership actors within the ordinary and mundane features of daily organisational life (Iszatt-White, 2011; Kelly *et al.*, 2006).

There is an increasing number of studies which have ventured into the daily *doing* of leading (Carroll and Simpson, 2012; Clifton, 2006; Larsson and Lundholm, 2013; Whittle *et al.*, 2015; Wodak *et al.*, 2011). They share similar analytical interests to the situated use of language in the form of spoken communication, a lower-case '***d***' discourse in Alvesson and Kärreman (2000b) terms, to explore leadership interaction in organisations even though they differ in the ways of conceptualising language-use. For example, Wodak *et al.* (2011) applied the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to critical discourse analysis and identified five salient discursive strategies which meeting chairs employ in driving decision making. At first glance, the work of Wodak and colleagues seems similar to mine in their interest to the linguistic accomplishment of leadership and the utilisation of the episodes from naturally occurring conversations in their analysis. However, my approach to studying language-use in the form of talk and text is different. Being informed by the principles of ethnomethodology, my research seeks to explore taken-for-granted methods or practical reasoning of producing order that constitutes sense (Rawls, 2008; Samra-Fredericks, 2010b) without privileging 'the researcher's interpretation of the participants' accounts' (Dick, 2013, p. 651). Therefore, rather than seeing social practices of organisational members as an outcome of 'specific discursive strategies' (Wodak et al., 2011) (i.e. second-order constructs), my research focuses on the members' first-order practices 'that are *constitutive of*', and therefore *consequential for*, the actual social settings of the people' (Whittle et al., 2014a, p. 88).

While much of the existing research on leadership is focused on leadership as influence, there is a stream of literature which contributes to conceptualisation of leadership as organising (e.g. Hosking, 1988; Larsson and Lundholm, 2013; Pye, 2005; Uhl-Bien, 2006) – 'the process whereby actions are coordinated and a somewhat predictable pattern is established' (Larsson and Lundholm, 2013, p. 1104). These studies conceptualise leadership as 'intimately allied' to organising through the capacity to shape future actions and outcomes (Pye, 2005, p. 32). For example, Kelly et al. (2006, p. 182) suggest that leadership 'should be viewed cautiously by researchers – not as an observable and measurable' phenomenon – but as an 'organising device…' and argue that leadership must be understood as 'a process of organisation'. Similarly, Pye (2005, p. 32) argues that the situated character of leadership and 'the improvisational dynamic of "moving *to*" the future' makes leadership 'not dissimilar to that of organising.' For Samra-Fredericks and Bargiela-Chiappini (2008, p. 654), the notion of organising 'points to pervasive human relational processes which brings shape or form and meaning to the mutually orientated-to phenomenon, such as 'organisation'. Organising, on the other hand, is commonly related to sensemaking which enables various important organisational processes and outcomes (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). In other words, as Pye (2005, p. 33) puts it, leadership as a subject of study is worthy to be reframed as 'sensemaking in action'. Setting the lens on the process of sensemaking adds a much needed specificity to the understanding of leadership as meaning management which involves providing 'intelligible formulations' (Shotter, 1993) to organisational actors of 'where they are', 'what's wrong', 'where and how they need to go' (Whittle *et al.*, 2015) when moving to the possible and desirable technological change.

Similarly to Weick (1979) who conceptualised organising a process of linking action performed by more than one actor; there are studies that demonstrate that at least two parties have to be taken into account to accomplish leadership (Carsten *et al.*, 2010). For example, in their study of leadership interaction, Larsson and Lundholm (2013) demonstrated a deep relational character of followership which is located in a practical interaction by analysing how followers contribute in interactionally visible ways to the active construction of what is going on. While followership (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2014) is not the main focus of my framework, it is important at this juncture to acknowledge its crucial role in the process of organising. Therefore, if we are to answer the question how 'a smooth and seemingly unproblematic organising process' of constructing 'intelligible formulations' unfolds then we need to be attentive to 'the dance between leader and led' (Fairhurst, 2007, p. 24), i.e. 'the situated and skilful utilisation of a range of co-operational tactics' (Larsson and Lundholm, 2013, p. 1123) which are naturally displayed within interaction and 'related to what a second participant *does* in response to a first participant' (Mondada, 2011, p. 543).

Being committed to their main analytical focus of studying the first-order practices of members, ethnomethodologically-informed studies 'standardly proceed by looking into the fine-grained detail of sequential organisation in talk, categorisation practices, gesture, human-machine interaction, or a combination of all these' (Whittle *et al.*, 2014, p. 78). To explicate the ways in which the process of constructing 'intelligible formulations' about technological change is publicly displayed and interactively oriented to within the production of action in the situated sensemaking accounts of leadership actors, I will, in the framework of my study, examine the discursive resources; namely, discursive devices (Antaki, 1994; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Whittle and Mueller, 2011) and categorisation practices (Fairhurst, 2007; Whittle *et al.*, 2015) used by members themselves to construct these accounts.

Discursive devices are generally defined as 'a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.138). According to Mueller and Whittle (2011, p.188), discursive devices are as 'language-based tools that are employed as part of interactional business.' Elaborating on the seminal works of Goffman (1971, 1974) where sensemaking devices are discussed as tools that organise our experiences, Whittle *et al.* (2008, p. 103) highlighted the role of discursive devices in facilitating the smooth flow of interaction arguing that the skilled use of discursive devices 'allow social life to go on'. As such, the notion of discursive devices enable us to illuminate how leadership actors draw upon a repertoire of discursive resources in their sensemaking accounts to construct, negotiate and accomplish technological change. The argument that leadership might have organising functions by providing discursively available categories 'to establish links and interdependencies between actions and actors' (Larsson and Lundholm, 2013, p. 1105), calls for attention to the categorical aspects of talk-in-interaction. As Whittle *et al.* (2014a, p. 74) state: ‘membership categories - and the predicates and forms of background knowledge members use with them – form a key element of the work of organising.’ Indeed, membership categories are important discursive resources in an ongoing sensemaking process through which people use taken-for-granted methods (i.e. ethno-methods) to accomplish order and organisation in their social life (Handel, 1982; Rawls, 2008; Whittle *et al.,* 2014a). Thus, the analysis of situated sensemaking accounts of leadership actors can reveal how they use membership categories and the category-bound knowledge and reasoning to make sense of and give sense to technological change and thereby enact it.

Having brought together the theoretical advancements in the fields of discursive leadership, organisational sensemaking and the social studies of technology, I developed an analytical framework grounded in the principles of ethnomethodology which contributes to an emergent research agenda that seeks to study technological change through situated sensemaking and practical reasoning of leadership actors. The value of the framework presented in my thesis is that it has the potential for advancing our understanding of how technological change is constructed, negotiated and accomplished by setting an analytical lens on unfolding and emergent qualities of technological change that are grounded in the daily discursive practices of leadership actors who make sense of and give sense to the technological change in organisations. In the next part of my thesis, I describe the research methodology applied in my study before moving on to examine the empirical data.

Part II. Methods

Chapter 4 An Empirical Quest for Everyday Meaning Making

Introduction

The methodological aim of the study, as it has been highlighted in the introduction chapter, is to design a qualitative investigation which allows collecting naturally occurring talk of organisational members in order to analyse how leadership actors make sense and give sense to the process of technological change which unfolds over time. Consistent with the methodological aim, this chapter presents an account of the research methodology and the methods utilised in the framework of the study. It outlines the rationale of the research design, which carefully links research question to data collection and analysis. Research design can be generally described as ‘an overall plan’ (Lee, 1999, p. 83) for conducting a piece of research. At the heart of the research design lays its rationale or logic aimed at answering the research question of a study. According to (Punch, 2005), the rationale of a study could be represented by a set of four main ideas: the conceptual framework, the research strategy, the question of who and what will be studied, and the tools and procedures to be used for collecting and analysing data. The overarching aim of this chapter is to follow the conceptual framework developed in the literature review section of the thesis and to systematically address the methodological choices that have been made in the process of following the analytic and ethical agenda of the research project. The proposed research design of the study is guided by the research question and aims to provide a strong methodological foundation for investigation of sensemaking and sensegiving of the leadership actors in the context of technological change.

The methodological challenge imposed by the nature of this research project and my ambition as a researcher to capture mundane sensemaking and sensegiving of leadership actors during the process of technological change requires ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking and developing skills of ‘sociological imagination’; as Mills (1959, p.211) put it, while fusing various research traditions and approaches in research design and process. Although I have got a theoretical understanding of the technological change, organisational sensemaking and leadership before embarking on my research project, during my fieldwork I made an endeavour to remain ‘open-minded’ allowing the studied organisation to ‘talk to me’ (Ericson, 2001). I was also aware of my theoretical ‘blinkers’ when dealing with the research participants and collecting information from the primary empirical sources. Following Czarniawska (2007, p.17), I have measured the attractiveness of the research techniques applied in the framework of the study ‘against the degree to which they permit… to tackle the peculiarities’ of leadership practices and sensemaking processes. Methodological and analytic choices at various stages of the project have also been guided by decisions based on resource constraints and the potential optimisation of ‘publishability’, as Lee (1999) put it, of the research results in targeted journals including *Leadership*, *The Leadership Quarterly*, *Human Relations, and Organization Studies.*

This chapter comprises of several sections. It starts with a discussion on ontological and epistemological assumptions within which the research project is situated in order to describe how I have approached the study of the particular social phenomena (i.e. discursive leadership) and to justify methodological and analytic decisions that have been made. Particular attention is given to the explanation of the methodological procedures of data collection. This section explicates a detailed description of the data collection process including instruments (i.e. in-depth qualitative interviewing) and methods (i.e. nonparticipant/participant observations and collection of documents). Data analysis methods explain how ethnomethodologically-informed discourse analysis, conversation analysis and membership categorisation analysis are applied in the study. The chapter is concluded by discussing research limitations, the quality of chosen analytic procedures and ethical principles of the study.

Ontological and Epistemological Foundation of the Research

At the outset of my methodological section, I want to emphasise that in their systematic search for knowledge, researchers are guided by different beliefs and assumptions which are crucial to the understanding and evaluation of reported findings. My research is orientated towards social constructionist ontology (i.e. subject matter or nature of reality) and epistemology (i.e. forms of knowledge and ways of assessing it). As a researcher who affiliates herself with a social constructionism tradition (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), I am cautious about risks of self-labelling and acknowledge that such affiliation is not a static picture but rather an ongoing process, as it has been pointed out by (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992). Considering the ontological and epistemological orientation of my research towards social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), it is important in this section to explain how social constructionist dialogues (Gergen, 1999; Gergen, 2001; Latour and Woolgar, 1997; Potter, 1996; Shotter, 1993) have informed the methodological choices presented in this thesis in order to support a meaningful contribution to knowledge about sensemaking and leadership.

Research guided by social constructionism is based on a range of assumptions developed from the critique of longstanding hegemony of traditional empirical science and its criteria, such as the promise of objective truth, neutrality and independence of the researcher. In contrast to these criteria, social constructionism makes no claims to a single objective truth (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) thus opening the door to multiplicity of participation (Schutz, 1967) in the production of meaning. Meaning, which is one central focus of social constructionism, is continuously negotiable and contested. From the social constructionist perspective, every concept is a subject to multiple interpretations depending on context (Gergen, 1999). For social constructionists, the social world is an outcome of social relationship, and all claims to what is considered as ‘the real’ or known can be traced to processes of relationship (Gergen, 2001). The knowledge of the social world, thus, is assumed to be socially constructed by individuals who actively participate in its creation by interacting and relating with each other (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). This emphasis on interacting and relating suggests the conceptualising of the social world as an ‘*ongoing achievement…*of human interaction’ (Watson, 2001, p. 223, emphasis in the original) without privileging one construction of reality over another.

There is an impressive array of writings that have made significant contributions to integrating ideas of social constructionism to organisational studies, for example Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), Calas and Smircich (1999), Clegg, (1981), Morgan, (1990), just to mention a few. This enquiry has been also complemented by studies in social construction of leadership and organisation (e.g. Barge and Fairhurst, 2008; Fairhurst, 2008; Fairhurst and Grant, 2010) , meaning making in organisations (e.g. Shotter, 1993; Weick, 1995), communication (e.g. Cooren *et al.*, 2006; Taylor and Robichaud, 2004). Consistent with the social constructionist perspective, people, therefore, can be understood as making up organisation by being always in the process of meaning making and constructing knowledge through processes of 'actions, interactions, and the local orchestration of relations' (Chia, 1995, p. 581).

It is the social constructionists' keen interest in language, as a medium of social action, and discourse which has sparked my initial fascination with this perspective. As I have already discussed, some of the main assumptions of the social constructionist perspective appear in my literature review; at this point I want to reiterate that consistent with my ontological and epistemological orientation, I focus my analytic lens on treating all versions of reality as 'particular, discursive, socially occasioned productions' (Clegg *et al*., 2004, p. 25). I perceive an organisation not as already formed and a stable entity which has got fixed 'substances' or 'attributes', but as a 'social fact' which emerges in the talk and text of organisational members and is interactionally achieved across the *duree* of institutional time (Boden, 1994; Fairhurst and Putnam, 2004; Whittle *et al*., 2015). Similarly to Langley and Tsoukas (2010, p. 4), I view an organisation as 'constituted by the interaction process among its members'. What is more, as my analytic interest lies in studying organisational life 'in flight' (Garfinkel, 1967) and 'as it happens' (Boden, 1994, p. 46), I place my methodological focus on studying ongoing processes of sensemaking and sensegiving, in particular.

Fieldwork and Data collection

The research question that I posed at the beginning of the study:

> ***How do leadership actors use discourse to make sense of, and give sense to, processes of technological change in organisations?***

suggests the utilisation of intensive research methods for collection of the naturally occurring talk and analysis that involve observing, capturing and describing organisation members' sensemaking and sensegiving as it happens *in situ* (Gioia and Thomas, 1996; Maitlis and Lawrence, 2007). Qualitative research has been considered as the best analytical choice for answering the research question in the framework of this study as it allows the exploration of the world views of the organisational members, conceptualising the phenomena under study using its thick and vivid description, and capturing dynamic processes of constructing social reality by research participants (Geertz, 1973; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Qualitative research is a diverse process utilising multiple strategies and methods for collecting and analysing a wide range of information. Empirical materials for the qualitative study can be collected from various sources of data including interviews, documents, archival records, personal notes, audio and visual records, direct and participant observations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Punch, 2005; Yin, 2009). However, qualitative studies are generally seen as time-consuming and laborious, which seems inevitable considering the time spent in field sites, effort directed towards data collection and techniques of data analysis and interpretation (Czarniawska, 2007; Lee, 1999).

Organisational theory researchers have had a longstanding interest in resolving what Carter *et al.* (2008, p. 104) define as 'an unease regarding the difference between the existing theory of what people do and what people actually do.' My research interest and analytical curiosity of exploring what organisational members *are* in fact *doing*, and the ambition to discover how organising and the accounts of organising are actually produced in real time have guided the methodological preference of doing the fieldwork in the framework of this study. My methodological choices, which favour, as Maynard and Clayman (2003, p. 176) put it, 'a thoroughly 'bottom-up' approach to research', have also been, in a sense, inspired by the famous British painter John Constable (1776-1837) who is recognised as an innovator of the landscape oil sketching. Constable has aspired to paint direct from nature, a truthful *en plain air* landscape, rather than to follow existing at that time approach in landscape painting based on studio-bound and synthetic compositional studies which tended to fictitiously embellish first-hand sketches (Rosenthal and Lyles, 2013). .

Organisation studies literature highlights several advantages for researchers for conducting empirical fieldwork. First of all, similar to sociologists of science and technology such as Latour and Woolgar (1986) and Knorr-Cetina (1981) who stepped into the world of laboratories to explore how facts are manufactured, organisation scholars can study “the actual *production*” (Czarniawska, 2007, emphasis in the original) of accounts of organising by stepping into a field of practice. Secondly, going to a field of practice, an organisation researcher can have an access to an abundance of actions and accounts of action. Another reason for studying people’s life and work in the field, according to Czarniawska (2007), is the possibility to observe organisational members’ selection procedures while they produce and consume a multitude of accounts.

My fieldwork which can be characterised as a long-term engagement with my research site, allowed me to access ‘primary longitudinal data’ (Samra-Fredericks, 2000, p. 245) where I was able to observe organisational members performing interactionally in the project meetings in real time. Observation and recording of interactive routines during a series of meetings enabled me to collect a ‘reacher version’ (Samra-Fredericks, 2000, p.245) of project members’ activities by tracing subtle changes underlining organising moves that can only become evident over time and not obvious from a short-term perspective (Symon and Clegg, 2005). As my research relies on different sources of data, I will discuss all the elements of the fieldwork in more detail.

An Overview of the Fieldwork

The longitudinal data collection for my research project occurred during the 12 months from January 2010 to January 2011. In this period, I conducted 29 in-depth interviews with project team members and project stakeholders, observed 10 project meetings and collected project-related documentation (including PowerPoint presentations, communication plans, KPI reports, agendas and minutes of meetings, e-mail exchanges, and project reports). All project meetings were audio-recorded and transcribed. In addition, detailed notes have been made during meeting observations. A transcribed data set (interviews and meetings) comprises around 1,000 pages. The detailed overview of the fieldwork is presented below (Table 1).

Table 1 Overview of the fieldwork

Research Site Period	The Northern University January 2010 – January 2011
Data source (1)	***Semi-structured interviews*** (i) 3 interviews with senior managers (individuals involved in planning, development, implementation and use of a new CRM software system (H-CRM) in the Northern University); (ii) 26 interviews with heterogeneous groups of university stakeholders that make use of the new H-CRM system.
Data source (2)	***Nonparticipant ethnographic observations*** with audio-recording wherever possible (i) 2 CRM Strategy group meetings (ii) 10 CRM Project group meetings (iii) 1 internal CRM-related meetings (Pilot School 2) (iv) 1 user- testing meeting (v) Impromptu discussions with the project team members
Data source (3)	***Participant observation*** with video-recording (i) PG Personalised Web-Page testing (University Marketing Team)
Data source (4)	***Documentary data*** (i) The documentation, related to the Student Recruitment CRM Campaigns Project, and produced by the project team members and other project stakeholders (e.g. project reports, meeting minutes, agendas, e-mails, project plans, etc.)
Data source (5)	***Other Impromptu activities*** (i) H-CRM Conference in London (ii) Filters writing session (Pilot School 2)

Observations Techniques

The growing interest for conducting research of modern practices ‘in an anthropological mode’ (Czarniawska, 2007, p. 12) has contributed to the increasing number of studies in organisation research that convincingly demonstrates the potential of utilising various observation techniques including participant and nonparticipant observations. These studies produce substantial and rigorous insights by gaining the first-hand knowledge about phenomena under study (Burawoy, 1979; Czarniawska, 2007; Moeran, 2009; Van Maanen, 1979, Van Maanen, 1988; Ybema *et al.*, 2009). However, this potential is still often overlooked, and observation techniques remain very much underutilised in management research despite their obvious advantages.

This study utilises nonparticipant observation techniques for capturing and illuminating organisational phenomena with rich contextual details as they occur in real time without the prompting of potential distortions from post hoc verbal descriptions (Lee, 1999) At this junction, it is important to point out that some researchers emphasise that nonparticipant observation differs from participant observations as the researcher does not assume the role of a member of the organisation. However, my prolonged engagement with the field demonstrates that the distinction between participant and nonparticipant observation is always unclear, which is similar to the observation made by Czarniawska (2007) who points out that one field technique usually glides into another during the accomplishment of the fieldwork. Therefore, I am treating the definition of nonparticipant observation, introduced above, with caution as it has been done only for the purpose of outlining the primary mode of data collection. Taxonomy of participant and nonparticipant observation has been highlighted primarily to assist methodological purposes of the research process.

My fieldwork could be better described as a constant interplay between involvement and detachment, immersion with the field and ‘reflexive distancing’ myself from the researched (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009). The stance of the nonparticipant observer of the project team meetings allowed me to experience what Bakhtin (1981) calls ‘outsidedness’ (translation suggested by Czarniawska, 2007, p. 20) and Bruyn (1966) addresses it as ‘detached involvement’, whereby I recognised using the words of Luhmann (1998), that the world as I see it as an observer is not necessarily the same one as seen by research participants. During my fieldwork, I learned to notice and reflect on differences between myself and my research participants in the process of observation and treated these differences as a source of knowledge. At the same time, I was able to appreciate and reflect on my limitations as an observer who ‘can never know *better* than an actor’ (Czarniawska, 2007, p. 21, emphasis in the original).

Meetings as Sensemaking Enterprises

Observations of the project team meetings represent the biggest proportion of my fieldwork. Similar to other scholars, I treat meetings as the interpersonal occasions for sensemaking in which organisations are socially constructed by their members (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1997; Weick, 1995; Schwartzman, 1986). In the literature review, I highlighted that my view on temporality of sensemaking is consonant with those scholars who suggest that there is no time out for sensemaking; and it is always taking place, without beginning and end (Gephart *et al.*, 2010; Leiter, 1980; Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). Appreciating difficulties in portraying the multiple, heterogeneous flows of organisational processes, Weick (1979) suggests that ‘the streams’ can be seen as a useful metaphor to capture this property of organisations. Thus, from a sensemaking perspective, organisations deal with streams of ongoing activities in which organisational members attempt to single out particular moments and extract cues from these slices of experience in order to interpret them and to make sense of what is happening (Maitlis, 2005; Weick, 1993; Weick, 1995). Nohria and Eccles (1992) observed that the continuous flow of actions and words in organisational environment, which they describe as the context of managing, is often punctuated by events, which serve to focus and crystallise meanings in organisation – namely, meetings. Given that flows of organisational sensemaking are constants (Weick, 1995, p.43), meetings can be recognised as important focal points for ongoing actions where sensing occurs. Being sensitive to an ongoing character of sensemaking, and at the same time being guided by pragmatic purposes of data collection, simply realising that I could only be in one place at one time, I have chosen meetings as a main setting of my fieldwork with the understanding that important sensemaking moments are happening in organisations all the time and in other places as organisational members constantly comprehend and manage their environment.

Interviews

The essence of the research presented in this thesis is its commitment to produce a qualitatively rich, detailed contextual description and analysis of an organisational phenomenon, i.e. leadership, by conducting an empirical enquiry within its real-life context. I was aware of the warning comments made by Crevani *et al*. (2010, p. 79) who cautiously suggested that: ‘If leadership is not what formal leaders do, how can one then empirically separate leadership activities from non-leadership activities?’ Therefore, my intensive longitudinal data collection was concentrated on gathering detailed information from various sources (including observations of the project team meetings, interviews and documents) of what it is actually like to be involved in leading the implementation of the new H-CRM system. In this section, I explain the role of the interviews in my research.

Interviews, as ‘windows in the depth of reality’ (Czarniawska, 2007), have received considerable analytic attention in social sciences. They have been recognised as ‘the central resource’ (Rapley, 2001, p. 303) of the social sciences in generating knowledge about humanity (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Silverman, 1973). Being one of the most accessible and common techniques in qualitative research, interviews are widely utilised by organisation researchers. There exists the broad range of interviews’ classifications including interview structure (e.g. semi-structured, unstructured), interview styles (e.g. face-to-face, electronic, etc.), and epistemological positions (e.g. Gubrium and Holstein, 2001; Morgan and Symon, 2004; Potter and Hepburn, 2005; Warren, 2001). Qualitative research interviews also vary in their methodological features such as length, style of questions, and number of participants (King, 2004). Alongside the works, treating the interview as a research instrument and interview data as ‘*a resource’* (Seale, 1998) emerged an interest in the interview as an object of sociological enquiry itself (Silverman, 1973) and in interview data as ‘*a topic’* (Seale, 1998). It goes without question that interviews are worthy of a much fuller treatment due to their significant contribution to the social sciences. However, in the framework of my research, interviews are assigned with a supporting role.

As part of my data collection, I have designed and conducted 29 semi-structured in-depth interviews with the project team members and other University managers involved in the new H-CRM system campaign. All participants were provided with information about my research project in advance (Appendix C) and only one person from the project team refused to be interviewed. More detailed information about the duration of each interview is presented in Appendix B. Twenty eight interviews were recorded and transcribed. I regarded my first interview conducted with Finnbar as a ‘pilot’ interview which helped me in refining the final version of the interview guide. We have been friends for a while and our conversation flew in a very casual and friendly manner. This interview was not recorded as it took place in an informal and quite noisy setting and I only made written notes as the conversation unfolded. I prepared an initial set of questions in advance and used my notes afterwards to reflect on whether I managed to identify fruitful areas for the interview guide, and also to make some approximate estimation of how long the interview might take.

The interview structure was loosely organised around a number of general themes which arose naturally from my informal conversations and several informal meetings with the project team participants. The set of interview questions was designed in a way that allowed flexibility in obtaining further clarifications, more details and insights by facilitating, in Burgess’ (1988) terms, ‘a conversation with a purpose’ which is shaped by the lived experience of the participants and ‘not by what the researcher thought might have been important to them’ (Pole, 2010, p. 172). I broadly covered such themes as project team members’ current roles in the Northern University, their professional background and experience, their understanding of the motivation behind the introduction of the new H-CRM system and critical success factors for its implementation, the attitudes towards the adoption and use of the new system, benefits and problems related to its implementation and lessons they have learnt. Being committed to the ethnographic interview tradition, I set up each interview as ‘an invitation to narrate’ (Narayan and George, 2012) which allowed me to elicit talk from the person being interviewed. In some cases I departed from an interview guide to pursue novel topics and the unexpected paths that emerged in the course of talking with my participants.

As I have mentioned above, interviews collected in the framework of my research were assigned with a supporting role while the main analytical focus of the research was on naturally occurring talk-in-interaction in a particular setting. Analysing the interview data, I was broadly concerned with situations that my participants encountered on a daily basis drawing from a stock of their experience (including successes, problems and failures) of being involved in the implementation of the H-CRM project. In order to get the ‘thick’ description (Geertz, 1973) about the phenomenon under study in a specific context, I utilised my research interviews' data to 'gather a description of the life-world of the interviewee' (Kvale, 1983, p. 174) which represented the reality 'beyond an interview' (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 201) in order 'to see the research topic from their [the interviewee] perspective' (King, 2004, p. 12). Using the words of Silverman (2001, cited in Potter and Hepburn (2005, p. 282), I was treating interviews as sensemaking accounts which provided me with a research possibility not only to explore 'a pathway to the participants' authentic experiences' of *leading* and/or of *being led* in the process of the implementation of the new H-CRM system, but also to get access to 'interpretive repertoires' (Wetherell and Potter, 1988, p. 172); in other words, 'a range of terms used in a specific stylistic and grammatical fashion', which participants draw upon when talking about technological change and making claims about project leadership. Analysis of these interpretive repertoires used by the participants assisted in enhancing my understanding of the ways that leadership is constructed in local discursive encounters. Thus, the interview data-set allowed me to be 'close' to the setting and develop knowledge of the category 'leader' and associated reasoning used by the project team members themselves, which is seen as 'a methodological *advantage'* (Whittle *et al.*, 2015, p. 386, emphasis in the original) from the perspective of ethnomethodology.

Ethnographic Component

Data collection of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction in the framework of the study has been augmented by the introduction of an ethnographic component which is seen as a valuable method of deep immersion into my research setting and getting access to the stock of 'local knowledge' (Geertz, 1973) available to my research participants. Introducing ethnographic component brings particular advantages to my research by providing a possibility to develop a detailed, in-depth picture of organisation and its members (Neyland, 2008; Ybema *et al.,* 2009). Organisational ethnography has been widely recognised as a method allowing the researcher to uncover and explicate "the ways in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to day situation" (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 540). One of the main promises of ethnography is its attention to interplay between so-called 'formal' (i.e. rules, standards, duties) and 'informal' (i.e. members' ways of interpretation and carrying out their tasks) aspects of organisational life (Schwartzman, 1993). An ethnographic approach, thus, appreciates daily organisational routines such as meetings, corridor talk, or paperwork and engages with everyday ordinary experiences of people in organisations (Schwartzman, 1993; Ybema *et al*., 2009). In discourse-oriented studies, ethnography is often used for integrating ‘the various discursive and non-discursive data’ and thus, aiding the process of analysis (Oberhuber and Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 197).

Despite obvious strengths of ethnography which have been mentioned above and its extensive utilisation within a wide range of organisation studies, ethnography is not ‘a straightforward methodology’ (Neyland, 2008), especially when it comes to the collection and analysis of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction in a particular setting (Moerman, 1988; Whittle *et al*., 2015; Samra-Fredericks, 2000). For instance, some branches of conversation analysis are challenged by ethnographic accounts that move beyond the ‘transcript-intrinsic data’ (Nelson, 1994) – i.e. oriented by the members in their talk, and thus, tend to ‘gloss’ over microscopic details of ‘the work that members do to accomplishing social order’ as Whittle *et al.*, (2014b, p. 613) explained. Useful for my study, which is focused on conducting a fine-grained, detailed analysis of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction, is the position introduced by Miller (1997, p. 159, cited in Samra-Fredericks, 2000, p. 251) who considers ethnography and detailed analysis of recorded material as ‘not competing, but complementary methodologies’. Consonant with this position, I use ethnography in my study as a useful complementary research method for gaining access to those things (i.e. experiences, interests, intentions, expectancies, etc.) that being left unsaid but known by speakers (Garfinkel, 1967), and that they use to routinely ‘fill in’ the gaps… anyway’ (Samra-Fredericks, 2004, p. 216).

Transcriptions

The data for the analysis is drawn from a corpus of the CRM project meetings recorded during the fieldwork over the period of 12 months. All recordings that I have made during my observations of the project team meetings are accompanied by extensive field notes written systematically during and after project team meetings. These notes inform the ethnographic component of my research, which I treat as ‘complementary methodology’ (Samra-Fredericks, 2000, p. 251) which aids the process of my data analysis. Considering the use of the transcriptions for my data analysis, I was mindful about limitations of transcription as an ‘estrangement device’ (Clifton, 2006, p. 206) which presents a spoken text in a written form in an inescapably incomplete and selective fashion. Therefore, while appreciating this form of data collection, in the first stage of my data analysis, I, nevertheless, gave the priority to the repeated inspection of a tape recording as an integral part of the analysis - the position stressed by CA researchers - in order to increase the details of the analysis and to provide, what Clifton (2006, p. 206) calls ‘some kind of guarantee against the limitations of idiosyncratic intuition and selective recollection.’ Transcription of the meetings, presented in this thesis, has been done with ‘a fairly low degree of delicacy’ (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1997) without intonational features and pronunciational particulars that are common in conversation analysis transcriptions. This decision has been prompted by the nature of the analysis, difficulties of transcribing a naturally occurring multi-party speech event by a non-native speaker, and requirements to produce the transcriptions in a limited time period. In my thesis I use transcriptions as a tool enabling me to ‘slow down’ the continuous stream of everyday life (Carroll and Simpson, 2012, cited in Whittle *et al.,* 2015, p. 385), and as a warrant allowing me to communicate the evidence to the reader so that the validity of my analytical claims, which are empirically grounded in the transcripts of naturally occurring talk, can be justified and assessed by referring to the particular data in a transcript. I was aware of the Jeffersonian system of transcribing, specifically developed for researchers who work in CA tradition (Jefferson, 2004), when preparing my materials for analysis. I have applied a more simplified version of transcriptions with a reasonable level of details (e.g. laughter, termination of speech), guided by the nature of my research. I will show later in my analysis how my analytic attention to these features turned out to be useful in getting some interesting insights.

Limitations

In order to produce a legitimate story presented in this thesis, I have made certain analytical and methodological decisions in terms of selecting certain items over others. Following Law (2004) and Hernes (2008), I appreciate that ‘selecting something means selecting away something else’ (Hernes, 2008, p. 146). In other words, by letting something capture our attention, we, at the same time, are letting something escape our attention (Poggi, 1965). Something that has been let escaping from my attention as a researcher has been acknowledged in this section.

Two caveats regarding data collection have been borne in mind. The first one is the presence of the observer and the recorder during meeting observations. This is likely, at least in some cases, having affected the conversational behaviour of the participants. The second issue is a lack of prosodic details in transcripts. Without prosodic information it is at times difficult in a fine-grain analysis to infer what certain items are doing in the discourse. Hedges (i.e. I think, you know) can serve as good examples of difficulties in interpretations of their operational functions in and across discourse as they can index various practices such as summarising, responding, disagreeing and other. In order to gain better understanding of the use of hedges, and to make relevant inferences about practices they invoke, interpretations of these items and their features have been done within sequences of episodes after constant reading and re-reading them. Such approach, being quite laborious and time consuming, allows getting certain analytical insights that would not otherwise be possible considering lack of prosodic details in the transcripts.

Even the episodes of the project team discussions about particular issues have been taken from across several meetings as well as within individual meetings, utilising only one genre (i.e. project team meeting) can be suggested as one of the methodological limitations of the current study. It could be suggested that examining complexity of dynamics of organisational change over time requires utilisation of various genres and sub-genres (i.e. meetings with administrators in various schools across the University, meetings with colleagues from other departments involved in the process of IS implementation) in order to enhance understanding of change process using the discourse analysis lens.

Data analysis

Condensing data

This section will be devoted to analytic choices that have been made in a continuing effort to narrow down or 'to condense', as Tesch (1990) put it, the scope of collected linguistic materials to manageable proportions. Miles and Huberman (1994, pp. 10-11) refer to this research activity as 'data reduction' which comprises processes of 'selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming' data. In what follows, the stages the process of data reduction and my analytic decisions will be described and explained.

Stage 1: The first stage of analysis began with identifying topics of the discussion around CRM system implementation during the study period. Acknowledging the lack of a commonly agreed notion on topic in linguistic and cognitive science literature, I started the topic identification by using a general definition of a 'topic' as a matter dealt within a conversation (www.oxforddictionaries.com) paying attention to what the conversation is about at any given moment. For the purpose of this research with its particular focus on talk-in-interaction, the notion of 'topic' in conversation has been conceptualised further by borrowing from Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997), as a pragmalinguistic category realised interactively in conversation which can be considered as interactional focus of sensemaking. At this stage of data analysis, I was not concerned with topical coherence or topic conflicts. My main task was to identify and list different topics that project members were talking about during project team meetings over the period of 12 months. Considering a meeting agenda as a pre-arranged set of agreed topics, I referred to the project team meetings' agendas and the project team meetings' minutes that were collected during my fieldwork in order to accomplish this work. I also used my field notes which I have extensively accumulated during my observations of the meetings. The example of identified topics in project team meetings conversations is presented in Appendix A.

Stage 2: Each topic of conversation in the project team meetings comprised of one or several organisational issues. The definition of an 'issue' applied in the framework of this research is elaborated using literature on sensemaking (Maitlis, 2005) and issue selling (Dutton *et al.*, 1983) . An organisational issue has been defined by Maitlis (2005, p.27) as “a topic of discussion that involved a question or concern connected in some way to the organisation as a whole rather than a small subset of its members.” An organisational issue for Dutton *et al*. (1983) is a development, event, or trend perceived as potentially having an impact on the organisational performance. For the purpose of the current research, which is focused on the CRM system implementation, an organisational issue has been conceptualised as a topic of conversation in which a question, concern or problem related to the CRM system in the organisation has been raised and discussed, and which has in some way an impact on the process of the implementation of this CRM system. At this junction, it is important to mention that this definition has been chosen by me and reflects my ‘etic’ stance as an analyst, and by no means represents a member’s own definition of an issue. For instance, the topic of discussion “Update on data integration” included such issues as “PG applicant feed”, “UG applicant feed”, “Enquiries feed”, “PG Portal feed” and “Registration feed”. For example, a topic of conversation about attendance at the ‘Connect U’ conference has not been considered as an issue in the framework of this research. I have also identified several sub-issues which have been defined as smaller topics of conversation that form part of a more inclusive issue. The sub-issue of “mandatory ‘source’ field” which is contingent on the issue “PG applicant feed” (Meeting M1/21) can be an example of this identification.

Stage 3: My next step of data reduction included tracing through all the chronologically ordered raw data of the project team meetings and identifying issues and/or sub-issues that were unfolded over several meetings. I have identified several issues which matched the chosen criteria of ‘being discussed’ over several meetings and reduced the list of identified issues to three project-related issues: “Excluded courses” (Topic: UG Core Communications), “UG applicant feed” (Topic: Update on Data Integration), and “Grouped school content” (Topic: Personalised Web Pages) for further analysis. Each of these issues is related to one of the main topics covered in the project meeting discussions. Most importantly, all three issues have been made into a topic of interaction by project team members themselves. Thus, they are not something that is imposed upon the raw data by myself as an analyst ‘in order to ‘explain’ what was happening or why it was happening’ (Whittle *et al.*, 2014a). For instance, the issue ‘UG applicant feed’ represents a particular research interest for me as it is related to the bigger topic ‘Update on data integration’ and it has been discussed at seven meetings. The chosen issues and relevant topics are summarised below in Table 2.

Stage 4: This stage of the data reduction was the identification of episodes – the structures of social encounters (Harre and Langenhove, 1999) - related to the chosen project-related issues. Two definitions of episodes are particularly relevant to my study. One way of defining episodes is borrowed from (Harre and Secord, 1973, p. 154) for whom episodes are 'any sequence of happenings in which human beings engage which has some principle of unity.' Another definition is suggested by Gumperz (1975, p. 17) who said that episodes are 'communicative routines which [people] view as distinct wholes, separate from other types of discourse, characterised by special rules of speech and non-verbal behaviour and often distinguished by clearly recognisable opening and closing statements.' For the purpose of the research, a meeting is conceptualised as a sequence of episodes. The issue "Excluded courses" comprises of 4 episodes that took place from April – August, 2010. The issue "UG applicant feed" is represented by 7 episodes unfolded over the period of 9 months. Two episodes are included in the issue "Grouped school content" as integral parts of the bigger discussion about Personalised Web pages.

Goffman (1974) argues that in most situations many different things are happening simultaneously – things that are likely to have begun at different moments and may terminate dissynchronously. Intrigued by the question: "What is it that is going on here?", I borrowed Goffman's notion of 'strip' which is defined as 'any arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity, including here sequences of happening, real or fictive, as seen from the perspective of those subjectively involved in sustaining an interest in them' (Goffman, 1974, pp. 9-10). These 'raw batch of occurrences', as Goffman (1974) puts it, is what I want to draw attention to as a starting point of my analysis.

Table 2 Identified Topics and Issues

Topic of Conversation	**Selected Issue**
Core Communications	Excluded Courses
Data Integration	UG Applicant Feed
Personalised Web Page	Grouped School Content

Unit of Analysis

‘An account’ - discursive construction of reality (Antaki, 1994; Maitlis, 2005; Potter and Wetherell, 1987) - is the central unit of analysis in the framework of the study. Accounts have been widely recognised as critical resources for sensemaking due to their capacity to describe and explain the world and thus make it meaningful (Antaki, 1994; Maitlis, 2005; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Whittle *et al*., 2014a). The definition of account adopted in the framework of this study is suggested by Mueller et al. (2013, p.22) who define an account as ‘an utterance located within a particular conversational encounter that provides a particular version of the self and/or world.’ It is argued that accounts are not simply sources of information but fundamentally ‘constitutive of the social world’ (Mueller *et al*., 2013, p. 22).

By generating new accounts, activating and shaping existing accounts, individuals interpret their environment and negotiate daily activities. Accounts allow individuals to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity and construct ordered relationships among sets of entities (e.g. events, people, actions, things) by providing ordered representations of previous unordered external cues (Antaki, 1994; Gergen, 1999; Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis and Lawrence, 2007; Mueller *et al*., 2013; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Weick, 1993; Whittle *et al*., 2014a).

Several organisation studies highlight the connection between accounts and actions, demonstrating that members are not only producing sensible accounts but also acting upon them (Maitlis, 2005; Starbuck and Milliken, 1988; Weick, 1993). Constructing an account of the situation which would facilitate collective transformation is usually seen as a key aspect of organisational sensemaking during organisational change (Bartunek *et al*., 1999; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Observing, collecting and analysing accounts constructed and consumed by research participants allows to explore institutional and interactional contingencies relevant to promoting technological change or resisting it (Mueller *et al*, 2013; Weick, 1995; Whittle *et al.*, 2014a).

Role of the Analyst

The research objectives of the current research, which appreciates organising and ordering practices rather than organisation and stability, require a more reflexive consideration of the 'researcher stance' (Cox and Hassard, 2005). This implies changes in the understanding of the researcher's authority in the study. My position as the researcher in a current study can be described as a 'tentative interpreter' embedded within and dependent on a particular social context (Calas and Smircich, 1999; Chia, 1996; Gergen and Thatchenkery, 1996). Such a shift could be seen as an effort to 'maintain the interpretations and experiences of the informants in the foreground' (Gioia *et al.*, 1994, p. 367), and following ethnomethodological tradition (Garfinkel, 1967) by not treating informants as 'unwitting dupes' (Fairhurst, 2009, p. 1609) but give them back 'their knowledgeability of their own actions' (Boden, 1994, p. 74).

According to Seedhouse (2007, p. 528), 'an etic or analyst's perspective views interaction from outside a system, using procedures and criteria alien to the system. An emic perspective views interaction from the participants' perspective, using the same procedures and criteria as they do.' The current study moves away from an etic analysis which is based on a conceptual frame of references imposed by a researcher and adopts an emic stance in order to understand the participants' frames of reference (Morris *et al.*, 1999; Cox and Hassard, 2005). As Van Maanen (1979, p. 520) highlights, an emic analysis allows researchers to 'move closer to the territory they study . . . by minimizing the use of such artificial distancing mechanisms as analytic labels, abstract hypotheses, and preformulated research strategies.' My methodological choices of the discourse analysis in the framework of the research have been informed by a 'methodological pluralist' position (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992) which tolerates various research traditions being mindful about their compatibility. I also follow ten Have (2004, p. 1) who proposes treating qualitative research methods as 'ways of doing research', 'as heuristic possibilities that need to be adapted to local circumstances and project-specific purposes, if they are to be of any use'.

Ethnomethodologically-informed Discourse Analysis

> ***"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone,***
> ***"it means just what I choose it to mean -- neither more nor less."***
> ***"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words***
> ***mean so many different things."***
> ***"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty,***
> ***"which is to be master - - that's all."***
> *Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass, Chapter VI*

This section aims to explain the methodological procedures that have been undertaken to achieve the research objectives of the study and answer the overarching research question. Firstly, I define what is meant by *Ethnomethodologically-informed Discourse Analysis* (EDA). I will then outline how this approach to discourse analysis is being applied in the framework of my study to examine the sensemaking and sensegiving processes and explain its contribution in conjuncture with related fields of *conversation analysis* (CA) and *membership categorisation analysis* (MCA).

The ethnomethodological canon, which I outlined in the theoretical section of my thesis, allows me methodologically-wise to become closer to the common reality of social life; such as, naturally occurred talk in organisations, and to explore experience of organisational members using methods and empirical techniques informed by the principles of EM. Ethnomethodologically-informed approach to discourse analysis (EDA), a recently developed approach to discourse analysis (Mueller *et al.*, 2013), has been chosen for three main reasons after considering and dismissing other analytic possibilities (e.g. storytelling and narratology as mentioned above in the Chapter 2).

Firstly, it has been taken into account that ethnomethodology has informed some of the core ideas of the sensemaking theory thus providing it with necessary robustness (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992; Gephart, 1993; Weick, 1995). Weick (1995) demonstrates the influence of ethnomethodological tradition on sensemaking thinking by assigning his initial interest in sensemaking to his early 1960s' conversations with Harold Garfinkel and explicitly referring to Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodological study on juries' decision-making when talking about sensemaking accounts in everyday life. However, as Whittle *et al*. (2015, p. 382) observe, EM 'received surprisingly little attention in the mainstream sensemaking literature' with just a few exceptions (e.g. Fairhurst, 2007; Samra-Fredericks, 2010a).

The second reason acknowledges the main challenge of the study in capturing ongoing daily sensemaking and sensegiving of organisational members. At first sight, when assuming that people are making sense of anything, it seems quite an easy task to accomplish as the phenomenon of the study is literally everywhere. However, a word of caution has been given by Weick (1995) who has seen effortless sensemaking as ‘a curse for investigator’ as what is usually seen is sense that has already been made, ‘products’ of sensemaking in Weick’s term, such as stories, rhetorical strategies and others. Given that the main analytical focus of the study is on the actual *making* of sense (emphasis added), ‘process’ rather than ‘product’, applying ethnomethodologically-informed discourse analysis seems a natural choice as it is equipped with analytical instruments that allow performing this analytical task by analysing interpretive procedures of organisational members.

The third reason for applying EDA refers to its ability of noticing and explaining the role of the context. For ethnomethodologists, social contexts are self-organising and driving towards accountability. In Garfinkel’s terms, accountability means that ‘actors are supposed to design their actions in such a way that their sense is clear right away’ (ten Have, 2004, p. 20). From an ethnomethodological perspective social contexts ‘*are sets of methods and the logic of accounting’* (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 119, emphasis in the original). From an EDA perspective, context is something members create and orient to. As Llewellyn and Hindmarsch (2010a, p. 30) point out: ‘The relevant context is achieved in practice…it is amenable to transformation at each moment.’

EDA addresses the call for ‘the detailed analysis of micro-episodes that are located within historically-grounded, longitudinal, in-depth, ethnographically-engaged research’ (Mueller *et al.*, 2013, p. 6). EDA offers a theory and a method which allows to show ‘*how* (emphasis in the original) [the] process of ‘bringing [organisation] into being’ gets done, practically’ (i.e. discursively), ‘by members’ (Whittle *et al.*, 2014a, p. 89). This is a ‘micro approach to discourse analysis’ (Mueller *et al.*, 2013, p. 6) which is informed by the field of ethnomethodology.

Traditions in discourse studies that focus on the detailed organisation of talk-in-interaction pay attention to various interactional methods and procedures that people use in order to make sense of their worlds (e.g. turn-taking, adjacency pairs, membership categories). EDA focuses on interpretive procedures of lay members and considers discourse as the practice of language-use in the form of accounts. From an EDA perspective a meaningful sense of the self and the world is constructed through accounts. According to Psathas (1999), an EM-informed perspective allows to develop understanding of indexical (i.e. context-dependent) connection between talk and setting and their co-constitutive nature, thus from the EDA perspective each text is an account which is a 'part of *situated social practice'* (Mueller *et al.,* 2013, p. 22, emphasis in the original). Taking an ethnomethodologically-informed approach to study organisational discourse allows treating different versions of reality as discursive and socially occasioned productions.

It is fundamental from the EDA perspective that language used by ordinary people is constitutive, and is not simply performing its descriptive function (Mueller *et al.*, 2013; Whittle *et al*., 2014a). The primary analytic focus of EDA is on the situated use of language in the form of spoken or written communication, which is similar to other discourse analytic approaches (e.g. Kwon *et al.*, 2014; Vaara *et al.*, 2010; Vaara and Tienari, 2008). However, EDA differs from these approaches in a way that does not interpret talk and text as 'caused' by social forces that lie outside of the text and operate 'behind the back' of members such as power/knowledge, vested interests, institutional forces, dominant system of thought, and so on' as Whittle *et al*. (2014a, p. 78) explained. For example, in studies informed by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), language-use is interpreted as an outcome of dominant interests of those who hold power in society, thus 'pointing to the forces operating 'outside' the talk or text' (Whittle *et al*., 2014a, p. 88).

EDA also differs from other forms of discourse analysis in its primary commitment to study the first-order practices of members (i.e. 'taken-for-granted 'methods' and 'practical reasoning procedures' (Samra-Fredericks, 2004, p. 202), rather than second-order constructs (e.g. rhetorical strategies, narrative themes, interpretative repertoires, etc.) (Whittle *et al*, 2014a). In other words, ethnomethodologically-informed studies show that social activities 'are themselves already orderly and organised not for analysts, but for members' (Llewellyn, 2010, p. 93). I will explain it referring to coding as the process of categorizing and sorting data which represents a key step in data analysis, and which is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies including discourse-oriented ones (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Saldaña, 2009). The primary aim of coding is making new discoveries and insights about participants, processes or phenomena under investigation by involving set of analytical procedures such as summarizing, condensing, synthesising, categorizing, comparing and examining observations made out of the corpus of data (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2009). The role of coding in qualitative inquiry is seen as providing the link between data and theoretical conceptualization. As it has been pointed out by Strauss (1987, p. 27), the excellence of the qualitative research 'rests in large part on the excellence of coding.' According to Saldaña (2009), analytical coding in qualitative research is primarily an interpretive act which is underpinned by the researcher's ontological and epistemological orientations, applied theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and the choice of the coding method (for example, 'initial coding' (Glaser, 1978). Thus, coding, as Mueller *et al*. (2013) emphasise, demonstrates the sensemaking process of the analyst involved in the task of fitting collected data and theoretical concepts together in order to produce academic constructs of lay member constructs - 'second-order constructs' (Leiter, 1980, p. 152). In contrast, the analytic focus of ethnomethodology is the members' methods for making sense of situations – 'first-order constructs', and, therefore, ethnomethodologists have a critical stance towards a 'coding' process assuming that everyday phenomena are warped when they are examined and represented in the form of abstract social categories (Coulon, 1995; Mueller *et al.*, 2013). As Lynch (2004, cited in Liberman, 2013, p. 6) explains, the aim of EM is not to 'apply concepts', but 'to place oneself in a position' to make discoveries from a site that we do not control.

Analysts working in the tradition of EDA should be attentive to three main things:

a) When, how, and where accounts are made;
b) What the accounts do for members in the contexts of their use in terms of practical consequences of accepting certain accounts;
c) How rival accounts are sorted, sifted and settled by members, with what consequences for those involved (Mueller *et al*., 2013, p. 22).

I am building on the strengths of the EDA which I am using to address limitations of the previous studies on sensemaking, that is - the EDA approach provides a powerful analytic lens for studying the epistemic (world-building) and performative (social action performing) capacity of discourse (Mueller *et al.*, 2013). Leadership actors' accounts therefore are no longer to be 'sorted' into true and false, but rather can be examined for the epistemic and performative work (social action performing) they achieve (Mueller *et al.*, 2013). For example, in the context of the project team meeting, an account given by one of the leaders could be employed to undermine rival accounts, and being widely accepted by other project members it could discredit oppositions to the IT project and thus push the change agenda forward. Adopting the EDA approach allows illuminating the interpretive work of leadership actors, regarding their accounts 'as constitutive of the social world' rather that 'sources of information about it' (Mueller *et al.*, 2013, p.22). In other words, an EDA perspective studies how accounts of leadership actors are used 'to perform social actions within a specific social situation' (Mueller *et al.,* 2013, p.22). Thus, from an EDA perspective, which is focused on the situated social practices, leadership is not a predetermined social fact, but an ongoing, practical accomplishment which is 'brought off' as leadership on a minute-by-minute basis' (Iszatt-White, 2011, p.125) as members (i.e. leadership actors) of the setting 'engage in the reproductive work of producing and intelligible shared social world' (Mueller *et al.*, 2013, p. 25).

Analysis of Categorisational and Sequential Aspects of Talk-in-interaction

According to Hester and Eglin (1997), the studies of membership categorisation are generally characterised by two alternative approaches: decontextualised and ethnomethodological. In the framework of my research, I am using MCA informed by the principles of ethnomethodology. Therefore, I recognise the contextual embeddedness of membership categorisation activities and view categorisation as an activity and a resource for action which 'is achieved and is to be found in the local specifics' (Hester and Eglin, 1997, p. 46).

Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) is a method for analysing interactional and textual practices, which is rooted in ground-breaking works of Harvey Sacks (1974, 1984, 1992), the founder of CA. It also draws upon various themes and resources from ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967). MCA, as a method of analytical enquiry, has been advanced and extended by integrating insights from works of other scholars such as Hester and Eglin (1997), Housley and Fitzgerald (2009), Jayyusi (1984), Lepper (2000), Schegloff (2007), Silverman (1998), Stokoe (2012) and Watson (1978). Broadly speaking, membership categorisation analysis studies how categories are employed in naturally occurring talk and text. As ten Have (2004, p.24) explains, MCA 'offers a useful entrèe to analysis of the social knowledge which people use, expect and rely on in doing the accountable work of living together.' Analytical focus of MCA lies in the empirical, qualitative understanding of membership categories as they are achieved and contested, organised and understood by people in talk and in texts within the practical contexts of social interaction and language use (Garot and Berard, 2010).

Membership categories, as defined by Sacks (1992), are classifications or social types that may be used to describe persons. He highlights their importance by stating that categories store 'a great deal of the knowledge that members of a society have about the society' (Sacks, 1992, pp. 40-41) and therefore they are *inference-rich* (Stokoe, 2006, emphasis in the original). According to Stokoe (2006, p. 282), categories and their '*inferential'* upshots can be '*implied'*, but not overtly stated, by mentioning some category-incumbent features (Stokoe, 2006, emphasis in the original). Being informed by principles of ethnomethodology, MCA, according to Hester and Eglin (1997, p. 25), 'regards categories as indexical expressions, emphasises the local, contextual specificity and the use of categorizations, and sees categorical order as a local accomplishment of the use of categories-in-context.' Sacks (1992) also developed the concept of membership categorisation devices (MCD) defining them as collections of membership categories plus members' rules of application. A classic example of MCD offered by Sacks (1992) includes the categories of 'baby' and 'mommy' that are heard as a collection of 'Members' about whom certain things can be pragmatically understood. For Sacks (1992), collections are 'situated', in other words they are dependent on context. Whittle *et al*. (2015, p. 383) point out that MCD provide 'the ability to 'interpret', 'read', or 'recognise' an action or utterance.

As Lepper (2000, p. 4) explains, MCA is:

> "A systematic analysis of the ways in which classes of persons – membership categories – and their activities – category bound activities – are employed within a 'base environment'- a membership categorisation device – to assemble the 'inference rich', recognisable actions and descriptions which… form the foundation of social order."

According to Sacks (1992), 'category bound activities' are those activities that are expectably and properly done by persons who are the incumbents of particular categories. Other scholars have extended Sacks' thinking on this matter (e.g. Jayyusi (1984), Payne (1976), Watson (1978, 1997). It has been observed, for example, that category-bounded activities are just one class of predicates which 'can conventionally be imputed on the basis of a given membership category' (Watson, 1978, p. 106). Other predicates include rights, entitlements, obligations, knowledge, attributes and competencies. In my study, I follow Whittle *et al.* (2015, p. 383) in their conceptualisation of categories and category predicates as '*flexible linguistic resources*' which emphasises their use 'in linguistic description over their role' (emphasis in the original). Whittle and her colleagues write:

> "Category predicates are not fixed and can be actively 'disrupted' and 'shifted' during periods of organizational change; nor are category predicates necessarily universally shared and accepted. We therefore view category predicates not as fixed properties of particular entities (persons, events, objects, etc.), but rather as perpetually 'in motion' and 'in the making'" (2015, p. 380).

As opposed to conventional sociology which tends to rely on the set of pre-supposed distinctions between macro and micro, culture and action, structure and agency, society and the individual, MCA 'shows their embodied confluence, their mutual incarnation, in

the detail of ‘society’ (Hester and Eglin, 1997, p. 156). Thus, membership categorisation analysis allows observing organisational phenomena from the endogenous orientations of participants and analysing it using a ‘what-the-participants-show-us’ approach rather than bringing in ‘what-the-researcher-knows-first’ (Stokoe, 2012; Wooffitt, 2005).
According to Stokoe (2012), conducting MCA posits certain analytical challenges including difficulties in ‘capturability’ of categorical phenomena and an absence of clear methodological guidance of ‘how to do’ MCA in ethnomethodological literature. Within my research, I have sought to overcome the former by designing a longitudinal study which is presented at the beginning of this section. Being aware of the latter, during my data analysis, I constantly practised doing categorisation analysis in order to develop what Lepper (2000, p. 13) calls a particular ‘analytic attitude’, which requires acquiring ‘the habit of suspending normal intuitive judgement about the meaning of talk, or text, and open up her analytic attention to detail which would normally pass unnoticed.’

Following observation done by Hester and Eglin (1997, p. 2) that ‘both the sequential and categorisational aspects of social interaction inform each other’, and considering that my analytic interest lies in studying leadership interaction as it unfolds ‘*moment by moment*’ (Hindmarsh and Llewellyn, 2010, p. 25) *in situ* and in real time, I also turned my attention to another sub-field of ethnomethodology – conversation analysis (CA). CA shares with MCA an assumption that interactions unfold based on the evolving understandings of the participants (Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 1997, 2007). Therefore, if we are to understand the unfolding process of interaction, we need to set the analytical lens to ‘how the participants *visibly* (emphasis added) make sense of what goes on’ (Larsson and Lundholm, 2013, p. 1107). In contrast to MCA which concerns the use of categories, CA concentrates on the sequential properties of action. Put differently, CA, as a method which directs attention to face-to-face interactions, illuminates the micro-level aspects of the sequential ordering of conversation as an important procedure that people use to make sense of their world (Larsson and Lundholm, 2013). Based on the fundamental assumption that the act of conversation follows a set of interactional rules, procedures and conventions, CA is interested in mechanisms of producing and reproducing social orders (Garfinkel, 1967; Goodwin and Heritage, 1990; Sacks *et al.*, 1974). With my primary research focus on capturing daily, ongoing, effortless sensemaking, I use CA as a source of analytic inspirations considering that from the CA perspective ‘each participant in an interaction makes sense of what has occurred before crafting his or her current contribution’ and thus, sensemaking can be studied as ‘the sequential unfolding of an interaction, turn by turn’ (Larsson and Lundholm, 2013, p.1107).

However, in the framework of my study, I am applying CA with caution (for instance, as I have mentioned above, I am not using the standard Jeffersonian transcription system for conversation analysis in my transcriptions) and borrowing CA instruments that help me to accurately represent a phenomenon under study to a wider research community. With my methodological commitment to explore the first-order practices of members, using CA principles allows me, first and foremost, to maintain standards of accountability of my analytical steps. In every step of my data analysis, I am applying the CA principle of validation by the next turn, which means that I am sensitive to the understanding of the utterance displayed by the hearer, treating each utterance as giving meaning to the previous, while providing a context for the next one. It is the understanding of the hearer, not my interpretations as an analyst, which matters in providing a ‘valid analytic inference about the procedures employed’ (Lepper, 2000, p.175).

I also follow Boden (1994, p.73) in her ethnomethodologically-informed perspective on CA, when she observed that we should not be misled by the name ‘conversation analysis’, because it is also an analysis of ‘*talk-in-interaction*, or, more simply *interaction* analysis’ (emphasis in the original). This particular orientation, as Boden (1994) explains, allows us to observe how social agents draw on resources of the very general conversational turn-taking system and *make* (emphasis added) it work for them to talk and to achieve a wide range of activities including for example, a project team meeting. Thus, while recognising the centrality of turn-taking mechanisms in CA, I am also attentive to the organisational context of interactions, and similar to Boden’s (1994, p.18), my study concerns ‘organisations in the broadest sense exploring the intense interactional settings that animate and advance them.’

Criteria of Quality

The problem facing any qualitative researcher concerns the relevancy, accuracy and other relevant aspects of the data gathered, as there are no agreed universal criteria for evaluating qualitative research in general (Gordon and Patterson, 2013; Seale, 1999). In qualitative research, ‘each time the value and usability of the data would have to be decided on their own terms’ (Ten Have, 2004, p. 181) as it is widely accepted that the conventional criteria of reliability and validity are not relevant to interpretive research (Maitlis, 2005). Evaluation of the quality of the discourse-oriented study poses particular challenges for a discourse analyst in terms of the justification of the quality of the chosen research methodology, because ‘the nature of the discourse analysis makes designing and conducting a discourse analytic study more art than science’ (Phillips and Hardy, 2002, p. 80). In my role as a discourse analyst who is interested in fine-grained analysis of moment-by-moment accomplishment of organisational activities, I subjected my data to repeated analysis as I would like my data to ‘speak to me’, but as ten Have (2004, p. 181) put it, data ‘does not “speak for themselves”; they are materials to be assessed to decide their significance for the story that is being developed.’ Therefore, in the absence of agreed criteria, it is crucial to present arguments supporting evaluation of the particular study in order to demonstrate that the findings presented in this qualitative discourse-oriented study are representative of the phenomenon of interest (Lee, 1999; Maitlis, 2005; Taylor, 2001).

Existing literature on quality in a qualitative research is characterised by competing claims regarding what should be considered as good quality work (Seale, 1999). Several authors (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2005; Tracy, 2010) suggest various criteria to outlining how quality of the qualitative research findings has been achieved by providing particular techniques and showcasing extended examples of actions taken. Some of suggested criteria are grounded in the principles of naturalistic studies. For example, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility of the study can be achieved through ‘prolonged engagement’ at the research site. Another criteria, borrowed from naturalistic studies in social research, is ‘triangulation’, which is based on the widely accepted implicit dominant assumption of moving closer to obtaining a ‘true’ picture of a social phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) ‘developing a more effective method for the capturing and fixing of social phenomena in order to realize a more accurate analysis and explanation’ (Cox and Hassard, 2005, p. 111). Triangulation involves collecting comprehensive, descriptively rich data of an empirical phenomenon from numerous data sources through a variety of methods (Maxwell, 2005; Cox and Hassard, 2005). Academic literature suggests addressing various types of triangulation in a qualitative enquiry such as data triangulation, investigator triangulation, methodological triangulation, theory triangulation (Denzin, 1978) and interdisciplinary triangulation (Janesick, 1994). Furthermore, acknowledging the growing diversity of qualitative methods, Tracy (2010), for example, conceptualises quality in a qualitative research by highlighting eight key markers including worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence. Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest several analytic techniques to validate findings of discourse analysis such as coherence, participants' orientation, new problems, and fruitfulness.

Summarising various approaches which address quality in a qualitative research in general and discourse-oriented research in particular, it might be concluded, using the words of Phillips and Hardy (2002) that creativity and innovation are required for every new discourse analytic study. This study is not concerned with building a generalisable theory and is not seeking to answer cause-and-effect questions about leadership phenomenon. Following the research tradition of discursive leadership scholarship (Fairhurst, 2007), this study regards 'the search for generalizable knowledge as either futile or exceedingly premature' (Fairhurst, 2009, p. 1609). In the framework of my study, I followed the principles of 'thick description' Geertz, 1973), fruitfulness (Potter and Wetherell, 1987), transparency (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002), significant contribution (Tracy, 2010), and ethics, which allow me to make a claim of the quality of the research presented in my thesis. I will address each criterion in turn and discuss ethics in more detail in the next section.

One of the main analytical challenges of the qualitative research is to decide what set of empirical data can be considered as sufficient for theorising purposes. In the framework of this study, this challenge has been addressed on the stage of data collection applying criteria of '*thick description'* (Geertz, 1973) complemented by criteria of '*saturation*' (Kvale, 1994, cited in Ekman, 2010, p. 80). This study drew on such sources of evidence as project documentation, project-related organisation archival records, interviews with project stakeholders, direct observations of project meetings, participant observations of various project-related activities, and project-related artefacts such as personalised web pages. This extensive data collection has got particular value in facilitating ‘transcript extrinsic’ insights in the process of data interpretation (Mueller *et al.*, 2013; Samra-Fredericks, 2004c; Samra-Fredericks, 2010b; Whittle *et al.*, 2014b). I applied criteria of ‘saturation’ when data collected from my extensive observations and interviews was no longer leading me down to observe and discover something dramatically new which can add value in answering my research question.

Fruitfulness of the data analysis can be seen as an additional criterion for the evaluation of a discourse analytic study. Fruitfulness is often seen as usefulness in academic terms such as generating new theories and hypothesis, or providing new insights or novel explanations to existing analysis or situations studied in the previous research (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Seale and Silverman, 1997). In this study I designed, using the words of (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 4), a methodological ‘package’ combining and integrating elements from different discourse analytical perspectives (EDA, CA, MCA) and organisational ethnography with the view that while each of these perspectives provide a different form of knowledge about the phenomenon under the study, together they can generate interesting and thought-provoking insights. Coherence of the suggested methodological framework has been achieved by careful and serious assessment of the compatibility of these perspectives and possibility to integrate knowledge that each approach can supply in one empirical study.

Transparency is addressed on the stage of writing and presenting my thesis, which, according to Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 172) ‘constitutes part of the validation procedures itself.’ By providing an ample representative set of examples from the empirical material and detailed accounts of my interpretations (as in Chapters 5, 6 and 7), I connected my analytical claims with specific extracts from my data and specific lines in my transcripts selected to be included in my thesis. I tried to avoid what Sheep (2006, p. 79) calls ‘illustrative ornaments of an abstracted, researcher-produced story,’ and made an endeavour to provide enough examples of the data, including transcripts of meetings and interviews complemented with ethnographic notes where necessary to make it clear ‘how the data is telling the story’ (Sheep, 2006, p. 79). In doing so, I offer the possibility to a reader to form his/her own impression of the study; I also invite him/her to use these examples to engage in analytical dialogue by evaluating the steps of my data analysis.

In practical terms, criteria of *significant contribution* might be addressed by appreciation that ‘whatever [researchers] do, results must be *interesting* to someone’, as

Phillips and Hardy (2002, p.81, emphasis in the original) explained. Following this piece of advice, I conducted my study by keeping two audiences in mind in terms of applicability of the knowledge obtained through my research results: the academic community and the ‘real world’ outside the academia. While the primary aim of my study is to contribute to the field of management and organisation studies, I also considered possibilities to extend the research discussion developed in my thesis in a way that might be relevant to professionals in the world of practice. This will be discussed in more detail in the section on research implications in Chapter 8.

Ethics

The research process in the framework of this study has been conducted with full approval from the project gatekeepers which has been obtained prior to data. While carrying out the research, I was open, honest and transparent about the purpose of my research with project stakeholders. I appreciated their right to know about the aims and intent of my research, the nature of data collection, how the results of my research will be utilised in research products and disseminated to the research/professional communities. Therefore, every individual involved in the research process has received a Research Participant Information Sheet which provided sufficient details about my study (Appendix C).

The complexity of the fieldwork and challenges in getting access to the variety of empirical material have been taken into careful consideration while making ethical choices in the conduct of the study. A set of ethical criteria addressed in the research process was based on a framework provided by the American Anthropological Association (AAA Code of Ethics) and Ethical Guidelines of Social Research Association (SRA Code of Ethics). Primary ethical obligations to the participants that have been taken into account preventing them against unwanted exposure include privacy, anonymity and confidentiality (AAA Code of Ethics, SRA Code of Ethics).

As a social researcher, I was aware that one of the likely sources of harm in social sciences is the disclosure of private knowledge (Punch, 2005). Therefore, the right of the participants to remain anonymous has been promised explicitly at the beginning of research (Research Participant Information Sheet –Appendix C) and has been respected during the process of conducting the study (Statement of Informed Consent for Interview – Appendix D). Participants' anonymity has been addressed by using pseudonyms and changing the name of the University and other identifying features in the field notes and the final version of the thesis. It has been also explained to the participants that despite the effort of the researcher to protect their privacy, anonymity might be unintentionally compromised. For example, participants might be identifiable through comments they made, or disguised organisation and location might be recognised by insiders.

Consonant with the ethical principle of confidentiality, all participants have got the right to say things ‘off the record’ during the recording process of interviews and meetings. These ‘off the record’ statements have never been written down in the field notes. Participants have also been assured that these statements would never appear in the final version of the interviews’ and meetings’ transcriptions.

During the process of meetings’ observations, the informed consent has been continuously negotiated with participants. Before every meeting, I checked that project team members were aware that the meeting will be tape-recorded. This process has been guided by the ethical principal that emphasises the importance of the quality of the consent rather than its format, and thus suggesting that the informed consent does not necessarily require a written and signed form (AAA Code of Ethics).

Guided by principle of not exploiting participants for personal gain in the process of my fieldwork, I have explored the ways in which my study could be useful to the participants. For example, on the basis of my interview data, I wrote a report that has been presented to all members of the project team and to senior management of the University. As ‘a fair return’ to the project team members, I have also been involved in the testing of personalised web pages and provided my feedback on this testing during one of the project meetings. The summary of the thesis will be available to research participants after the completion and submission of the thesis.

Conclusion of Chapter 4

Following the methodological aim of the study, this section provides an overview of the research design chosen for conducting an ethnomethodologically informed and discursively sensitive field study (Fairhurst, 2007; Mueller *et al*., 2013; Whittle *et al*., 2015). In this section, I have provided an overview of the fieldwork that has been carried out in order to achieve the main aim of the research project - to explore the '*daily doing'* of leadership *in situ* and in real time. I have described methods of data collection which involved a long-time engagement with the research setting (the Northern University) and included such methods of data collection as semi-structured interviews, participant and nonparticipant observations and ethnographic components. In order to conduct what Larsson and Lundholm (2013, p. 1103) called an 'advantageous' study of leadership as an interpersonal accomplishment, I have offered a methodological 'package' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 4) - a range of interpretive approaches selected for analysis of naturally occurring talk - which was informed by EDA, MCA, CA and organisational ethnography. I have demonstrated that these methods can be utilised within one study providing a rich analytic insights about the phenomenon under study. I have also acknowledged the research limitations and discussed ethical considerations that have been taken into consideration in the framework of this research. In the next chapter, three issues, extracted from my data, will be elaborated in greater detail in order to illustrate how the suggested methodological approach allows examining the '*doing of leading*' in daily interactions of leadership actors in the process of technological change.

Part III. Stories of Change

> ***"… and hopefully we might be getting to this point now where everyone knows what they are talking about…"***
> *Fiona, CRM Project Manager*

Introducing Context - Student Recruitment CRM Campaigns Project

After months of conducting interviews, observations of project meetings and exploring documentation related to the CRM project in the Northern University, I have made an endeavour to develop a set of analytical tools that can help me carrying out my research. The data that I have collected is very rich, messy and subjective. It has captured a complex and vibrating environment of my fieldwork including a variety of project stakeholders' views and perspectives, as well as their complex interplay with contextual information. Trying to address the richness of the analytical possibilities provided by my fieldwork and collected data, and at the same time acknowledging the limitations of various strands of the discourse analysis, I looked for a range of interpretive methodological approaches (including EDA, CA, MCA and organisational ethnography) that would enable me to answer my research question. In other words, my aim was to concentrate on data analysis that can take in account context, people and their interactions. At this juncture, before moving further to discussion of the results of my data analysis, I contextualise my study, introducing the setting where my data collection took place.

Addressing an increasing trend to personalised information in the higher education sector, many Universities in the UK have started implementing tailored CRM marketing campaigns which enable them to provide professional and coordinated approach to communications with undergraduate and postgraduate enquires and applicants. In the Northern University, which has been chosen as a research site for my study, implementation of a new Student Recruitment CRM campaigns system has been conceived as a part of the University CRM Strategic Framework. This Framework represents a University-wide approach to CRM marketing which is coherent, coordinated, appropriately-managed and efficient. According to the CRM project documents, CRM is defined as the development, maintenance and management of an effective and productive relationship with potential and actual customers (i.e. the entire spectrum of relationship between the University and the current and prospective students and other customers including letters, e-mails, visit days, phone calls, etc.) which is vital for student recruitment and other external business interactions. As the project-related documents suggest, it has been recognised by the CRM Strategy group that the use of appropriate technology, such as a computerised CRM system to support clearly-defined business processes, is critical to CRM implementation and impact. The aim of the Student Recruitment CRM Campaigns project, as it is stated in the project documents, is to purchase an external CRM system - a bespoke global market-leading CRM Product (further 'H-CRM') to support University marketing campaigns in order to optimise the recruitment, conversion and admission of high quality students. The Student Recruitment CRM Campaigns Project oversees the implementation of a University-wide integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) business processes and software for further improving of University communications with prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students, from enquiry to registration.

The analysis which follows is based on the data collected during observations of the Student Recruitment CRM Campaigns Project team meetings that have taken place in the period April 2010 - January 2011. My longitudinal research engagement with the research site allowed me to observe project team meetings which were regular (normally once a month), scheduled meetings with a formalised agenda which had been distributed prior to every meeting. The CRM project team meetings are particularly interesting empirical settings as they represent the unique mix of strategists, middle managers, and other project stakeholders. The project team consisted of a core group of CRM users (as defined in the project documents) who had to attend every meeting, and other members representing a heterogeneous group of project stakeholders across the University, including marketing managers of the faculties, pilot schools' representatives, recruitment and admission managers from the University Department of Admissions and Marketing (DAMA). Some of these stakeholders attended meetings only when they had specific expertise relating to the meeting's agenda; others attended meetings when they can add value to the work being discussed. Therefore, the number of participants varied from meeting to meeting.

Researcher's Notes

In this part of my thesis, the data analysis will be presented in three vignettes: 'Hunting the Deer', 'I Wear not Motley in my Brain' and 'Queen to Play'. At this point, I would like to provide a brief explanation to the chosen titles of the vignettes and smaller extracts from project team interactions that I called 'scenes'. First and foremost, the given titles are my own 'brainchildren' created by my imaginary work through my data analysis process. They are, in a sense, 'second order constructs' that help me to frame the situation metaphorically and to tell a story of organisational change describing and explaining the 'first order' - lived experiences of organisational members (Cornelissen *et al.*, 2008; Van Maanen, 1979). Of course, these titles are by no means representing project team members' constructs. Secondly, as I mentioned previously in the methodological section, through the process of data analysis I gave priority to constant reading and re-reading of chosen episodes as I wanted my data 'to speak' to me. I made my reading by zooming in and immersing in the pragmatic details of conversations as well as zooming out in order to explore interpretive procedures of the members, to see the overall patterns and sense the overall dynamics of the episodes unfolding over time. The titles that have been given to each empirical chapter are the results of creative insights that have been stimulated by my constant communication with data in this way. Metaphors that I use to tell stories of leading change in my thesis go in contrast with metaphors of leadership that can be found in exciting leadership literature as I tried to avoid using such clichés as 'hero', 'gardener' or 'commander' and others; what Alvesson and Spicer (2011, p. 49) call, 'typically celebratory metaphors'. I use different metaphors instead: Hunter (discursive leadership in Vignette 1), Jester (discursive leadership in Vignette 2), and Grossmeister (discursive leadership in Vignette 3). Each of these metaphors has been identified by exploring how leadership was actually being discursively exercised in real life and in real time. My hope is this that using a metaphorical language will help my audiences to communicate better with my findings and unveil some thought-provoking insights about leadership.

To be consistent and systematic in my analysis, I used 'a set of keys' informed by ethnomethodology:

- I treated data collected in the project meetings as accounts;
- I looked for membership categorisation work within the interaction and within accounts;

- I aimed at finding a version of worlds ('social facts') that were talked about in the interaction, in the accounts, and in the membership categorisation work (Baker, 2001, p. 778).

By turning each of these keys, I was able to get access to and explicate the sensemaking accomplishments of project team members, and thus to answer my research question. Although I have organised the following chapters in line with the overall structure of the thesis, the three chapters that follow will be presented in a form of writing which is 'rhythmically' different from the other sections of the thesis. Rather than strictly following specific terminology of ethnomethodology, MCA and CA, I will provide a reading of the data in less technical ethnomethodological terms. In a sense, it might be considered as bringing in what can be called using the language of music, a 'dissonant harmony' as I am taking risks to show the nitty-gritty details of the analytic process as it unfolds using lay language, whereby various insights, discoveries, conclusions are 'laminated' (Boden, 1994) with each round of re-reading when the data was either confirming or contradicting previous findings and insights. However, borrowing inspiration from Stravinsky's ballet music and bringing 'dissonant harmony' to my writing does not imply that the analysis presented is chaotic and not focused, thus compromising the quality of the analysis. It is brought in as it allows one to make a special point, or, by using words of one of my favourite painters Hundertwasser (1990), 'to take a long brush and paint … outside within' the reach of a strict canon of academic writing and presentation, so that it will be visible that 'doing' discourse analysis is not a straightforward and linear process, and it takes lots of effort to slowly tease out significant analytical points by unlocking stories that kept a low key in the collected data. To the extent that my readers could have compromised my aptness, I ask for sympathy with the intention behind it.

In my study, I follow the principle of 'ethnomethodology's willingness' (Iszatt-White, 2011) to accept whatever data my research setting offers and develop my analytical insights from a variety of sources including transcript extrinsic data such as the meeting minutes. The meeting minutes' excerpts which accompany a discussion of each chosen episode are used as 'organisational fingerprints' (Deppermann *et al.*, 2010, p. 1702) of the face-to-face interactions. They enabled me, using words of Samra-Fredericks (2010a, p.2149), to get access 'to a "store" of background knowledge' available to the project team and to inform my efforts 'to understand what is going on and to interpret the utterances and nuanced meaning making.' Moreover, being the form of an internal written communication, the meeting minutes, in a sense, allow demonstrating that the organising process ‘stretches beyond the boundaries of the interaction as such’ (Larsson and Lundholm, 2013, p. 1119).

All the meeting minutes were circulated among the project team members after the meeting, so they could amend the document and/or add missing information they considered important. Thus, the minutes of the meetings offer additional evidence that the issues chosen for analysis have been recognised as important by the project team members themselves and discursive encounters observed in the transcripts are related to organisationally relevant goals and organisationally important outcomes. Future project team activities were carried out with the reference to action points written in the meeting minutes, therefore this organisational document might be considered as the project team’s ‘resource for action’ (Svennevig, 2012a). It allowed leadership actors to manage the progression of the change initiative by making the project team members accountable for tasks specified in the meeting minutes’ records in ways that were interactionally visible in the project team meetings.

The meeting minutes also demonstrate ‘the interplay between written documents and talk-in-interaction’ (Svennevig, 2012a, p. 64). For example, sometimes the ‘emergent interactional state of affairs’ (Deppermann *et al.*, 2010) observable in the transcript differs from the state of affairs recorded in a written form. However, in-depth analysis of the relationship between the meeting minutes and the project team actions and conversations in its own right, as well as the discussions about the contingent and situated accomplishment of the meeting minutes are beyond the scope of this thesis as the main analytical focus of the current study is spoken interaction.

Chapter 5 Vignette 1 ‘Hunting the Deer’

Preamble

According to the project documentation, implementation of the UG Core communications plan should structure and facilitate the distribution of standardising and centralising the elements of communications with prospective UG students across the University. As Sharleen (Project Director) explained during one of the meetings (Meeting M4/25-13/07/2010, lines 661-663):

> “…the whole point of the core campaign… that it is core and everybody receives a base level of information.”

Ethnographic data revealed that the process of introducing the UG Core Communications Plan and the launching of the ‘UCAS Acknowledgement e-mail campaign’ was supervised by Fiona centrally and by the Faculty marketing teams locally. According to Fiona’s presentation delivered on one of the project team meetings, the new H-CRM generated e-mail was designed in line with the new IS system to replicate the letter sent out by the central admission team acknowledging a UCAS application form arriving at the University before it is sent out to the Schools. During the initial discussions between the project team members, it had been suggested that the process of inclusion/exclusion of UG courses would be similar to the centralised PG Communication campaign comprising, for example, occasional students and Erasmus-type students. However, several Schools and courses decided to opt-out from receiving the UCAS acknowledgement letter for UG applicants for various reasons. This decision triggered the project team’s discussion about the possibility of including/excluding certain University schools and courses in the UCAS acknowledgement e-mail campaign.

As my ethnographic observations suggest, the admission process which existed at that time in the Northern University could be characterised as a high level of autonomy of the Schools and courses in their communications with prospective students. This had also become evident from the interviews with the project team members. For instance, some of the schools, for example, the School of Chemical Engineering in Faculty B, had a vast range of electronic and hard copy letters that they developed by themselves and sent out by themselves to the prospective students at different stages of the application process. As Fiona (Project Manager) mentioned in her interview:

> "…they are very proud of their system and although they consider the benefits of the H-CRM [i.e. new system – GG], they are not prepared to just throw it in using the new system while the old one is proven… I think that is fair enough… We have to show them the benefits of the system."

The series of selected interactional episodes that follow demonstrates the process of resolving the issue with excluded courses in the project team meetings. I call this collection of episodes 'Hunting the Deer' and present them chronologically as they unfolded in real time.

Episode 1 Anticipating and Deflecting Resistance to Technological Change

The extracts discussed in this section are taken from the project team meeting in April 2010 (coded as M1/21 – 07/04/2010 for the purpose of the data analysis). For analytical purposes, this episode is broken into shorter fragments that I called 'scenes' in order to structure my narrative in a coherent way and helping the reader to navigate through the chapter. They should be read sequentially using the line numbers provided. Line numbers in each extract reflect the position of the interactional episode in the transcription of the meeting. There are thirteen project team members who were present at this meeting (see Table 3Table 3). Speakers in the chosen episode (and in other episodes throughout the data analysis chapter) are highlighted in the table with asterisks.

Table 3 Participants of the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

	Participants of the project meeting		Speakers in Episode 1
1	Sharleen	Project Director, DAMA	*
2	Fiona	Project Manager, DAMA	*
3	Audrey	DAMA	*
4	Amanda	DAMA	
5	Catherine	DAMA	
6	Hannah	Faculty A	*
7	Anastasia	Faculty B	*
8	Agnes	Faculty B	
9	Harriet	Pilot School 1	*
10	Linda	Faculty B	
11	Doris	IO	
12	Chloe	DAMA	
13	Sean	DAMA	

Scene 1 Opening of the hunting season

Table 4 Episode 1 Extract 1 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

325	Sharleen:	UCAS Acknowledgement?
326	Fiona:	Yes, okay. Cast your minds back to last time we were
327		talking about the undergraduate core communications and one
328		of the first e-mails that would be sent out to applicants to the
329		University, undergraduates, would be an acknowledgement of
330		their UCAS application form arriving at Northern University.
331		So this was before anyone in an admissions office or School
332		had looked at the form to make a decision on whether to give
333		them an offer or not.

The episode begins with Sharleen's opening question "UCAS Acknowledgement?" (Line 325) which is heard as a 'unilateral announcement' (Svennevig, 2012a) of the agenda point [source: field notes]. By announcing 'UCAS acknowledgement', Sharleen is creating a sense of the current situation by framing the issue for the discussion. She focuses the conversation on the particular topic and maintains topical coherence by following the meeting agenda. She also occupies the omni-relevant membership category (Fairhurst, 2007) 'team meeting chair'. By introducing this question, Sharleen creates a common frame of reference that has been widely described in organisation studies' literature (Asmuß and Svennevig, 2009; Svennevig, 2012a; Boden, 1994) in terms of opening a discussion in a meeting, ensuring a progression of the topic and enabling participants of the meeting to take the next turn. This short form of the opening

of the discussion also suggests that ‘UCAS acknowledgement’ has already become a recognisable cluster of words (Handford, 2010) that allows Sharleen to steer the meeting activities in a way which is recognisable by project team members.
The introduction of the topic for discussion is followed by a confirmation token from Fiona “Yes, okay.” (Line 326), accepting the allocation of the turn. This suggests a shared understanding about what is to be started (i.e. discussion about the UCAS acknowledgement e-mail campaign), and who has the right to start the discussion (i.e. Fiona) as well as the reasons for starting (i.e. invitation for a discussion in the form of a question) without these being explicitly stated by the meeting chair. This, in turn, might be heard in a way that this is not the first time when this issue has been discussed, and participants have been in the similar situation before. Thus, Sharleen as the chair of the meeting enacts discursive leadership by invoking the agenda (Svennevig, 2012a; Boden, 1994) and mobilising the participants’ attention around a ‘known-in-advance’ topic.

Topic progression has been supported by Fiona, who takes turn and displays an orientation to the agenda by producing a narrative account (Lines 326-333), a recap, which is aimed at a particular group of listeners – the project team members – setting the scene for the current activity, i.e. discussion about the UCAS acknowledgement e-mail. In the first utterance, she indicates that the discussion which follows will be related to another discussion that took place in the previous meeting (Lines 326 - 330). She refers retrospectively to the “last time” (Line 326) when the project team discussed “undergraduate core communications” (Line 327). Thus, Fiona provides a brief overview of events as they occurred during the previous joint experience shared by the project team members. From my ethnographic data, I know that in the previous meeting the undergraduate core communications were discussed during Fiona’s presentation of the UG communication plan for prospective undergraduate students [source: field notes].

At this point, it is necessary to provide a brief description of this UG communication plan extracted from my ethnographic data, due to the significance of this document for the analysis. According to Fiona’s presentation, the UG communication plan for prospective undergraduate students is designed as a series of communications between the University and the prospective students which is based on the existing University recruitment cycle. This series of communications has got four levels: University level, contractual information/administrative correspondence, faculty/school-specific correspondence and ad-hoc communications. The University level labelled as ‘*Core*

Communication' comprises of the following communications with applicants: visiting the University, an invitation to country visits, UCAS application acknowledgement, pre-arrival information, international handbook, confirmation and clearing information, decliners' survey. Project documentation suggests that labelling the University-level communications as '*Core Communication*' is supposed to transmit the message of '*One University*' across Faculties and Schools by focusing on the students' recruitment communications that have to be consistent and coherent. This idea has been broadly presented in Fiona's interview account when she mentioned:

> "The key thing is to make sure that our communications to […] students are coherent, consistent, that they look like coming from the one University… in a nutshell, it is about giving the appearance of the one University while engaging with students… and all our communications are there for a purpose… and are consistent and coherent."

The message of '*One University*' also delivers information that communications labelled as '*Core*' will be performed centrally on behalf of the University and that they are delegated to the new IS system – H-CRM students recruitment system (further H-CRM). For example, it has been envisaged that the UCAS Acknowledgement e-mail should replicate the letter sent out manually by the central admission team which acknowledges a UCAS application form arriving at the University before it is sent out to Schools. The UCAS acknowledgement e-mail thus has been designed as a new ICT medium for communicating with University applicants, which admission staff in the Schools should integrate in their recruitment practices according to the UG communication plan.

The two discourses – a student recruitment discourse and a technology discourse - have been invoked and intertwined through membership categorisation work in Fiona's account. The student recruitment discourse is demonstrated by Fiona's knowledge of 'typified' organisational categories (Samra-Fredericks, 2003) relevant to student recruitment and admission process, which are presented using the simple and routine selection of words and lexemes such as "the University" (Line 329), "undergraduates" (Line 329), "UCAS application form" (Line 330), "admissions office" (Line 331), "an offer" (Line 333). The technology is enrolled discursively by Fiona's reference to "Undergraduate Core Communications" (Line 327) and "e-mails" (Line 328). The lens of MCA used to observe Fiona's first two utterances allows noticing a membership category device (MCD) of University recruitment, which is implicitly evoked by the Standardized Relational Pair (SRP): “applicants” (Line 328) – “anyone in an admissions office or School” (i.e. admissions staff - Line 331). This membership categorisation device displays these two elements that typically go together when we are talking about the process of student recruitment to the University. Fiona also briefly summarises the process of admissions using category bound activities (CBAs) (Sacks, 1992) or category predicates (Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002; Fairhurst, 2007). She does so by mentioning the admissions staff, as category incumbents with a normatively expected set of responsibilities and duties, who look at the application form and make the decision of giving or not giving an offer to potential applicants (Lines 332-333).

In this episode, Fiona enacts discursive leadership by framing a situation in a recognisable way for the project team members by using ‘typified’ (Samra-Fredericks, 2003) membership categories, which signal shared elements of knowledge existing within the project team. Thus, Fiona does not ‘simply describe’ reality but ‘gives form’ to reality (Clifton, 2006) contributing to the evolving organising process. Her followership is displayed by active co-construction of the stepwise elaboration on the topic announced by the chair of the meeting.

Scene 2 Spotting a deer and choosing a weapon

Table 5 Episode 1 Extract 2 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

333	Anastasia would like the project to give
334	her a steer with a stick that she can use within her Schools to
335	say, ‘Do we agree that- Do I carry on? (Laughter) Do we
336	agree this acknowledgement of the UCAS application form
337	should be across the board, all Schools and all courses?’ So, do
338	we agree that all Schools and all courses should receive this
339	UCAS acknowledgement letter? And Anastasia wants to be
340	able to say to a School, ‘It's been agreed by the project that
341	everyone should have this UCAS acknowledgement letter. It's
342	not an opt-out unless there is a really genuine reason like
343	Hong Kong, Naval Architecture or PwC but otherwise, for
344	example, Chemistry, Computing Science, there isn't really a
345	reason why they shouldn't have this e-mail.’ So Anastasia wants
346	us sort of to say ‘Yes’.

After making the introduction in the form of a retrospectively framed account (Lines 326-333), Fiona makes a reference to Anastasia (Faculty B marketing manager) using a metaphorical expression “Anastasia would like the project to give her a steer with a stick that she can use within her Schools” (Lines 333-334). As Samra-Fredericks (2000, p.251) explains, the conversation that happened outside the meeting has found its ‘way back to the formal arena’ of the project meeting in the form of ‘reported speech’. Thus, a conversation that happened between Fiona and Anastasia outside the meeting is deemed to be significant. In other words, Fiona, as a project manager, recognises the existence of the problem (i.e. resistance at the School level) which needs to be discussed by the project team.

Furthermore, as it has been explained above, the UG communication plan has been designed to deliver an idea of ‘*One University*’ through the message of centralisation and uniformity of core recruitment communications across Faculties and Schools. Once agreed by the project team members, the UG communication plan compels other organisational members (i.e. Faculties and Schools admission personnel) to certain behaviour. In this sense, the UG communication plan can be described as a ‘textual agent’ (Cooren, 2004, p. 374) which ‘actually does something’ (Ashcraft *et al.*, 2009, p. 36) as it entails the potential of making a difference (Latour, 2005) and can be mobilised towards particular situational effects (Ashcraft *et al*., 2009) such as a required form of coercion forced by the process of standardising and centralising. However, in Fiona’s utterance (Lines 333-334) it can be heard that the compliance with this anticipated behaviour (i.e. the project team’s expectation of how the new H-CRM system should operate) was unsuccessful in some of the Schools in Faculty B, as Anastasia, the Faculty B marketing manager, has some difficulties in securing acceptance of the Core Communications in her Schools. Therefore, she needs a legitimate source of power - “a steer with a stick” (Lines 333-334) - to ensure this compliance.

In this utterance, Fiona is using a metaphorical expression ‘a steer with a stick’, to signal about ‘spotting’ a problem in some of the Schools. She does not describe any of the particular details of the issue raised by Anastasia, thus leaving it for further interpretations of the project team members. In line with the discursive view of metaphors (Cornelissen *et al*., 2008; 2011), it can be seen how Fiona employs this metaphorical expression in her account in order to ‘manage’ her interests in leadership interaction. If we are to explain the metaphor of a ‘stick’ using common sense, then we can refer to a well-known adage of ‘carrot and stick’, where a carrot works well to motivate, and a stick means a method of coercion by using a threat of punishment. Framing Anastasia’s request in this way, Fiona provides a locally specific ‘intelligible formulation’ (Shotter and Cunliffe, 2003, p.20). In other words, she is establishing a ‘social fact’: there are some Schools across the University that are resisting the proposed course of change (i.e. the new H-CRM system). Thus, Fiona is seeking support from the project team to legitimise a way of using, metaphorically speaking, ‘a weapon’ (i.e. - ‘a stick’) when dealing with the resisting Schools.

At this point, it is important to refer to the additional information from the interview data about the usage of the new system for recruitment practices across the University. In her interview, Fiona points out that there are three Faculties of the University that have “slightly different” approaches in their engagement with the H-CRM project. For example, she explained that Faculty B with the central recruitment team was engaging with the Schools in a quite prescriptive way. They were doing it centrally by accumulating all Schools’ communication into a Faculty plan. Faculty A, in contrast, has started by “picking” several proactive Schools that have already got a “sort of CRM activities” by using the system that they have in place. Regarding Faculty C, Fiona mentioned:

> “… I feel for a while that […] they are not behind, but they are not engaging so much with the project but they are starting to now agreeing … courses or areas of the project that they will get involved in. The areas of the project I mean at the moment are e-mail campaigns and also setting PGs personalised web-pages….”

This background information might, perhaps, help to shed some light why Fiona speaks for Anastasia in this extract (Line 333 and 339). This fact of speaking for Anastasia might be seen as having a local interactive meaning signalling a sense of solidarity in terms of having allies in the process of transferring the message of ‘*One University*’ across Faculties and Schools. For example, Shiffrin (1993, p. 234) pointed out that speaking for someone means ‘sharing so much’ that it is possible to take someone’s position in conversation. At the same time, speaking for Anastasia might be heard as Fiona’s anticipation of resistance not only from the Faculty B Schools but as something likely to occur on a bigger scale. Interestingly, however, she uses Anastasia’s voice to distance herself from the proposition of using ‘a stick’. In other words, Fiona starts

claiming the necessity to exercise power, but in such a way that her formulation might be potentially heard as not being what she wants personally.
In her attempt at providing an intelligible formulation of the situation, Fiona is heard as invoking a certain category predicate (Housley and Fitzgerald, 2009; Larsson and Lundholm, 2013; Whittle *et al.,* 2015) when needing “a steer with a stick” (Line 334) is associated with the particular collective category ‘Schools in Faculty B’. Fiona frames the issue referring to some ‘Schools from Faculty B’ in a way that might be heard as a threat to proposed change initiatives. Thus, it explains why ‘a stick’ (rather than ‘a carrot’) is required in order to achieve compliance with new University recruitment standards. At the same time, Fiona is characterising the project team as an incumbent of a category that possesses a legitimate power that can be used against the resisting schools locally to avoid that threat (Lines 333-334, Lines 345-346).

The anticipation of the bigger scale of resistance might be heard in Fiona’s question in lines 335-339. Even though there is no explicit indication of broad project goals in her account, Fiona artfully connects the local organisational interests of Anastasia, by animating her account, to the overall interest of the project by using phrases such as “the UCAS application form should be across the board” (Lines 336-337) and “all schools and all courses should receive this […] letter” (Lines 338-339). Thus, Fiona is framing a technological change as the process which requires coercive forms of control to ensure compliance across the University. This might be potentially heard as anticipating local resistance not only from Schools in Faculty B but from other Schools as well. In doing so, Fiona invokes a discourse of centralisation and uniformity which she emphasises by reformulating and repeating her question several times using words and lexemes such as “across the board” (Line 336), “all schools and all courses” (Line 337), “everyone” (Line 341).

The three-part repetition of “do we agree” (Lines 335, 336, 337) signals that Fiona wants to make a special point. For instance, Atkinson (cited in Antaki, 1994, p.133) recognises the three-part listing activity as a powerful rhetorical tool of persuasion. Fiona continues categorisation work by attributing predicates such as “it’s not an opt-out” (Lines 341-342) and having “a really genuine reason” for not receiving a UCAS acknowledgement letter (Lines 344-345) to certain Schools and courses. Based on her knowledge and expertise, Fiona is attempting membership categorisation work by creating a ‘demarcative set’ of logically exclusive categories (Jayyusi, 1984, p.125). This is heard when Fiona presents certain Schools and courses as ones that have “a really genuine reason" (Lines 343-344), contrary to other Schools and courses that have no "reason" (Lines 344-345) to be excluded from the UCAS acknowledgement e-mail campaign. This set has several significant features as it involves locally occasioned collectivity categorisations which are temporary and context embedded (Jayyusi, 1984). In other words, by making an attempt to suggest which Schools and courses have a legitimate reason to opt-out and which do not have such a reason, Fiona is heard to be evaluating the legitimacy of local resistance. By listing certain courses such as "Hong Kong, Naval Architecture or PwC" (Line 343) and Schools such as "Chemistry and Computing" (Line 344) Fiona is being heard as doing 'itemisation' (Jayyusi, 1984, p.83) or, in other words, identifying which particular schools require 'a stick'. The upshot is that Fiona's categorisation work has resulted in creating a temporary collective category of 'Schools needing a certain form of coercion to ensure compliance with the new e-recruitment practices'. This temporary event-specific (i.e. introduction of the UCAS acknowledgement letter) category has been invoked within a specific time period (i.e. new H-CRM system implementation) and on a particular occasion (i.e. project team meeting). It acts as a 'framing device' (Fairhurst, 2007, Whittle *et al.*, 2015) enabling the project team members to better understand existing problem (i.e. local resistance) related to the new H-CRM system implementation.

To sum up, in this episode Fiona enacts discursive leadership by framing the situation around certain Schools (Faculty B) as a 'threat' to change initiatives. By attributing predicates of not having a legitimate 'reason' for opting out of the core e-mail campaigns Fiona accomplishes the discursive task of transforming a category of 'Schools in Faculty B' to a temporary, more controversial one, in order to de-legitimate their current position. She uses the metaphor of 'a stick' to frame the technological change in a way which requires a certain form of coercion. In so doing, Fiona discursively constructs a legitimate mean to exercise power against anticipated local resistance.

Scene 3 Scouting hunting areas

Table 6 Episode 1 Extract 3 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

347 Sharleen: At the moment, the situation is that Karen’s team
348 sends out an e-mail that is generated manually, to almost all
349 courses. There aren't actually that many that opt out now. So I
350 think we want to very strongly recommend. Should we say?
351 Okay, we're doing that.
352 Audrey: Well it's already happening, really.
353 Sharleen: I'm just trying to think of the list of exclusions, but I
354 know Chemistry weren't. I think Computing Science might,
355 they might have their own, and Law might be another one. But
356 we've got the list of who they are and I suggest that we'll pick
357 them off individually.
358 Fiona: Medicine, for example, was one, but they are not going
359 to, they opt out.
360 Sharleen: If they want to say something slightly different, of
361 course we have got dynamic e-mail so whatever they say now,
362 we can say-

Sharleen’s account that follows, after she initiates the turn at lines 347-349, might be heard as inviting project members not to interpret “a steer with a stick” (Line 334) as something that is wrong doing. Sharleen accomplishes this by referring to the current situation with the UCAS acknowledgment e-mail, starting her account with “at the moment” (Line 347), explaining further that “the situation is that Karen’s team sends out an e-mail that is generated manually to almost all courses” (Lines 347-349). In this account, Sharleen demonstrates her knowledge of the existing ways of practising recruitment communications by mentioning and incorporating certain aspects and elements of these practices, including “Karen’s team” (Line 347) and “an e-mail” (Line 348) which this team is generating “manually” (Line 348). A category predicate “opt-out”, which Sharleen uses in Line 349, has got analytical significance for analysis because it contributes to the categorisation work started by Fiona. ‘Opt-out’ as a verb might be heard as a predicate suggesting that currently certain Schools have got an option of receiving or not receiving the UCAS acknowledgement e-mail.

Another significant element in Sharleen’s account which might be heard as evaluation of the problem - or ‘scoping’- is the statement “there aren’t actually that many” (Line 349), referring to Schools that the project team needs to deal with. This is heard as

Sharleen’s attempt of re-framing Fiona’s request as achievable. After providing her assessment of Fiona’s request, Sharleen suggests a course of action that she initially presents as merely a personal opinion, in terms of “I think” (Lines 349-350). However, she continues her turn by using the collective pronoun “we” (Line 350), thus, turning herself into a spokesperson for the project team as a whole. In line 350 “we want to very strongly recommend”, Sharleen formulates a proposed course of action framing it as a strong recommendation for those Schools that resist the change process without having a legitimate reason to do so. This utterance displays Sharleen’s hierarchical position in the project team meeting as she formulates a decision on behalf of the project team followed by an explicit request for action, in the form of a closed question: “Should we say?” (Line 350). This question might be heard as an attempt at putting forward the idea for acceptance or rejection by the project team as well as inviting other project members to join the discussion.

However, there was no interactionally visible response to Shaleen’s question, and she ends her turn with a self-response presenting the solution to her question without any contribution from the project team members: “Okay, we're doing that” (Line 351). An acceptance token “okay” (Line 351) and the pro-term “we” (Line 351) suggest that the proposed course of action is not the product of the single decision-maker but a joint agreement of the project team members. The meeting transcript and field notes reveal no interactionally visible disagreement with the course of action suggested by Sharleen. Therefore, she has succeeded in framing ‘a steer with a stick’ as a form of ‘strong recommendation’ and in legitimising the use of this ‘stick’ with the Schools that resist change process without having a legitimate reason to opt out. Thus, in this strip of interaction, discursive leadership is enacted by Sharleen defining the scope of problem using her background knowledge, re-framing Fiona’s request as achievable, and assigning a future course of action in a form of ‘strong recommendation’ as a way of dealing with local resistance.

In line 352, Audrey takes her turn and produces an utterance which displays her understanding of what is at stake at the specific moment of the discussion. She presents her clarification of the current situation with the admission letter in the form of a declarative statement: “Well, it’s already happening, really” (Line 352). In this utterance, Audrey anticipates that Sharleen’s suggestion will not be resisted as it is simply what is already happening. Audrey’s utterance is also heard as intensification of what has been said before by Sharleen as she is using discourse markers ‘already’, ‘really’ making Sharleen’s proposal even more achievable and, thereby, galvanising support for it. In other words, Audrey frames reality defining ‘the situation here and now’ (Fairhurst, 2011, p. 3) referring to ‘the way things work around here’ (cf. Heritage, 2012) and the events ‘the way they are’ (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996). Thus, Audrey enacts discursive leadership by providing explicit reference to a shared ‘epistemic territory’ (i.e. what is known, how it is known, person’s rights to know it (Heritage, 2012; Svennevig and Djordjilovic, 2015) displaying not only the possession of relevant information but also the right to articulate and communicate it (Pollner, 1987; Raymond and Heritage, 2006).

In her next turn, Sharleen is heard as referring to the existing “list of exclusions” (Lines 353-355) as a resource where additional information about Schools, which are currently not receiving e-mails manually generated by the central admissions team, can be found. Sharleen’s use of a category predicate “exclusion” (Line 353) which subtly replaces a category predicate ‘opt-out’, is not trivial here. This might be heard as changing the possibilities for opting-out from the core communication campaign. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (dictionary.cambridge.org), ‘opt out’ is defined as *an ability to choose* (emphasis added) not to be part of an activity or to stop being involved in it. ‘Exclude’ means *to prevent* (emphasis added) someone from taking part in an activity or to intentionally not include someone in the activity. Therefore, this subtle interplay with words ‘opt-out’ and ‘exclude’, might suggest reducing the right of the Schools to choose the form of communication, thus, it plays a vital role in the categorisation process. Through her categorisation work (i.e. creating a temporary category of ‘excluded courses’), Sharleen contributes to the process of legitimising the new IS system by eliminating those elements that do not ‘fit’ into the requirements of the new H-CRM system.

Another notable point in this episode is heard when Sharleen states “we’ve got the list of who they are” (i.e. Schools and courses) (Line 356). She identifies these Schools and courses “Chemistry”, “Computing Science” (Line 354), “Law” (Line 355) and proposes “we’ll pick them off individually” (Lines 356-357). This utterance suggests several things. First of all, Sharleen shows her competence by invoking her ‘knowledge how’ (Samra-Fredericks, 2003) to deal with the situation by using an additional source of information – “the list” (Line 357) of the Schools and courses that currently opt out.

Thus, Sharleen offers her interpretation of ‘the situation here and now’ (Fairhurst, 2011, p.6) and frames it using her background knowledge of the situation referring to the existing list of exclusions. Secondly, she is heard as assigning actions to the project team members who are supposed to deal with the Schools and courses individually in order to “very strongly recommend” (Line 350) them to receive the UCAS acknowledgement letter. By suggesting to “pick them off individually” (Line 357), Sharleen is heard as attempting to influence the future project team’s actions towards more individual work with all Schools and courses mentioned in ‘the list’ of exclusions. The suggested individual character of communications with the Schools and courses from “the list” (Line 357) seems to be pointing to what Orton and Weick (1990, p.211) called ‘subtle leadership’; or in other words, when centralised direction and coordination of the project are supposed ‘to be achieved through one-to-one conversations’. Moreover, Sharleen’s utterance is also heard as having military connotations, where enemies can be picked off individually rather than fought collectively, using the logic of dividing and conquering.

Thus, Sharleen enacts discursive leadership by framing the situation around local resistance in a way that allows shaping a course of future actions. She defines the scope of the problem (i.e. “There aren’t actually that many [Schools and courses] that opt out now” (Line 349), refers to a credible source of background information (i.e. “we’ve got the list” (Line 356) and then suggests a manageable and realistic way of resolving the issue (i.e. “we’ll pick them off individually” (Lines 356-357). In this episode, active followership is constructed within the situated, interactive and sequential achievement of understanding (Mondada, 2011), which is heard in Audrey’s (Line 352) and Fiona’s (Lines 358-359) utterances.

Scene 4 Taming a deer and coming closer

Table 7 Episode 1 Extract 4 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

363	Fiona:	When Anastasia and I had the discussion, the argument
364		is that a School, you know, they haven't engaged in a
365		relationship yet with that individual because they don't know
366		yet whether they want to make them an offer, so you are
367		almost- The University may want to engage with them
368		initially, but the School might not be making them an offer so

369 basically why would they want to start a relationship with an
370 individual School or person in a School when you don't even
371 know yet whether you want to make an offer to them? That
372 would be my argument.
373 Anastasia: It's not to exclude the schools sending their own
374 and introducing someone that will be dealing with the
375 application and starting building a relationship, it's just literally
376 to do that initial acknowledgement, so they have got
377 something in a holding position until they get into the school.
378 Harriet: Surely that can happen much quicker than us waiting
379 for it to come to a school? I can't think of a reasonable excuse
380 as to why.
381 Sharleen: I think we said we will do that as part of the core campaign.
382 Hannah: I imagine the schools that would complain would be
383 the ones that wait until they've got three months' worth of
384 applications before they do anything. That then makes us look
385 bad because the student thinks, 'Well I got an e-mail saying so
386 and so and I didn't hear anything then for three months!'
387 Sharleen: We'll get Karen to give us the list of which Schools
388 send their own and have opted out of the central service and
389 then take it from there.
390 Fiona: I've already done that in that I have already spoken to
391 the individual people about their individual course that are on
392 that list, so I did that ages ago.
393 Sharleen: Okay, there aren't that many of them, are there?
394 Fiona: No, no. It's PwC and Chemistry that are outstanding.
395 Sharleen: So you're in that meeting and you are telling Chemistry?
396 Fiona: Yes.
397 Sharleen: Okay.

The extract starts with Fiona's account where *student relationship* discourse (e.g. "the University may want to engage with them initially" (Line 367-368) is intertwined and overlaps with *student recruitment* discourse (e.g. "the School might not be making them an offer" (Line 368). The membership category device *relationship management* is heard when Fiona is using category-bound activities such as "to engage in a relationship" (Line 364 and 367) and "to start a relationship" (Line 369). Fiona's membership categorisation work serves as a method for invoking particular claims to legitimise a particular definition of the situation and to justify her position (i.e. proposing a 'steer with a stick'). Fiona frames the issue in a way that can be heard as promising less work for School administrators in terms of not "starting a relationship" (Line 369) with applicants before making them an offer. This burden of initial engagement can be, according to Fiona, delegated to the University ("The University may want to engage with them initially"- Lines 367-368) while Schools are deciding to make an offer or not. In this account, Fiona demonstrates her background knowledge of the recruitment process at the University and Schools levels by mentioning some particular details related to this process. For instance, in lines 367-368 she says: "the University may want to engage … but the School might not be making them an offer". She also uses "you know" (Line 364) which is heard as her reference to shared knowledge about the particular stage in the recruitment process when Schools "haven't engaged in a relationship yet with that individual" (Line 365).

As categories have normative and moral dimensions (Housley and Fitzgerald, 2009; Jayyusi, 1984), describing someone as an 'individual' (i.e. not assigning with any organisation-related category) and not as 'a student' or 'an applicant' in this account is significant. This category-use displays Fiona's normative assessment what Schools should do, why and when. The concept of moral assessment suggests that, perhaps, at the particular stage of the recruitment process, Schools are not expected to 'start a relationship' with these 'individuals'. Therefore, they are not expected to send any e-mail correspondence, and if they are doing this, then they are doing extra work, which might be delegated to the University. Therefore, the process of change is characterised as legitimate and acceptable because it is heard as a way of improving admission procedures by reducing existing workload. In this account, Fiona is heard as attempting to show Schools that the proposed technological change will benefit them, and thus, she is trying to convince them to see this change as being done 'in their best interests'(Whittle and Mueller, 2011; Whittle *et al.*, 2014b).

Discursive leadership is enacted by Fiona through framing the situation using 'interest-talk' (Whittle *et al.,* 2014b) constructed around a sense of 'interest' in making the admission process in the Schools easier. In other words, Fiona is framing what Schools *do* want (as in Lines 365-366) to make sense of what *might* benefit them, and also to give sense to what *would* benefit them (as in lines 369-370) (Whittle *et al*., 2014b, p.608). Thus, she establishes the following 'social fact': receiving the UCAS acknowledgement letter will benefit schools across the University in terms of reducing their workload.

Fiona is also heard as 'translating' (Whittle *et al.*, 2010) the proposed change initiative into local practice that would benefit admission personnel in the schools. Thus, the new H-CRM system is seen in a way that is congruent with the Schools' interests and their local requirements. Several project team members join the conversation (Lines 373-386) introducing their arguments, which could be heard as a continuation of ‘interest-talk’ initiated by Fiona. For instance, taking her turn, Anastasia continues framing the proposed change as the one that brings benefits to Schools by emphasising that this will be done in the students’ best interests as “they have got something in a holding position” (Lines 375-378). While Hannah (Lines 382-386) is heard contributing to category predication work by claiming that the resisting Schools are those that tend to: “complain” (Line 382), “wait for three months” before they actually reply to the students (Lines 383-384), and “make us look bad” (Lines 384-385).

In her leadership role, Fiona mobilises a collective effort in terms of generating and giving the project team members ‘prepared accounts’ or ‘scripts’, which they can refer to in their future conversations with the resisting Schools in order to guide them towards the desired path of action. This might be heard as an attempt to anticipate and deflect potential problems with the new H-CRM system implementation which might rise locally. The project team is oriented towards possible counterarguments or anticipated excuses that can be expressed by Schools that want to opt-out (i.e. Schools that “send their own” communications - Line 387) and rehearsing possible responses that could help them to deal with complaints and counterarguments (Symon, 2008). Thus, discursive leadership in this strip of interaction is enacted by Fiona through framing the proposed technological change as beneficial for the schools using ‘interest-talk’. This, in turn, has triggered responses from other team members: Anastasia (Lines 373-377), Harriet (Lines 378-380), and Hannah (382-386). In this encounter, followership is interactively built by the project team members who have started collectively ‘rehearsing’ possible arguments that might be used in the conversations with the resisting Schools and courses.

In lines 387-389, Sharleen allocates tasks to the project team members and, thus, enacts discursive leadership through assigning action-points that are accountable for future meetings. Then she reiterates her assessment of the scale of possible resistance (Line 393) which might be heard as an indication that the agreed action is achievable. Another example of ‘subtle leadership’ (Orton and Weick, 1990) is heard in lines 390-392, where Fiona displays her commitment to action by mentioning that she has spent some time speaking on a one-to-one basis with ‘the individual people about their individual course’ explaining to them the benefits of the new H-CRM system. This utterance can be also heard as Fiona is holding control over the situation as she clearly states that she has “already done” (Line 390) several conversations ‘with individual people about their individual course'. In other words, it seems that she has anticipated the possible development of the situation and has already taken action to resolve possible problems.

The excerpt from the project team meeting minutes, which supports the analytical interpretation of the utterances in this episode, is presented in Table 8. It is clear from this excerpt, that when the interaction ends, the new obligations for Fiona to engage with the task, as constructed in the interaction, remain.

Table 8 Excerpt from the Project Team Meeting Minutes M1/21 - 07/04/2010

UG Core Communications

UCAS acknowledgement

- Previously discussed campaign acknowledging UCAS application
- Agreed that this campaign should be a core communication applicable to all courses
- Chemistry and PWC courses are programmes which have concerns about this campaign

ACTION: Fiona to check and send list of courses who currently opt out of central admissions acknowledgement to relevant colleagues.

Episode 2 Maintaining the Agreed Direction of Change

This episode involves only three project team members, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Participants of the Project Team Meeting M2/22 - 04/05/2010

	Participants of the project meeting		**Speakers in Episode 2**
1	Sharleen	Project Director, DAMA	*
2	Fiona	Project Manager, DAMA	*
3	Audrey	DAMA	
4	Amanda	DAMA	
5	Karen	DAMA	
6	Hannah	Faculty A	
7	Anastasia	Faculty B	
8	Agnes	Faculty B	
9	Ethan	SP services	
10	George	Faculty C	
11	Harriet	Pilot School 1	
12	Linda	Faculty B	
13	Doris	IO	
14	Gillian	IO	
15	Deborah	Faculty A	*
16	Chloe	DAMA	
17	Sean	DAMA	

Scene 5 Chasing and hounding

Table 10 Episode 2 Extract from the Project Team M2/22 - 04/05/2010

133	Sharleen:	Okay. The next one, 'To check and send a list of
134		courses currently opt out of Central Admissions
135		Acknowledgement.'
136	Fiona:	That's undergraduate, yes, I sent it round again and it
137		was more just a prompt for Catherine, but also a reminder for those
138		people that still have subject areas that - Politics is the other one.
139	Deborah:	I'll chase them again, I have asked, but they are just -
140	Fiona:	And then it's Computing, Anastasia, for Computing,
141		Chemistry and Natural Sciences. But I know they asked for
142		Naval Architecture and Medicine.
143	Sharleen:	Thank you.

In this brief episode, Sharleen opens the discussion by reading action points from the previous meeting from the agenda [source: field notes]. She refers to the courses that “currently opt out” (Line 134) and to the “list” of these courses (Line 133) which needs to be sent to Schools. Thus, she reinforces points that have been agreed in the previous meeting.

Fiona takes turn and contributes to ‘a smooth and seemingly unproblematic organising process’ (Larsson and Lundholm, 2013, p. 1123) by displaying her followership through the active co-construction of the stepwise elaboration on the topic announced by the chair of the meeting. She presents her account by confirming that agreed actions have been accomplished (“yes” – Line 136) and stating that the list has been sent around to Schools across the University (“I sent it round again” – Line 136). She pronounces ‘items from the list’ (Fairhurst, 2007) pointing out those Schools and courses that opt out of the central e-mail campaign including “Politics” (Line 138), “Computing, Chemistry and Natural Sciences” (Lines 140-141), “Naval Architecture and Medicine” (Line 142). Fiona also refers to the project team members who are responsible for dealing with the Schools mentioned in the list: “a prompt for Catherine” (Line 137), “a reminder for these people that still have subject areas …” and “Anastasia” (Line 140). It appears that according to the list, there are ‘opt-out’ Schools not only in Faculty B but in Faculty A as well (“Politics is the other one” – Line 138). Therefore, by listing Schools from the existing list, Fiona is heard as using her knowledge to deliver a message to the managers in the project team who are accountable for the work with these particular Schools and courses across the University (i.e. Schools and courses that don’t have a legitimate reason for opting out of the central e-mail campaign). For instance, Fiona’s reference to “Politics” (Line 138) serves as a signal to action for Deborah (Faculty A marketing manager), who responds to Fiona’s call by taking the next turn: “I’ll chase them again” (Line 139). This metaphorical expression used by Deborah is heard as furnishing the School of Politics with the predicate of ‘needing to be pursued in order to catch’. At the same time, Deborah demonstrates her understanding of the request made by Fiona and she is characterising herself as trying to make contact with the School of Politics in order to obtain information, which is required by the project team.

Through ‘itemisation’ (Jayyusi, 1984) based on the existing list of exclusions, Fiona offers a publicly displayed ‘audit’ of the resisting Schools, which is triggering a response from the Faculty A marketing manager (Deborah). This is an analytically significant point in this episode as Fiona enacts discursive leadership through framing the situation in a way that allows holding the project team members to account for maintaining the agreed course of actions. This is how it has been heard by Deborah, who interactively displays her followership by suggesting the next course of actions that she needs to undertake.

The excerpt from the project team meeting minutes, which supports the analytical interpretation of the utterances in this episode, is presented in Table 11. It demonstrates how the *status quo* of the project team discussion is 'fixed' in the project documents.

Table 11 Excerpt from the Project Team Meeting Minutes M2/22 - 04/05/2010

Action point from the previous meeting.

Episode 3 Creating a Sense of Urgency

Table 12 Participants of the Project Team Meeting M4/25 - 13/07/2010

	Participants of the project meeting		**Speakers in Episode 3**
1	Sharleen	Project Director, DAMA	*
2	Fiona	Project Manager, DAMA	*
3	Audrey	DAMA	*
4	Amanda	DAMA	
5	Karen	DAMA	*
6	Anastasia	Faculty B	*
7	Agnes	Faculty B	
8	Ethan	SP Services	
9	Leticia	DAMA	
10	Gillian	IO	
11	Deborah	Faculty A	*
12	Chloe	DAMA	
13	Sean	DAMA	

Scene 6 Tracking and trailing

Table 13 Episode 3 Extract 1 from the Project Team Meeting M4/25 - 13/07/2010

637	Sharleen:	Excluded courses.
638	Fiona:	And finally excluded courses. This is again just, I feel like
639		I've asked this many times and have got answers on some
640		courses but I still need answers on Computing, Chemistry,
641		Natural Sciences, Politics, and for Catherine, Business,
642		Accounting and Finance. I have asked this several times.
643	Anastasia:	Computing, definitely are going to go for it.
644	Fiona:	They are included.
645	Anastasia:	Chemistry and Natural Sciences, I need to talk to.
646	Fiona:	Okay, and Politics and Business, Accounting and
647		Finance. I know Catherine is sort of saying she's nearly there
648		but I need definitive answers now if we're going to start
649		running campaigns.

This episode starts with Sharleen pronouncing “Excluded courses” (Line 637) when she is reading the agenda [source: field notes]. This utterance is significant because Sharleen is heard as orienting the project team members to a new ‘temporary’ membership category attributing a category-resonant description (Schegloff, 2007) of being ‘excluded’ to the existing category ‘university courses’. This is not to say that this category-predicate combination is always tied to the category ‘University courses’, in

some sort of objective way. Rather, such category-generated feature emerges in actual stretches of talk and signals about category-bound organisational knowledge shared among the project team members. The effect of this category predicate work is important because it enables leadership actors to construct a discussion around Schools and courses that do not have legitimate reasons to opt-out from the central e-mail campaign and thus represent a danger to the change initiative.
Taking her turn, Fiona repeats: “Excluded courses” (Line 638) which is heard as the active co-construction of the stepwise elaboration on the topic announced by the chair of the meeting and re-emphasising significance of this membership category. Using the discourse marker “again” (Line 638), Fiona indicates that this is not the first time when the issue with excluded courses has been discussed. She upgrades this in her next utterances, which might be heard as a complaint and a suggestion of a lack of progress: “I feel like I’ve asked this many times” (Line 639), and “I have asked this several times” (Line 642). In lines 640-642, Fiona lists (Fairhurst, 2007; Jayyusi, 1984) Schools and courses which require further actions as they still have their own e-mail communications with applicants: “Computing, Chemistry, Natural Sciences, Politics” (Lines 640-641), “Business, Accounting and Finance” (Lines 641-642). In doing so, Fiona is focusing on the managers who are responsible for delivering the agreed course of action and therefore, they need to be held to account for slowing down the process of change.

Fiona’s complaints have been responded to by Anastasia, who takes her turn and interactively displays her understanding of the existing problem by informing that “Computing, definitely are going for it” (Line 643). Anastasia’s utterance is interrupted by Fiona’s confirmation “They are included” (Line 644). In Latour’s (1990) terms, what is heard in this episode is an incremental modification of the attitude of some part of the group (i.e. resisting Schools and courses), transforming it little by little through an accumulation of successive elements (e.g. the will of the manager – implementation of the plan, the hardness of his words, using ‘a stick’, one-to-one conversations, etc.) in order to minimise their anti-programmes (i.e. preventing them to have their own e-mail communications with applicants). Therefore, Fiona’s confirmation that ‘Computing’ are already “included” (Line 644), already sounds like a small win. In line 645, Anastasia takes her turn and continues reporting, “Chemistry and Natural Sciences, I need to talk to”. In this utterance, Anastasia displays her understanding of her responsibilities and her commitment to engage with the assigned task. Fiona demonstrates her agreement using a confirmation token “Okay” in Line 646. Fiona’s utterance (Line 648) “I need definitive answers now” is heard as an increase in urgency and intensity of her complaint where words ‘definitive’ and ‘now’ serve as re-enforcing instruments allowing her to send a signal to marketing managers holding them to account for not complying with the agreed course of actions.

Discursive leadership in this sequence has been enacted by Fiona by framing the situation with ‘a negative spin’ (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996) to emphasise the slow dynamics of the change process and invoking a topoi of threat to the change initiative (i.e. if we’re going to start running a campaign, then all Schools should confirm that they are ‘in’). Fiona’s listing activity contributes to a further characterisation of the ‘Excluded courses’ category in terms of a necessity to speed up the decision-making process regarding their inclusion in or exclusion from the University’s e-mail campaign. This is how it has been heard by Anastasia who interactively displays her active followership by reporting what is already done and shows her commitment to the agreed course of actions.

Scene 7 Taking a breath and changing a weapon

Table 14 Episode 3 Extract 2 from the Project Team Meeting M4/25 - 13/07/2010

650	Sharleen:	Can I query why they should?
651	Fiona:	The courses that opted out of the initial
652		acknowledgement e-mail for the admissions process
653	Karen:	Because they were doing their own e-mails.
654	Fiona:	And if they opt out of the first one then they ultimately
655		opt-out of the rest of things.
656	Sharleen:	Do we- Is there a bigger question of, do we give
657		them the option?
658	Deborah:	Politics, I think, will be changed because the
659		admission is changing so
660	Karen:	We can tell them that's what happens. (Laughter).
661	Sharleen:	The winds of change. But the whole point of the
662		core campaign is that it's a core campaign and everybody
663		receives a base level of information and if they have what they
664		do then what we need to do is make sure that we are
665		combining what they do with the core campaigns.
666	Fiona:	The only course that generally is excluded is the Naval
667		Architecture because of the admission. And Medicine is to be

668 included, but as I say that's still outstanding on those other
669 areas though.
670 Audrey: What we say, we want to talk to them to get buy-in.
671 Sharleen: There is an option. We have core campaigns with
672 some exclusions. and if there are any problems with that -
673 Anastasia: We’ll speak to them.
674 Sharleen: Yes. Great.

In this episode, Sharleen demonstrates what Boden (1994, p. 126) calls ‘the power of queries’. Queries are different from the questions in their interactional and organisational significance. This episode starts with Sharleen’s question: “Can I query why they should?” (Line 650) - a rhetorical move which is opening mitigating request and invoking the relationship domain (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). Using the words of Boden (1994), Sharleen takes the turn by asking an open question in the form of ‘a query’ (Lines 656-657). This is followed by categorisation work produced by Fiona (Lines 651-652, 654-655) and Karen (Line 653) deploying categorical knowledge to explain what kind of courses can be considered as ‘opt-out’. For instance, Fiona says that they “opted out of the initial acknowledgement e-mail” (Line 652) and Karen adds that they “were doing their own e-mails” (Line 653).

In line 654, Fiona is upgrading the categorisation work by putting forward a predicate ‘opting out for the rest of things’. This might be heard as an attempt of defining the scope of the problem which seems bigger than just opting out from “the initial acknowledgement e-mail” (Line 651). This move introduces a ‘negative’ spin in the discussion, as the situation is now framed by Fiona as a possible threat to the proposed change initiative. “The rest of things” (Line 655) here is a catchphrase, a common expression which comes from everyday language of the organisational members and brings a very familiar and accepted meaning to their conversation. While being quite vague, this catchphrase in Fiona’s utterance might be heard as a reference to the core communication plan and to the previous discussions about existing possibilities for Schools to opt out from it. This is, perhaps, why in her next turn Sharleen responds to this with the closed question (Line 656-657) showing her understanding of what ‘the rest of things’ actually means. She frames her question in a way that invokes a bigger agenda; whether ‘opting-out’ from the ‘rest of things’ will be legitimate, i.e. allowed by the project team.

In Line 661, Sharleen produces an affiliative response to Karen’s account (Line 660) in which she upgrades Karen’s formulation with the metaphor “… the winds of change”.

By introducing this metaphor, Sharleen picks up Karen's utterance "that's what happens" (Line 660) and draws it into the larger arena of technological change in the University. Using this metaphor, Sharleen invokes a 'discourse of technological inevitability' (Leonardi and Jackson, 2009) which is heard as leaving little ground for any opposition to the proposed change initiative. As Leonardi and Jackson (2009, p.413) suggest, invoking this discourse allows to control the field, thus giving an indication of the situation that is not a contest anymore. In other words, receiving the initial acknowledgement e-mail is heard as almost 'pre-agreed' as it is suggested by 'the nature' of the new technology itself. After that, Sharleen re-focuses the project team's attention on the strategic objective of the new H-CRM system's implementation. She refers to the general understanding of the core campaigns ("the whole point" – Line 661), and re-enforces discourse of centralisation and uniformity by saying: "it's a core campaign" (Line 662), "everybody receives a base level of information" (Line 663).

In line 670, Audrey summarises the previous discussion "what we say" and re-formulates it in order to make it more congruent with interests of the project team, thus directing attention towards particular desirable actions "we want to talk to them to get buy-in". This formulation seems to be successful as it is developed further by Sharleen, who maintains a topical coherence and confirms "an option" of having "core campaigns" (Lines 671 - 672) and Anastasia, who suggests that anticipated problems could be addressed by "speaking" to the Schools (Line 673). Anastasia demonstrates interactionally visible agreement with the suggested course of action by finishing the utterance started by Sharleen (Lines 671-672). Sharleen takes the turn after Anastasia and states: "Yes. Great" (Line 674). By introducing praise for the work that has been accomplished by the project team members, Sharleen shows enthusiasm and uplifting positivity, and demonstrates what might be called a 'positive spin' or 'positive programming' (Pratt, 2000) .

To sum up, in this episode discursive leadership is enacted by Sharleen through the introduction of a query which allows addressing an issue beyond the frame of the current discussion (i.e. moving from the 'one e-mail campaign' to the 'rest of things'). As Boden (1994, p.124) explains, 'the query is oriented to by the recipient *as a framebreak*' (emphasis in the original). The situation has been also re-framed by Sharleen in terms of the scope and scale of the problem by introducing the metaphor 'the wind of change' (Line 661) and thus invoking a discourse of 'inevitability'. As a result, the suggested course of action, which is heard as congruent with the scale of the problem, has been collectively formulated. This stepwise elaboration is not possible without active followership demonstrated by the project team members in this episode. For example, Karen produces an active contribution to the co-construction of the course of action in conversation by displaying a cooperative stance seemingly aligning with Fiona’s utterance and continuing it “because they were doing their own emails” (Line 653). She is also heard as actively engaging in the discussion by responding to Sharleen’s question by saying: “We can tell them what happens” (Line 660).

The excerpt from the project team meeting minutes, which supports the analytical interpretation of the utterances in this episode, is presented in Table 15. This excerpt demonstrates that Deborah and Anastasia as incumbents of the category ‘School marketing managers’ have been endowed with a new set of responsibilities which remained after the interaction ended.

Table 15 Excerpt from the Project Team Meeting Minutes M4/25 - 13/07/2010

UG Core campaigns
Excluded courses

- The following courses still to be confirmed as being included in UG Core communications: All Chemistry and Politics courses, Business, Accounting and Finance and Natural Sciences
- If they excluded themselves from the first campaign, should this exclusion be applied to all campaigns? Should they have the option to be excluded from core campaigns?

ACTION: Deborah and Anastasia to confirm if the following courses are to be excluded from UG core communications: All Chemistry and Politics courses, Business, Accounting and Finance and Natural Sciences.

Episode 4 Achieving 'Symbolic Triumph'

This is the final episode in the chosen sequence in which four speakers are involved (Table 16).

Scene 8 Successful shot and closing of the hunting season

Table 16 Participants of the Project Team Meeting M5/26 - 04/08/2010

	Participants of the project meeting		**Speakers in Episode 4**
1	Sharleen	Project Director, DAMA	*
2	Fiona	Project Manager, DAMA	*
3	Amanda	DAMA	
4	Karen	DAMA	
5	Anastasia	Faculty B	*
6	George	Faculty C	
7	Harriet	Pilot School 1	
8	Linda	Faculty B	
9	Gillian	IO	
10	Deborah	Faculty A	*
11	Chloe	DAMA	

Table 17 Episode 4 Extract from the Project Team Meeting M5/26 - 04/08/2010

117	Sharleen:	Deborah and Anastasia to confirm if the following
118		courses are to be excluded. Actually, is this excluded just from
119		the first -?
120	Anastasia:	That was the 'acknowledgement'.
121	Fiona:	Yeah. That was the acknowledgement. Although the
122		implication would be that you'd have more of a discussion
123		about the subsequent school communications and that they
124		were going to adjust, you know.
125	Deborah:	Anyway, the Politics DPD has been replaced, this is a
126		new guy.
127	Fiona:	Anastasia?
128		(Group indecipherable)
129	Fiona:	Okay, excellent. So it's just Catherine to confirm for
130		Business, Accounting and Finance.
131	Sharleen:	Brilliant.
132	Fiona:	So everybody is in!
133	Sharleen:	Thank you everybody.
134	Fiona:	Except Hong Kong. (Laughter).
135	Sharleen:	Yes, Hong Kong is out, because we don't want to
136		send them e-mails in that way.

This episode starts with Sharleen opening the discussion by reading the action points [source: field notes]. She maintains topical coherence by following the meeting agenda and occupies an omni-relevant membership category (Fairhurst, 2007) ‘team meeting chair’ (Svennevig, 2012a). In line 117, Sharleen holds “Deborah and Anastasia” (managers from Faculty A and B respectively) to account by referring to action points from the previous meeting and asking them “to confirm” which “courses are to be excluded” (Line 118). This utterance is followed by Sharleen’s question (Lines 118-119) which is heard as ‘making turn’ for other project team members to respond as she is looking for clarification what ‘excluded’ actually means. This opportunity is taken by Anastasia, who takes the turn and clarifies that “the first” (Line 119) means “the acknowledgement” (Line 120) e-mail. Anastasia’s utterance is followed by Fiona, who confirms (“yeah”- Line 121) and upgrades Anastasia’s answer by mentioning the possible implications of being ‘excluded’ from the acknowledgement e-mail (Lines 121-124).

In this episode, we can notice a growing enthusiasm and positivity expressed by Fiona (“excellent” - Line 129) and Sharleen (“brilliant” - Line 131) who are heard as demonstrating a ‘positive spin’ or ’positive programming’ (Pratt, 2000) thus enhancing the project team’s sense of participation. This growing positivity is reaching its peak in Fiona’s utterance in line 132 when she says: “Everybody is in!” which is heard as a ‘symbolic triumph’, as Denis *et al*. (2010), call it. By introducing this utterance, Fiona is bringing the phase of the discussion to a close and signalling that all schools and all courses across the University have agreed to receive the UCAS acknowledgement letter.

What might be also heard in this utterance is that local resistance has been eliminated and thus the new e-mail recruitment campaign (i.e. the initial acknowledgement e-mail) will be consistent with the principles of the new H-CRM system. In other words, this utterance is heard as elimination of the ‘excluded courses’ (i.e. the point of resistance to change) and the legitimisation of the new practices (i.e. electronic e-mails – unified, standardised electronic correspondence with potential applicants which is going out centrally to all Schools except Hong Kong (Line 134). In line with a ‘symbolic triumph’, there is also a power leverage achievement that has been introduced by Sharleen in her statement: “Hong Kong is out, because we don’t want to send them e-mails in that way” (Lines 135-136), which is heard as legitimisation of a new type of power relations, which are now ‘fixed’ at the University level.

Chapter 6 Vignette 2 ‘I Wear not Motley in my Brain’

CLOWN: **Lady, cucullus non facit monachum;**
that’s as much to say as I wear not motley in my brain.
Shakespeare, Twelfth Night

Preamble

According to the project documents, it was essential that the data from the University systems (PAS) can be fed and populated in the new H-CRM system on a daily basis to ensure that integrations and campaigns are based on up-to-date information. This required support from the DTD department in terms of ensuring appropriate data feeds. However, the introduction of the H-CRM system in the University was not a straightforward process and it was complicated by the fact that there were certain technical problems with transferring data from one system to another (i.e. transferring the PAS students’ records to the H-CRM system). Many project members highlighted in their interviews that the experience of data integration was a difficult and challenging one in the project. For example, Sharleen mentioned that:

> “…the negative thing, or challenge for the project came from working with the PAS-system. That has been the hardest thing for the whole project… we began to understand more and more about challenges on the PAS side of things… ”

The ‘UG Applicant feed’ issue also illustrates the tensions between different groups of software system users (i.e. DTD staff and project team). For instance, Sharleen described this in her interview:

> “How much we could plan of that I don’t know […]…We speak every time with different people to solve different problems. We’re trying to negotiate our way through. Our difficulty was we cannot tell them what to do and we don’t have the technical knowledge to do this… ”

At this juncture, it is useful to refer to my ethnographic notes. I wrote: “When I was attending the meetings, I was struck by the fact that an important group of the CRM project stakeholders– the Digital Technologies Department (DTD) – were not present at these meetings.” I consider that this fact is important to mention, in order to give an indication that during my fieldwork DTD representatives have been absent from the discussions about CRM system integration in the project team meetings that I observed.

Following Amanda in this series of episodes, I have been intrigued by one particular feature. Amanda's utterances have been very often followed by group laughter. For example, she was the only team member who overtly and explicitly interrupted the topical flow suggested by the chair of the meeting, when she said 'Sorry, I'm not finished.' However, even this serious move once again has been followed by group laughter. What is more, other people often approached Amanda using jokes and jests. Paradoxically, as it might be seemed at first sight, but some kind of 'foolery' was part of Amanda's work during the meetings. This observation is significant, particularly because I know from my interviews that Amanda is recognised by the project team members as an expert and leader. As an analyst, I was puzzled by the question: "Why was Amanda wearing the 'Jester Mask', in a sense?" This question has triggered an analogy with 'wise fools' or 'notable jesters', and I called this Vignette 'I wear not motley in my brain' broadly referring to Shakespeare's dramas and comedies, where Jesters, Clowns and Fools always appear as important characters contributing in various ways to the development of the main plots.

Episode 5 Planning Well in Advance

Table 18 Participants of the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

	Participants of the project meeting		Speakers in Episode 5
1	Sharleen	Project Director, DAMA	
2	Fiona	Project Manager, DAMA	*
3	Audrey	DAMA	
4	Amanda	DAMA	
5	Catherine	Pilot School 2	
6	Hannah	Faculty A	
7	Anastasia	Faculty B	
8	Agnes	Faculty B	
9	Harriett	Pilot School 1	
10	Linda	Faculty B	
11	Doris	IO	
12	Chloe	DAMA	
13	Sean	DAMA	

Table 19 Episode 5 Extract from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

194	Fiona	Undergraduate applicant feed. That is in progress with Robert.
195		We set the deadline at the end of June, to have that ready so
196		that we can be testing it throughout July, with the view to the
197		first campaign that will use undergraduate data on being the
198		confirmation and clearing campaign for this year's cycle, and
199		then obviously we will kick off from September with next
200		year's cycle.

This series of episodes starts in the April meeting – Episode 5 – when the “UG application feed” issue has been introduced by Fiona (Lines 194-200). Before moving further, it is worth mentioning that such lexeme as ‘Undergraduate applicant feed’ is an interesting phenomenon in itself which is presented in the form of phraseological innovation. Elements from three different discourses can be heard as conflated in this language unit: university course (Undergraduate), stage of application (applicant) and technology (feed). Appearance, adoption and normalisation of this new terminology, which is widely used in the vocabulary of project team meetings and in the project documents, indicate an element of shared knowledge, which is discursively presented in this episode in Fiona’s account. This terminology-in-making deserves attention of terminology research which, however, lies beyond the scope of the current study.

In her account, Fiona reports about the current situation with the progress related to the UG application feed integration which can be heard in this strip of interaction as a non-problematic one (Lines 194-200). Fiona frames the issue as being under control because it is “in progress” (Line 194), there is a person –“Robert” (Line 194) who is responsible for it and there is an anticipated time line of issue-related activities, which are presented in chronological order – having the feed ready by “the end of June” (Line 195), “testing it throughout July” (Line 196), using it for the “confirmation and clearing campaign” (Line 198) and “kick off from September” with the new recruitment cycle (Line 199). In this short excerpt, Fiona’s categorisation work is displayed by positioning herself as the person who is in charge for monitoring the progress of the project as she linguistically displays the ‘knowledge of’ (Samra-Fredericks, 2003) the University recruitment process (e.g. “confirmation and clearing campaign” – Line 198, “this year’s cycle” – Line 198), the stages of the project time-line (e.g. “the deadline at the end of June” – Line 195, “testing … throughout July” – Line 196 , “kick off from September” – Line 199), and technological details of the issue under discussion (e.g. “applicant feed” –

Line 194 , “undergraduate data” – Line 197, “the first campaign” – Lines 196-197). Throughout the account, Fiona uses “we” (Lines 195, 196 and 199) which is heard as a reference to the core CRM project team, as a group which is in charge for setting deadlines, testing and running campaigns project-wise.

In this episode, discursive leadership is enacted by Fiona through framing the technological change as a rational and well-organised process. Through framing of the ‘definition of situation’ (Whittle *et al*., 2014a) in this way, Fiona establishes a ‘social fact’ that the process of the new H-CRM system implementation is going on smoothly in a well-planned way.

The excerpt from the project team meeting minutes, which supports the analytical interpretation of the utterances in this episode, is presented in Table 20.

Table 20 Excerpt from the Project Team Meeting Minutes M1/21 - 07/04/2010

Update on progress DTD Data feeds

UG Applicant Feed:

- Deadline for this feed has been set with Robert of end June
- Testing will take place in July

Episode 6 Introducing a Thinly Veiled Criticism

Table 21 Participants of the Project Team Meeting M3/23 - 19/05/2010

	Participants of the project meeting		Speakers in Episode 6
1	Sharleen	Project Director, DAMA	*
2	Fiona	Project Manager, DAMA	*
3	Audrey	DAMA	
4	Amanda	DAMA	*
5	Catherine	Pilot School 2	
6	Hannah	Faculty A	
7	Ethan	SP services	*
8	Harriett	Pilot School 1	
9	Linda	Faculty B	
10	Gillian	IO	
11	Sean	DAMA	
12	George	Faculty C	
13	Leticia	DAMA	

Table 22 Episode 6 Extract from the Project Team Meeting M3/23 - 19/05/2010

Ethan: Have we given up on the UG application feed?
Fiona: Not yet.
Amanda: Oh, sorry, apologies. I spoke to Tony. At the moment we are getting a 'seven-day' feed but we're only getting new records Monday to Friday; weekends, we're getting a feed but no new records. I spoke to Tony this morning, who I did e-mail about two weeks ago but he never replied to us, and he has said they had to put it in as a request to the help desk and ask them, and he gave me the text what I had to say and it was really funny, so I had to put that in as a request and as soon as we find out, if we all get a seven-day feed, we'll let you know.
Fiona: And then what attributes can be really?
Amanda: Hopefully we will then start to investigate.
Sharleen: It's strange that we could have a five-day feed of updates but not a seven-day feed.
Amanda: It's not picking up new records
Sharleen: On Saturday and Sunday?
Amanda: Yes, they switch it off on Saturday and Sunday, as opposed to the problem that we had a couple of weeks ago where the DTD switched off something, while they were doing some maintenance, and then forgot to switch it back on again! So we had no e-mails coming in, no e-mail addresses coming in.
Sharleen: This is the challenge of-
Amanda: This is the challenge.
Sharleen: Yes, the challenge of managing a project where you

320 are not in control of all of the elements.
321 Amanda: Indeed.

Episode 6 opens with Ethan’s question (Line 295) which is framed in a way that shows Ethan’s awareness about certain problems or difficulties with UG data integration. Using the verb “given up” (Line 295) might be heard in its connotation as ceasing an attempt of data integration. Knowing that Amanda is responsible for data integration, we would expect her to take the next turn, but Fiona takes the next turn instead of Amanda in this exchange by reassuring Ethan “Not yet” (Line 296). This turn taking and statement of reassurance might indicate that Fiona is not only controlling the situation with data integration, but also, in a sense, protecting Amanda, who seems to have forgotten to present information about UG data integration and being held to account by one of the project members. This move has been continued by Amanda, who starts her turn with an apology (Line 297). This is followed by an account which is presented in a form of narration framing the situation around data integration.

The problem, according to Amanda, is related to the fact that a ‘seven day’ feed receives an update from Monday to Friday only, whilst on weekends, there are no updates; she mentions: “weekends, we’re getting feed but no new records” (Line 299-300). What happens next in her account seems particularly interesting as after providing the overview of the situation and pointing out what the problem is, Amanda begins her categorisation work by switching her attention to Tony, a specialist who works in the DTD department. What we can hear from her narrative is that she has spoken with him this morning because she has been waiting for his reply for around two weeks after sending him an e-mail about the problem with the UG feed (Lines 300-301). What can be already observed from this utterance is that Tony is not keen on prompt replying as it there is no response from him after “two weeks” (Line 301). Bringing this time dimension to the discussion might be heard as raising a sense of urgency because this meeting takes place in May, and the UG applicant feed should be ready for testing by the end of June [source: Episode 5]. Therefore, it is not surprising that Amanda brings a comment about how long she has been waiting for Tony’s response to the fore.

What is more, Amanda adds in her next utterance that Tony “never replied to us” (Line 301). Describing Tony’s non-response to her e-mail in such way, Amanda replaces the singular pronoun “me” to the plural – “us” (Line 301). Thus, she is portraying Tony as the person who is not only ignoring her e-mails personally but who tends not to reply to the project requests generally. Adding the discourse marker “never” (Line 301), Amanda is heard as suggesting that the described activity – ‘non-replying’ to the e-mails (Line 300-301) – is ‘typical’ for Tony. Invoking this category predicate enables Amanda to define ‘anticipated features’ (Larsson and Lundholm, 2013) associated with Tony, as a member of the DTD department in terms of what he can, should ‘be’ or ‘do’ (Fairhurst, 2007; Whittle *et al*., 2015). Thus, Amanda’s category predication work allows holding Tony to account for not replying to her requests. By mobilising personality predicates, which describe Tony as not responding on time, she encourages others to view him in this way (i.e. not expecting to receive replies from him). Thus, potentially she is affecting future communication between Tony and the project team.

Amanda’s next utterance could be heard as Tony, actually, behaves in compliance with the procedures existing in the DTD department because he suggested that the problem needed to be reported to the help desk first: “he has said they had to put it in a request to the help desk and ask them” (Line 302-303). Then, according to Amanda, Tony gave her a ready-made text of the request that has to be submitted to the help desk (Line 303). Thus, Amanda describes Tony as the person who follows the instructions and complies with the rules in his (i.e. DTD) department (Line 301-303). Amanda reacts to this by mentioning: “It was really funny” (Line 303-304) which is followed by her comment that she “had to” (Line 304) comply with the DTD department procedures in order to resolve the existing problem with the UG data feed. This comment is heard as hiding the ‘real’ situation which is not funny at all, because when it comes to the relations with the DTD department, Amanda was forced to follow a bureaucratic procedure – “a request” (Line 302), to write a ready-made “text” (Line 303) and what is more, somebody (i.e. Tony) from the DTD department told her what to say and do. Framing the situation in such a way Amanda mobilises two predicates that are heard as associated with the category the ‘DTD department’. The first one is ‘a lack of accountability’ which is brought into play by describing Tony as “never replying” (Line 301); in other words, ignoring project requests. The second category predicate, which is expressed in a disguised form by Amanda’s comment “it was really funny” (Lines 303-304) characterises the DTD department as having bureaucratic procedures when dealing with a technical inquiry which might hinder the process of change (i.e. slow and ineffective). Clearly, tensions exist between the project team and the DTD department that is influencing the process of data integration. However, Amanda avoids overt criticism and offers a set of predicates with vague and multiple interpretations thus she describes the situation in a veiled way.

Amanda also infuses the situation with uncertainty by commenting about future action without a clear indication when the problem can be exactly resolved. Using phrases such as “if we… get a … feed” (Line 305), “hopefully we will start investigate” (Line 307), might be also heard as lacking clear communications between the project team and the DTD department. Amanda’s categorisation work in this account continues as she invokes the categorical pronouns “they” (Line 302) and “them” (Line 303) which is heard as distancing the project team, i.e. “us” (Line 301) from the DTD department whose representative ignores project team e-mails (Line 301) and follows slow bureaucratic procedures when dealing with the project team’s urgent technical inquiry (Lines 299-300). In contrast, Amanda describes the project team as agile (“as soon as we find out… we‘ll let you know” - Lines 304-305) and responsible (‘we will then start to investigate” - Line 307). In these utterances, Amanda is using the collective pronoun “we” (Lines 305 and 307) which is heard as including herself in these activities. This categorisation work allows commenting on Amanda’s commitment to the suggested actions.

At this moment, Amanda does not know for sure what is causing the problem with the ‘7 day’ feed and whether this problem is on the PAS and H-CRM side, she says: “we will … start to investigate” (Line 307). Therefore, she cannot hold the DTD department to account for not getting feed on the weekends. Considering this, Amanda frames the situation in a way which vaguely suggests the possibility that the “‘7day’ feed” problem (Lines 289-300) might be caused by the DTD department side. Without blaming the DTD department overtly, she only creates expectations pointing out where the cause of this problem might be.

In what follows next, Sharleen starts her turn by saying: “It’s strange” (Line 308) which might be heard as lack of rational explanation. Then she provides a formulation (Clifton, 2006) by summarising the problem, as “we could have a 5-day feed of updates but not a 7-day feed” (Lines 308-309). This formulation is upgraded by further clarification offered by Amanda, who explains that it happens because the system is “not picking up new records” (Line 310) on “Saturday and Sunday” (Line 312). Furthermore, according to Amanda, the system is not picking up new records, because “they” (i.e. the DTD department) “switch it off on Saturday and Sunday” (Line 312).

In lines 312-316, Amanda provides a narrative account describing the situation which has happened before. This account is significant in the development of this interaction as the vague pronoun "they" (Line 312) which Amanda used before has been replaced by "DTD" (Line 314) thus overtly naming the department which is causing problems. Amanda continues her category predication work by mentioning some of the functional roles that the DTD department is understood to perform, including "switch[ing] off something" in the system (Line 314) and "doing some maintenance" (Lines 314-315). The criticism of the DTD department is brought by Amanda openly when she is telling that a couple of weeks ago there was another "problem" (Line 313) caused by the DTD department. Thus, she indicates that this is not the first time the DTD department has caused problems with data integration. After that, Amanda deploys a particular predicate 'forgetting' when telling that there were no e-mails coming into the system because the DTD "forgot to switch it back on again" (Line 315) after maintenance. Using a predicate 'forgetting' might be heard as intentional ambiguity (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996; Eisenberg, 1984) which has been used to introduce criticism in a disguised form as this predicate offers various motives (Whittle *et al.*, 2010) that can be attributed to the DTD department, including the failing to remember (i.e. something that might be insignificant to remember), technical incompetence (i.e. inadvertently neglecting to switch it back on), sabotage (i.e. deliberately not switching the system back on), lack of information (i.e. not realising the importance of switching the system back on). Thus, Amanda frames the DTD department as the one which fails to perform their responsibilities which they are normatively expected to fulfil - i.e. switching the system back on. Without mentioning this explicitly and using the predicate 'forgetting', she opens the possibility for others to make an inference about what motive might be relevant.

Lines 317-321 display an example of co-construction of shared meaning achieved through the formulation collaboratively produced by Sharleen and Amanda. This account is interesting for its turn-taking structure. It starts with Sharleen's utterance "This is the challenge of" (Line 317) which is echoed by Amanda repeating exactly the same words "This is the challenge" (Line 318), which, in turn, is reinforced and reaffirmed by Sharleen's token "yes" (Line 319) and is repeated once again "the challenge of" in line 319. The three-part repetition of 'this is a challenge' (Lines 317, 318, 319) is a rhetorical tool (Atkinson, 1984, cited in Antaki, 1994, p.133) which signals that Amanda and Sharleen make a special point. It is interesting to note that this repetition has been achieved by two people repeating the same phrase one after another. This collaboratively produced account displays interactionally visible solidarity between Sharleen and Amanda as it formulates their shared understanding of the existing situation. After that, Sharleen upgrades her utterance formulating the challenge of the project as lack of control over all of the elements (Lines 319-320). She is using a pronoun “you” (Line 319) which is heard as an attempt to generalise the problem and to avoid saying directly that the project team is not in full control of the project. This formulation has been re-enforced by Amanda’s utterance “Indeed” (Line 321).

In this episode, discursive leadership is enacted by Amanda through ‘framing’ the DTD department as causing a problem with data integration, i.e. incompetent in some way. Category predication work undertaken by Amanda includes the following discursive ‘moves’: describing the representative of the DTD department as the one who is constantly ‘ignoring’ the project team’s requests; characterising the DTD department as having ‘funny’ bureaucratic procedures; attributing the ‘seven-day’ feed problem to the DTD inability to undertake normatively expected duties and responsibilities. This category predication work sets the stage for developing interactionally visible solidarity between Amanda and Sharleen which has been displayed on the micro-discursive level (Lines 317-320). Stating explicitly in her formulation that situation is partly out “of control” (Line 320) Sharleen recognises the existence of a formalised point of resistance - the DTD Department. Amanda’s utilisation of co-operational tactics (repetition – Line 318, re-enforcement – Line 321) demonstrates her active followership which contributes to a smooth organising process by the stepwise elaboration of the formulation.

The excerpt from the project team meeting minutes, which supports the analytical interpretation of the utterances in this episode, is presented in Table 23.

Table 23 Excerpt from the Project Team Meeting Minutes M3/23 - 19/05/2010

Update on ISS data integration

- UG application data feed - by the end July

Episode 7 An Emotional Vacation - Easing Tension and Releasing Stress

Table 24 Participants of the Project Team Meeting M8/29 - 24/11/2010

	Participants of the project meeting		Speakers in Episode 7
1	Sharleen	Project Director, DAMA	*
2	Fiona	Project Manager, DAMA	*
3	Audrey	DAMA	
4	Amanda	DAMA	*
5	Anastasia	Faculty B	
6	Hannah	Faculty A	*
7	Karen	DAMA	
8	Ethan	SP services	
10	Amelia	SP services	*
11	Doris	IO	
12	Leticia	DAMA	
13	Elaine	DAMA	

Table 25 Episode 7 Extract 1 from the Project Team Meeting M8/29 - 24/11/2010

Sharleen: Okay. Uhhh. Gather strength. Update on data integration, and EMT Connect system. Amanda, I think you're starting on the undergraduate application feed, so tell us where we are.

Fiona: Hope on the H-CRM side. (Laughter)

Sharleen: Bearing in mind that Phoebe has no prior knowledge of this campaigns project.

Amanda: We just-we get a day feed from PAS, we get an undergraduate feed, we get a postgraduate feed, we get an enquiries feed and we get a portal 'keep warm' feed. The postgraduate and undergraduate are feeds on applicants who've applied to the University so it has all their personal information and it has all the information on the applications that they've made to the University, and there are other bits and pieces in there as well. CRM system is a communication tool which uses e-mails to communicate with people. I’ll tell you

Sharleen: There is a reason of telling this.

Amanda: I've set up, for the undergraduates I set up and queued an e-mail that Karen had requested go out to people for 2012 entry to make them aware of the funding issues, that it was going to be a different funding thing. When that went out, there's about 400 e-mails that actually went out and there's only 38 people had e-mail addresses… So I think there's a problem with the feed here somewhere. So then we discovered that DTD had taken the decision to always send the e-mail, only include the e-mail and the mobile numbers in our feed on a Sunday. We get a daily feed of all new applications,

196 but any of those new applications that we receive from
197 Monday to Saturday wouldn't have an e-mail address or mobile
198 phone number.

In this extract, the issue with the undergraduate feed is discussed further. This episode starts with Sharleen, who opens the topic for discussion in an unusual way with the emotional attachment “Uhhh. Gather strength. Update on data integration” (Lines 169-170). She is already setting expectations that this is not an easy topic for discussion and nominates the speaker “Amanda, so tell us where we are” (Lines 171-172). This emotional opening of the topic suggests a high level of ambiguity and triggers an emotional response from Fiona, who takes the turn (Line173) instead the nominated speaker (i.e. Amanda). Fiona interrupts Sharleen with a humorous ironic response which is followed by her laughter (Line 173). This is heard as Fiona’s attempt to change the footing (Goffman, 1981). However, Fiona’s laughter has not been shared by other project team members [source: field notes], and, therefore, they don’t affiliate with Fiona’s stance. This unilateral laughter might also suggest that Fiona is just releasing her emotions that are running high when it comes to problems with data integration. Sharleen takes the turn by introducing a new member of the team (Lines 174-175). What is significant in this account is that Sharleen does not simply present the new member of the team, but points out that Phoebe has “no prior knowledge” (Line 174). By stating this openly Sharleen is heard as requesting a more detailed response from Amanda.

Amanda starts her account with the cumulative listing (Fairhurst, 2007) invoking a set of category-bound activities, which briefly explains that the project team deals with various “feeds” (Lines 176-178). She also explains what the postgraduate and undergraduate “feeds” mean (Lines 178-183) and what is the “CRM system” (Lines 183-184). This might be heard as providing a vocabulary of necessary basic terms assuming that Phoebe needs to understand what the project team is talking about. What is interesting here, for instance, that Amanda is using the abbreviation “PAS” (i.e. the University main information system – Line 176) without clarifying its meaning to Phoebe. This might be considered as evidence that this abbreviation has already become a part of commonsense knowledge shared not only by project team members, but across the University. In Amanda’s account, we can also hear the category “applicants” (Line 179) with category predicates “undergraduate and postgraduate” (Line 179) who later are referred to as “people” (Line 184) whose personal and application information is stored in “feeds” (Lines 177-179). Here two discourses – technology discourse and student recruitment discourse – have been invoked and intertwined through membership categorisation work.

Then Amanda offers a short overview of the situation (Lines 186-189), and describes the problem with the e-mails by providing sufficient numerical evidence to justify why this problem has been given attention stating: “400 e-mails… went out, and only 38 people had e-mail address” (Lines 190-191). In lines 186-198, Amanda is heard as categorising herself as ‘a person with expertise’ using the personal pronoun “I” and the category-bound activities “set up and queued an e-mail” (Lines 186-187). Later, she described how a problem with a feed has been identified and why she started investigating it (“I think there’s a problem with the feed here somewhere”- Lines 191-192). Then she switches to a plural pronoun “we” (192-193) which is heard as a collective effort of discovering the nature of the identified problem with the feed. In lines 193-194 Amanda points explicitly at the DTD department suggesting that this is their decision of “only includ[ing] the e-mail and number in [the] feed on Sunday” (Line 195) causes problems with receiving the correct data in the system from Monday to Saturday.

Table 26 Episode 7 Extract 2 from the Project Team Meeting M8/29 - 24/11/2010

199	Amelia:	Is there any reason for that?
200	Amanda:	Yes, yes, and I am coming to that. And the reason for
201		that was because it was such a big, big file that it was making
202		everything else falls over on a daily basis. So they took the
203		decision…
204	Amelia:	They didn't ask 'what' they could cut out? (Laughter).
205	Amanda:	No. They took the decision to, 'If you only ran this on
206		a Sunday then nothing else is running so nothing else can fall
207		over'… Yes, but our whole CRM system fell over because we
208		didn't have any e-mail addresses. But the reason why weren’t
209		notified was because we weren’t on some log somewhere that
210		we were users of this actual set of data. We had been omitted
211		from being added to that notification log, so therefore we
212		didn't get told that this had happened. So it's happened a
213		couple of months ago…

In line 199, Amanda’s account is interrupted by Amelia, who unexpectedly takes the turn which is heard as she is in a rush to find out, what is the reason that causes such a problem. Reaffirming that there is a reason “yes, yes…” (Line 200) Amanda responds to Amelia’s request “I am coming to that” (Line 200) which is heard as she is trying to deliver information step-wise. In the next utterance, Amanda uses layman’s terms to explain the reason why the DTD department made a certain decision by exaggerating (“it was such a big, big file” – Line 201), simplifying (“it was making everything else fall over” – Line 202), providing time-line details (“on a daily basis” – Line 202). Then she is interrupted again by Amelia, who asks the closed question (Line 204) looking for further clarification. This question is followed by Amelia’s unilateral laughter [source: field notes], which suggests an ironic character of her question. In this strip of interaction, Amelia’s active followership is demonstrated by her engagement with the discussion which is interactively displayed by bringing up additional questions as Amanda’s account unfolds (Lines 199 and Line 204).

After providing a straightforward affirmative reply to Amelia’s question (Line 205) Amanda continues category predication work by saying: “we didn’t have any e-mail addresses” (Lines 207-208), “we weren’t notified” (Lines 208-210), “we weren’t on some log somewhere” (Line 209), “we had been omitted from being added to that notification log” (Lines 210-211), “we didn’t get told” (Lines 211-212. Here, the pronoun ‘we’ hearably refers to the project team members who are actually “users of this actual set of data” (Line 210). Therefore, Amanda is heard as providing an explanation of existing problems between the DTD department and the project team. She characterises the DTD department as not considering the project team seriously and constantly excluding their interests and needs from decision-making.

Table 27 Episode 7 Extract 3 from the Project Team Meeting M8/29 - 24/11/2010

214	Sharleen:	It's fair to say we didn't know we needed to be on
215		the log.
216	Amanda:	Well, it was- we didn't know we needed to be but it
217		was a log (Laughter).
218	Anastasia:	Nobody knew there was a log!
219	Sharleen:	Nobody knew there was a log, yes!
220	Amanda:	That's right. We're not.
221	Amelia:	Who's the lady that?
222	Sharleen:	Nina.

223 Amelia: She would have known that there was a log!
224 Sharleen: She must have forgotten the log.
225 Group laughter.
226 Sharleen: Ok. Where are we now?
227 Amanda: I don’t know, sorry. (Group laughter) Anyway, Tony
228 and Robert got together (Group laughter) and they came up
229 with a solution whereby we still get the big file on Sunday but
230 the rest of the days of the week we get any new records or any
231 changes that have been made, and they come in on a daily
232 basis with the e-mail addresses and telephone numbers, so
233 daily basis we get, once we've created or amended within the
234 last 7 days and then on a Sunday we get the whole big file, again.
235 Sharleen: So will that affect any of the other communications
236 that are being sent out within the Faculties?
237 Amanda: Well it was fixed quite speedily, once we discovered
238 it, it was fixed within about a week.
239 Fiona: The reason we haven't written out to say it's fixed is
240 because we had a project meeting today and also the last
241 e-mail we had was where there were a few things to iron out,
242 so I've sent an e-mail saying 'Are these ironed out?'
243 so I didn't want
244 Sharleen: to anticipate it. Ok. Well done.

When Sharleen takes her turn, she starts her account by saying: “It’s fair to say” (Line 214) which is heard as she is about to make an acceptable and appropriate comment in the current situation. Using “we” (Line 214), she demonstrates interactionally visible solidarity with the project team in this situation and continues stating: “We didn’t know we needed to be on the log” (Lines 214-215) which suggests that this was an unpleasant discovery not only for her but for the team as well. This sense of discovery has been reflected by Amanda, who says: “Well, it was” (Line 216). After echoing Sharleen’s phrase “we didn’t know we needed to be…” (Line 216) she repeated again “but it was a log” (Line 216). This utterance is followed by a burst of Amanda’s unilateral laughter, which can be possibly explained by the ‘irony’ of the situation when the main users of the actual set of data (i.e. the project team) have been excluded from the ‘notification log’. Anastasia‘s declarative statement “Nobody knew there was a log” (Line 218) makes the confirmation stronger, as “we” which is used by Sharleen and Amanda has been transformed to “nobody”. This is confirmed by Sharleen, who repeats the statement and upgrades it with an affirmative confirmation token “yes” (Line 219) at the end. And it is reaffirmed once again by Amanda “That’s right. We are not” (Line 220). This sequence suggests intensifying of interactionally visible solidarity between the project team members in their orientation towards the identified problem of being excluded from the notification log.

Amelia’s question (Line 221) is heard as an attempt to recollect a name of a person who is responsible for adding the project team as ‘users’ to the notification log. Sharleen provides a short answer by taking turn before Amelia finishes her question (“Nina” – Line 222). Amelia indicates that Sharleen provides the correct name of a person who is expected to be accountable for the situation with the log by continuing: “She would have known that there was a log” (Line 223). This utterance suggests assigning certain responsibilities to Nina regarding her knowledge about the log thus holding her to account for not letting the project team know about the notification log and for not adding them as users. Sharleen is heard as reframing the situation by invoking the predicate “must have forgotten” (Line 224) which is followed by group laughter.

In this episode, Sharleen uses the predicate ‘forgotten’ attributing it to a member of the DTD department. As it has been explained in the previous episode, a deployment of this predicate might suggest various motives behind it. However, group laughter that follows in this episode is quite interesting. Usually, group laughter is described as providing positive in-group function; namely, enhancing group solidarity (Holmes, 2006). However, using the predicate ‘forgetting’ might suggest a veiled criticism and pointing at a person’s professional incompetence. As Sharleen’s critical comment is targeting a non-present out-group member, this group laughter might be heard as treating a member from another department as the butt of jokes and even ‘bullying’ her. As Kärreman (2011, p.165) points out that bullying can be understood as a ‘subtle violation of interpersonal norms… that inflicts ‘dignitary harm’ on the victim, highlighting the role of hierarchy and subtlety’. What is heard here might suggest bullying but in a veiled form using a vague predicate ‘forget’ which has been already in use among the project team members when talking about the DTD department in the previous meeting. Sharleen’s question “Where are we now?” (Line 226) sounds like a pseudo-question and an attempt to change the footing and come back to a serious discussion. However, Sharleen’s attempt is not successful because Amanda responds with an apologetic comment “I don’t know, sorry” (Line 227) which is followed by another burst of group laughter. The laughter continues after Amanda mentioned two other members of the DTD department “Tony and Robert got together” (Lines 227-228). This episode continues with Amanda reporting successful resolution of the problem (Line 237).

To sum up, discursive leadership is enacted in this episode by Amanda through explaining the issue in simple laymen's terms: "it was such a big, big file that it was making everything else falls over" (Line 201-202). This provided the project team members with an 'intelligible formulation' of the situation with the '7-day' feed. Category predication work of the leadership actors allows them to characterise a member of another department in a way that triggers group laughter and thus to increase group solidarity by diminishing and belittling the opposition to the change process.

The excerpt from the project team meeting minutes, which supports the analytical interpretation of the utterances in this episode, is presented in Table 28.

Table 28 Excerpt from the Project Team Meeting Minutes M8/29 - 24/11/2010

Update on data integration:
UG application feed

- New records 2011 entry are now in the system after a problem with PAS
- In addition, the issue of e-mail addresses being updated weekly with H-CRM has been fixed quickly by Robert and Tony. We still get big file on Sundays and changes (created or amended records) come in the daily feed.

Chapter 7 Vignette 3 ‘Queen to Play’

Preamble

Project documents define Personalised Web Page (PWP) as:

> “a customer relationship web-based marketing tool which provides personalised, relevant and timely information in an engaging and direct way to applicants who have been made an offer.” [Source: field notes]

The main purpose of introducing PWP in conjunction with e-mail campaigns was to engage directly with individual students in order to convert them to registered students. It has been envisaged that PWP should include links to not only relevant information on the University’s main website but also to School/course specific information based on the student’s stage in the application cycle and expressed interests. An essential principle for the PWP was that the presented information should be clear, engaging, accurate and dynamic encouraging students to use the web page as a reference/reminder tool and to return for new information. The structure of the PWP page comprised of three main elements: columns, sections and content blocks. Content blocks were the key mechanism for communicating information and linking to the content on the School and University websites; they should be clear and concise. It has been expected that all course and School content blocks and filters would be created by September 2010. However, there was a delay as the issue of the content block emerged in one of the meetings during the discussion about the overarching principles of PWP and how to structure it.

The PWP working group, led by Audrey, was responsible for PWP development and implementation. What surprised me during my data collection that in her interview Audrey has not recognised herself as a leader of the project, while she has been recognised as such by other project team members; that is why it is particularly interesting for me from the analytic point of view to follow her in the next series of episodes which I have called ‘Queen to Play’, metaphorically alluding to rules and principles of chess play.

Episode 8 Handling Unstructured Discussion and Disagreement

In this episode, the main analytical focus is on the ways participants invoke categories and category predicates in a course of accomplishing a particular action – discussing the grouped school content on the Personalised Webpage (PWP). This discussion, as data suggests, has been a ‘battleground’ infused with overt and covert disagreements between project team members. This episode is presented in five scenes, which should be read sequentially using the line numbers provided. Line numbers, as in the previous episodes, reflect the position of the episode in the transcription of the meeting. Table 29 represents a list of project team members involved in the discussion. As it might be already observed almost all people presented in the meeting have been involved in this discussion.

Table 29 Participants of the Project Team Meeting M1/21- 07/04/2010

	Participants of the project meeting		**Speakers in Episode 8**
1	Sharleen	Project Director, DAMA	*
2	Fiona	Project Manager, DAMA	*
3	Audrey	DAMA	*
4	Amanda	DAMA	
5	Catherine	Pilot School 2	*
6	Hannah	Faculty A	*
7	Anastasia	Faculty B	*
8	Agnes	Faculty B	*
9	Harriet	Pilot School 1	*
10	Linda	Faculty B	*
11	Doris	IO	
12	Chloe	DAMA	
13	Sean	DAMA	*

Scene 1 Debut and opening gambit

Table 30 Episode 8 Extract 1 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

1116 Sean: Point 1 of Appendix 2. This happens to be one of the
1117 personalised web pages platforms for 'Pilot School 2' and it's just
1118 occurred to us that some of this content, when it's been
1119 pulled through, is a little bit sort of, it's not random in the
1120 sense that we know, you know, it's deliberately placed in
1121 that particular section for students, they'll have to kind of
1122 sort of scan around a little bit to find specific School
1123 content and they won't necessarily relate everything within

1124 those sections. So it was just an idea we had in discussion
1125 as to whether that individual School content should be
1126 grouped together into one section area. So we came up
1127 with a bit of a demo here which actually has all of that
1128 content which is currently around different sections on the
1129 other page, into one section here. So it was pulling all of
1130 that content in together. Now the implications of that that I
1131 mentioned down here related to the fact that some of these
1132 other sections could actually become quite small, limited,
1133 they might only have one or two items in. And depending
1134 on where we put that School content, the column that will
1135 be in would be quite long, so you can see the difficulty of
1136 actually exposing through this. Time specific content like
1137 the Pilot School 2, that will have to go under a separate
1138 content area with its own heading, because you can only
1139 actually time limit document areas rather than content
1140 blocks. So again, it's to open up to discussion whether we
1141 think that's a good idea or bad idea, or whether we find
1142 some other mechanism to actually flag up School content
1143 and whether that's background colour, like we've done for that.
1144 Fiona: But then it'd be random bits
1145 Sean: Yes, random colours dotted around all over the
1146 page. So what do people think?
1147 Agnes: I think it looks a bit weird with that long-
1148 Harriet: We're linking through anyway into school
1149 information and we're creating a page and if there's any
1150 specific school information we could put it at that point
1151 rather than making the front page messier.
1152 Fiona: But sorry to be Devil's advocate here, but now you
1153 are creating a point that goes against what you said before
1154 about the student not getting this as a personalised web
1155 page and also having to go another click to get more information.

The opening of this episode starts with Sean's narrative account (Lines 1116-1143) that sets the scene for the discussion about providing an overview of the work that has been done with Personalised Web Page (PWP) regarding individual School content. He points out that individual school content is not random but is placed in particular section of PWP deliberately for students. Sean starts categorisation work by listing predicates, which are associated with the category "students" (Lines 1121-1122). They "have to kind of sort of scan around a little bit", they need to "find specific School content" (Lines 1122-1123), they "won't necessarily relate everything within those sections" (Line 1123-1124). Then Sean refers to a discussion which has happened outside the meeting about whether individual school content should be grouped together into one section area (Lines 1124-1143) which is deemed to be significant. He offers “a bit of a demo” (Line 1127) to the project team and invites the project team members to discuss the various options (“What do people think?”- Line 1146) including whether “that’s a good idea or bad idea” (Line 1141), whether “some other mechanism to actually flag up School content” might be found (Line 1142), or whether “that’s background colour” (Line 1143) will be randomly dotted “around all over the page” (Line 1145-1146). Harriet (deputy manager, Pilot School 1) joins the discussion (Lines 1148-1151) by suggesting that they would rather create a link to any specific school information than make “the front page messier” (Line 1151). This proposal has been met by a straightforward reply from Fiona (Line 1152), which displays her overt disagreement with Harriet position. Fiona reports the words of the addressed recipient (Harriet) “you are creating a point that goes against what you said before” (Lines 1152-1153) back to Harriet. This is heard as a challenge to the veracity of appropriateness of what has been said by Harriet before. Fiona justifies her critical stance by using the metaphor “Devil’s advocate” (Line 1152) which is heard as her negative aggravation attempt (Lachenicht, 1980) to challenge Harriet explicitly in order to provoke a debate.

Table 31 Episode 8 Extract 2 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

1156	Harriet:	The thing is, they are going to have to go another
1157		click anyway. To my mind, if a student comes in here then
1158		the thing they are going to want most, I'd have thought,
1159		would be course information. And if they are going to click
1160		through, what we've done is created a page for each of our
1161		MSc programmes, which is what this would limit to if they
1162		can select their course on the front page and then go
1163		through to one that's specific to them, and we can always
1164		put a link on that if they want School information.
1165	Audrey:	The only thing I would say, and this is because we
1166		had this discussion at an early stage, I think when you
1167		weren't in the discussions, I completely understand what
1168		you are saying there, it might be that you need to perhaps
1169		go and think it through, because the whole point of this is
1170		that it's got to be dynamic as well, and so it might be that
1171		there are things that you want to actually raise, you know,
1172		links to the School communications at certain points in
1173		time and put in here. So depending on your
1174		communications and how they are structured over a period
1175		of months. It may be that you want to highlight them in

1176 here as well. So part of it is just that it allows you to give
1177 more profile to some things at certain points in time. Not
1178 everything, and as you say, it might be that it's on the School site.
1179 Harriet: Right.

Harriet responds by providing a tactical summary which she starts with the phrase “the thing is” (Line 1156) and framing the situation in a way that supports the idea she has put forward by referring to students who “have to go another click anyway” (Lines 1156-1157). Further utterances are heard as justification of getting ‘another click’ by generating a scenario (which is heard by Harriet’s extensive use of the discourse marker “if” in lines 1157, 1159, 1161 and 1164). Harriet is also heard as doing category predication work by mobilising predicates associated with the category ‘university applicants’, including: “the thing they are going to want most would be course information” (Line 1158-1159), they “are going to click through” (Lines 1159-1160), they “select their course on the front page” (Lines 1162), “go through to one that’s specific to them” (Lines 1164). Thus, Harriet justifies her position by framing it around applicants’ interests and suggesting what they might ‘want’ and what they ‘might do’ when they “come in here” (Line 1157) (i.e. when they visit PWP). Harriet’s account also invokes category-relationship pair – university applicant/School. Each of these categories carries with it category predicates based on the relationship facilitated by the new PWP page. A set of predicates associated with the category ‘School’ include creating “a page for each of our MSc programmes” (Line 1160-1161) and putting “a link” (Line 1164). While predicates related to the category ‘university applicant’ include “selecting their course” (Line 1162) and going ‘through’ the page to the course “which is specific for them” (Line 1163). Categories and category predicates used by Harriet in her framing activity invoke a pre-existing expectation about each category of the category-relationship pair and thus demonstrate her knowledge of the on-line application process which she deploys to defend her position.

Audrey joins the conversation without any polite note of interruption by beginning her turn with a straightforward statement: “the only thing I would say” (Line 1165) which is followed by invoking a category predicate “being in this discussion at the early stage” (Line 1166). This predicate is brought into play by Audrey as the incumbent of the category ‘member of the project team’ who has been involved in the project at an early stage and participated in the discussions related to the PWP before. At the same time, it is heard that Audrey sets herself in opposition to Harriet because she continues her category predication work by describing Harriet using a category predicate “not being in the discussion” (Lines 1166-1167). This category predication work can tell (likely) about Harriet’s characteristics as a project team member who is lacking relevant background knowledge and information because she has not participated in the previous discussions. What is evident in this encounter between Harriet and Audrey can be summed up by using the words of Samra-Fredericks (2003, p.156) - ‘a contest over whose knowledge and expertise is to count.’ In her categorisation work, Audrey characterises Harriet as ‘not having the necessary skills or knowledge to successfully contribute to the discussion’.

Audrey is heard as anticipating the potential disagreements in the project team as contentious areas start arising from Harriet’s comments; they are already demonstrating disparate views about PWP. In her next utterance, Audrey makes an attempt to exclude Harriet from the discussion saying bluntly and straightforward: “you need to perhaps go and think it through” (Lines 1168-1169), bringing into play another predicate of the category ‘member of the team’ who is inadequately prepared for this discussion, and who needs perhaps to consider or investigate additional options. By using “you” (Lines 1166 and 1168), Audrey is heard as being direct and ‘bold on record’ (Bousfield, 2008) in expressing her disagreement with what has been said by Harriet. Particularly, it can be heard in the utterance when pro-term ‘we’ has been used contrary to “you” - “we had this discussion” (Lines 1165-1166); “you weren’t in the discussions” (Lines 1166-1167), thereby allowing to explicitly associate Harriet with characteristic, which might be heard as having ‘negative’ connotations. “You” also works interactionally as an address term (Watson, 1978) by which Audrey is oriented to Harriet isolating her from the group (Lines 1165-1167). This is followed by another example of what Lachenicht (1980, p.607) calls ‘positive aggravating language’ when Audrey states that “you need to perhaps go and think it through” (Line 1168-1169) which is heard as a rational and intentional attempt to hurt or damage the addressee (Locher and Watts, 2005).

In lines 1169-1178, Audrey suggests to Harriet to explore different options depending on “the School communications” (Line 1172) and “how they are structured” (Line 1174). Audrey is heard as reformulating Harriet’s proposition (i.e. competing account) in order to make it more congruent with the main idea of having a dynamic webpage (“whole point” – Line 1169). Thus, she orients the project team to possible options highlighting existing opportunities (“give more profile to some things” – Lines 1176-1177) and constraints (“not everything” – Lines 1177-1178). The use of the prefabricated cluster “you know” (Handford, 2010) which appears in line 1171 in the middle of Audrey’s account suggests that Audrey is “packaging and shortcutting commonsense knowledge” (Stokoe, 2006) which other members of the group can share. Using ‘you know’ as the common knowledge component in the categorical practice proposes that the categorical upshot is recognisable and mutually shared as part of the ongoing maintenance of a commonly shared, objectively existing world (Handford, 2010). At this moment of interaction, participants have the shared membership of the category device - ‘student recruitment’ - and by virtue of that membership they also share cultural knowledge of the category features. For example, Audrey displays this shared category knowledge by mentioning: “the school communications” (Line 1172) and “how they are structured over a period of months” (Line 1174-1175). This mutual category knowledge is essential to the smooth progress of the activities under way.

In light of Goffman’s (1967) conceptual vocabulary, this strip of interaction shows subtle ways of ‘how’ a ‘face threat’ (i.e. Harriet’s face) is interactionally constituted (Culpeper et al., 2003, Samra-Fredericks, 2010a). Intentional ‘face-threatening activity’ (Bousfield, 2008) enables Audrey to lead deploying categorical knowledge to characterise the member of the project team whose opinion does not go in line with the major idea of having a “dynamic” web page (Line 1170) as inadequately prepared for the discussion. Categorising Harriet as an ‘incompetent’ member of the project team, Audrey frames the situation in a way that allows her to exclude a potential source of divergent interpretation from further discussions. Through a set of category predicates invoked in Audrey’s and Fiona’s turns, Harriet is forced into a ‘verbal corner’ (Boden, 1994, p.128). This makes Harriet’s self-defence difficult, and she appears ‘powerless’ to save her own face (Goffman, 1967, p.28) when she replies with a very short affirmative answer: “Right” (Line 1179).

Scene 2 Promoting a pawn and identifying weaknesses in the opponent's position.

Table 32 Episode 8 Extract 3 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

1180	Audrey:	The other point is that the course information, at
1181		the early stage when we were talking about course
1182		information, one of the things we've gone around in circles
1183		about is the fact that by this stage they have already
1184		applied. So actually, one of the discussions and one of the
1185		reasons we didn't use the central course information was
1186		that because they'd already applied, they are actually
1187		wanting more detailed information on some School sites,
1188		but they've actually probably read that as well. So that's
1189		where the discussion has been up until now. So just in
1190		terms of what you said on here, I suppose the question is,
1191		going back to the two alternatives here, is whether you
1192		want even to actually- It's how much School personality if
1193		you like do you want on this site? And the options are
1194		either to have it embedded in all the other sections, which
1195		when we had the previous discussion, we felt that actually
1196		diluted it to almost the extent where it actually, it doesn't
1197		make much difference. I personally hate the idea of putting
1198		a background colour against or having the text in a
1199		different colour to bring it out; I just think it will make it look
1200		weird and I don't think the students would understand
1201		what's behind that. It's the first time I've seen that and I
1202		think that actually works better as far as I'm concerned if
1203		the schools want some more information. But it depends
1204		on how you are going to use this.
1205		*Group discussion about the webpage. Overlapping.*

As Whittle *et al*. (2010, p.31) explain: 'Substantial discursive work was required on the part of the change agents to realign the interests of the recipients with the change… change needs to be translated in such a way that it effectively funnels the diverse concerns of its intended recipients into alignment with the required change.' This is what is observed in this illustrative fragment.

Audrey's reference to "the early stage" (Line 1181) of discussion can be heard as a tactical move by which she is trying to keep the conversation on track and maintain the order of the conversation. She directs attention to the "course information" issue (Lines 1181-1182) using the idiomatic expression "gone around in circles" (Line 1182) which suggests that the discussion about the PWP design is not progressing well. According to

Audrey, one of the identified difficulties is related to the fact that at this stage of the recruitment process “they” (i.e. applicants) “have already applied” (Lines 1183-1184). She continues her account by referring to previous discussions by saying: “that’s where the discussion has been up until now” (Lines 1188-1189) and highlighting available options by mentioning: “the two alternatives here” (Line 1191). She is using a collective pronoun “we” (Line 1181, Line 1182, Line 1185, and Lines 1195-1196) which is heard as reference to group level rather than the individual level of decision making. The interesting twist in Audrey’s account is heard when she makes an attempt of making a formulation (Clifton, 2006) which she presents in a form of question “I suppose the question is … how much School personality if you like do you want on this site” (Lines 1190-1193). Switching to a pronoun ‘I’, which is followed by Audrey’s utterance “I personally hate the idea” (Line 1197) sounds like the ‘emotional crescendo’ (Samra-Fredericks, 2010a, p.2152) revealing her strong personal disagreements with some of the suggested options. She is making her account even stronger by upgrading her position with the hypothetical opinion of the students when she states: “I don’t think the students would understand” (Line 1200), thus bringing the students’ perspective as an important criterion for justification of the PWP-related decision-making.

Table 33 Episode 8 Extract 4 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

1206 Audrey: It partly depends on how much information you
1207 want have and it also depends on how dynamic you want it
1208 to be. I mean I'd suggest that you put all this in one, have
1209 some of it.
1210 Catherine: I mean some of it will be dynamic and some of it,
1211 when we've looked back, we would remove completely
1212 anyway, because obviously Sean mocked it up, so with a
1213 view to just picking bits of where he saw fit, and obviously
1214 some of it's not relevant. So actually it would cut down on
1215 that being as long as it is. And also do you think there is
1216 maybe an element of moving some of the kind of more
1217 generic University-stuff across, because I think people
1218 want to feel part of the School, but ultimately they are part
1219 of the University. And I just think that if the two things can
1220 be separated out it is easier to kind of build that
1221 relationship at School level.
1222 Anastasia: I mean could you put sort of an 'onwards' and
1223 say, if you feel you've got more than that, then make it
1224 something that is dynamic, so that when they go in, it does

1225 change, but it's not knocking it completely out. Enough of it
1226 to be able to get across I suppose but you know what they
1227 really feel is important, but make sure that the page
1228 doesn't go on and on and on.
1229 Sean: I mean the content blocks and where you place
1230 them will probably be fixed so you have to determine that
1231 beforehand. It's difficult to know exactly how it would be.
1232 But obviously if you've taken stuff out then it's going to
1233 shorten some of these blocks and could potentially move
1234 one or two of these other ones across.
1235 Fiona: But that would be moved permanently and not…?
1236 Group: Yes (overlapping).
1237 Sean: You couldn't do it dynamically.
1238 Audrey: I mean the question is, Anastasia, whether we
1239 could put limits on it.
1240 Anastasia: You could limit it to this and if you have more to
1241 say, you know, make it dynamic, say things coming in and
1242 out, then think carefully about what you put on that section
1243 so that it doesn't- The reason we're saying this is
1244 because it will knock out the text and will make it look, it
1245 won't make it very aesthetically pleasing in terms of
1246 presentation, so that's why we're asking you to try and
1247 stick to these guidelines realistically. I don't know really.

After the project team discussion (Line 1205), Audrey presents another attempt of making a formulation summarising what has been discussed so far by saying: “It … depends on how much information you want to have and it also depends on how dynamic you want it to be” (Lines 1206-1208). In academic literature, formulations are seen as a particular part of the discursive ‘machinery’, the ‘machinery of conversation’ (Clifton, 2006, Drew, 2003) which characterises a state of affairs negotiated in the preceding talk (Heritage and Watson, 1979). Making a formulation and confirming it usually can be considered not only as a signal for topic closure but also as closure of sensemaking activity (Clifton, 2006). Therefore, being a part of the discursive ‘machinery’, formulations are of particular interest from an organisational sensemaking perspective because they have got the power to ‘fix’ (Clifton, 2006) the meaning of the talk-so-far and eliminate the possibility of multiple understandings. Thus, past and present of organisational reality can be fixed in a formulation. What is more, a formulation which is followed by a decision based on the implicit consensus also fixes a future state of affairs. In other words, a formulation can be seen as an important linguistic tool in any repertoire of leadership skills used for ‘doing leadership’ in organisations (Clifton, 2006).

In this illustrative fragment of interaction, Audrey’s formulation is challenged by other team members who take their turns using a primary interactional cluster ‘I mean’ (Handford, 2010) in order to clarify their thoughts in relation to the position presented by Audrey. Catherine used “I mean” (Line 1210) taking her turn, “I mean” is also used at the beginning of Anastasia’s account (Line 1222), followed by Sean’s utterance “I mean” searching for clarification (Line 1229). This might suggest the existence of divergent understanding as some of the project team members interpret the issue in their own way. Some kind of interactionally visible consensus has been achieved after Fiona asks a question (Line 1235) regarding the possibility of moving the content block, which is followed by group’s affirmative reply “Yes” (Line 1236). However, because of the limitations of audiotaped material, it is impossible to tell if all the participants contributed to this affirmative agreement; verbally or non-verbally.

In lines 1238-1239, Audrey demonstrates her listening skills by referring back to Anastasia’s point in her utterance. She starts her turn by clarifying her position using the discourse marker “I mean” (Line 1238) and asking the question which directs the conversation towards the existing limits of the page. Directing her question to Anastasia, Audrey is not only pointing to the person who is expecting to take the next turn but she is also heard as maintaining a ‘one-to-one’ conversation and displaying ‘subtle leadership’(Orton and Weick, 1990) in her attempt to maintain order in the existing discussion. However, the attempt of maintaining order and sense in the discussion has collapsed when Anastasia responds by stating vaguely “I don’t know really” (Line 1247) at the end of her account (Lines 1240-1247).

At this point, Audrey appears to endorse Anastasia’s comment about “stick[ing] to … guidelines” (Line 1247), as she states that this “could be good” (Line 1248). However, her formulation “I think something like that could be good” (Line 1248) sounds very vague. Her next utterance is heard as an attempt to upgrade her formulation (“I mean”- Line 1248) and to be more specific. Audrey clarifies her position offering a kind of ‘putative decision’ pointing to possible actions such as the need of liaising with Schools and delegating them responsibility of thinking about things that can capture the attention of the applicants (Lines 1249-1251). She is not mentioning applicants or students directly, but this can be heard from her vague reference to “attract someone’s attention” (Line 1252). Audrey’s utterance “need to liaise with schools” (Lines 1249-

1250) and “getting them to think” (Line 1250) could be considered as a ‘putative’ decision because it has not been agreed, and the commitment of relevant participants has not been achieved in a second turn (Huisman, 2001). Moreover, in lines 1253-1255 Fiona is heard as challenging Audrey’s ‘putative’ decision. Thus, the situation has been ‘put back to square one’ and reality again remains open for further negotiation (Clifton, 2006).

Table 34 Episode 8 Extract 5 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

1248	Audrey:	I think something like that could be good. I mean,
1249		that again would be down to probably need to liaise with
1250		the schools because it's about getting them to think about
1251		what is the most, not just what they can say, but what is
1252		the most grabbing thing that will attract someone's attention.
1253	Fiona:	But I think if you put it all on your School page like
1254		you are suggesting, then there’ll never be a reason to see
1255		this personalised web page then.
1256	Harriet:	I’ll tell you the truth. But we've talked about this
1257		before but I've never actually seen the School content
1258		included in this, or even had any thoughts about what it
1259		could be; everything I've been involved in has been the course…
1260	Group:	Yes (overlapping)
1261	Harriet:	Yes, it is something that we need to think about.
1262	Audrey:	And it’s difficult.

Harriet, who has been silent after she was ‘hurt’ by Audrey and Fiona, takes the turn in line 1256 and makes an attempt to recover her credibility with strong statement “I’ll tell you the truth.” She ‘talks herself into being’ as an expert emphasising that she has participated in the previous discussions “we’ve talked about this before” (Line 1256-1257); displaying her expertise in PWPs by using the discourse marker “never” (Line 1257) and saying: “I’ve never actually seen the School content included in this” (Lines 1257-1258); generalising her experience by using the discourse marker “everything” (Line 1259) and mentioning: “everything I’ve been involved in has been the course” (Line 1259). Harriet’s statement has received positive affirmation from the group “Yes” (Line 1260) providing so much-needed back-up for her. This is followed by Harriet’s attempt of taking responsibility on behalf of the project team as using a pronoun “we” in her utterance suggests when she is saying: “Yes, it is something that we need to think about” (Line 1261). This utterance is heard as echoing Audrey’s statement “it might be that you need to perhaps go and think it through” (Lines 1168-1169). This displays Harriet’s followership through interactionally visible alignment with the suggested change initiative. Taking turn in line 1262, Audrey does not display any interactionally visible disagreement with Harriet. This observation suggests that she accepts Harriet’s formulation upgrading it with a brief response “it’s difficult” (Line 1262) which is heard as a possible sign of warning for the rest of the team.

Scene 3 Early middegame and control of the centre

Table 35 Episode 8 Extract 6 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

Sharleen: I’m just going to say, I think actually having the Business School specific stuff in a different colour, I think that works as a block, but I think like you that it would be very bitty and I don't think the students would get it if it was, you know. I think if it was course specific, if it was highlighted… Part of me wondered, the course level stuff, the School level stuff, the first point of contact, should that stuff be in the left hand…? Should that stuff, could that stuff be in the left hand column rather than the right hand? I say that because quite a lot of the pages that we've looked at and the audit that we did in the first instance, had a lot of the 'fluffy' stuff on the right hand side, you know the virtual tours, sort of fun and pleasure stuff. It's important, yes, but arguably not as important as the course stuff and the Business school stuff. And the impact going straight into a page where your eye takes you to the top left or whatever.

Audrey: Could I just to come back a second. The interesting thing about making the assumption that that is the best way of doing it and so we need to actually change the structure of the page. I think the decision we need to make first is, do we think this is actually an approach we would want to go down? Because the issue is whether we had School information sort of dotted around the page, or whether we had a specific, if you like, you might want to call it a dynamic content section effectively, so the filter for this is on Business School section, so for example, if Linda, if you are accessing it and you weren't a Business School student, then you wouldn't see that because it wouldn't come up. Anastasia, if you accessed it, it would automatically come up. So it might be an option when we are creating the pages that we don't have to have any School information on. We could just have personalised web pages that just, you know, it's a decision we need to make at some point, but for the pilot Schools there might obviously be School based information, and for the non-pilot Schools it might be that we decided that we just start off and just don't have any of that School information, but they've got access to everything else to start off with.

Sharleen: Can I just ask a question to colleagues who work closely with academic Schools? What do students feel an association with, is it the School, is it the course…?

Linda: I think as an internal thing when we analysed

structures, then really I think, it's the University that
students initially anywhere…

Hannah: I think the University and the subject, but not
necessarily. But they don’t care about Faculties and
Schools really; but they care about English Literature

Anastasia: and facilities

Hannah: and facilities around. In the Business School,
well, they'd be interested in finance and banking as well…

Catherine: Yes, but I think that as a School we are trying to
build that relationship with them at a School level, kind of
slightly separate to the University, and I think that even at
UG level, that's what they are pushing for. So I think that
whilst it might not be there at the moment, and they identify
with the University, I think that the way that we're moving is
that we are trying to shift that slightly.

Sharleen: It was more trying to think from a student
perspective of, if I was applying to Geography or whatever,
would I - would it be relevant to me to have any
information about the School that Geography happened to
be situated in.

Sharleen joins the discussion by focusing on a different aspect of PWP such as page design, positioning of the information in the left-hand/ right-hand column and impact of this positioning (Lines 1263-1278). However, the sequential architecture of the episode shows that Sharleen’s discussion has not been supported by Audrey, who says: “Could I just come back a second” (Line 1279) which suggests that she wants to keep the discussion focused and avoids any deviations. Audrey is covertly challenging Sharleen’s position by demonstrating disagreement, which is heard in her utterance “I think the decision we need to make first is” (Line 1282). Then Audrey seems to seek a consensus switching from her personal position “I think” (Line 1282) and referring to the project team using ‘we’ when she asks: “Do we think this is actually an approach we would like to go down?” (Lines 1283-1284). However, there was no interactionally visible response to Audrey’s question, and she ends up her turn with a self-response (Lines 1284-1300) presenting the solution to her question without any contribution from the project team members. In her account, Audrey addresses the project team members by their names (“Linda” – Line 1289; “Anastasia” – Line 1291). This is heard as Audrey’s attempt to share the same stance with the project team members in order to simplify the example she is using to explain her position (Lines 1288-1292). Audrey’s account demonstrates a lack of shared stock of local organisational knowledge related to

PWP as, for instance, she struggles to define “whether we had a specific, if you like, you might want to call it a dynamic content section effectively” (Lines 1286-1287). In lines 1295-1296, Audrey repeats once again about the need to “make” a decision (Lines 1295-1296) which is heard as an attempt to keep the discussion focussed. She uses a pronoun “we” (Line 1295, Line 1296 and Line 1298) which shows her association with the project team and anticipation of achieving a consensus regarding personalised web pages.

The next turn (Line 1301) is taken by Sharleen, which is heard as trying to change a focus of the discussion bringing the students’ voice to the fore. She refers to the “colleagues who work closely with academic Schools” by asking question (lines 1301-1303) which is heard as opening the possibility to other project team members to contribute to discussion. Sharleen’s invitation seems to be successful, and she has got a set of responses (which might be interpreted as an evidence of active followership) from other team members, including Linda (Lines 1304-1306), Hannah (1307-1309) and Catherine (Line 1313-1319) who have not yet contributed to the ongoing discussion.

Table 36 Episode 8 Extract 7 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

1325 Audrey: I think that when we had the original discussions,
1326 just taking us back to some of those principles we were
1327 talking about, I frankly, just put my cards on the table I
1328 don't really care which University, School or individual
1329 subject, but I think that postgraduate students, if you are
1330 applying to another University for a particular subject area,
1331 then you do actually care about things like credibility of the
1332 organisation as a whole, and some of that was what we
1333 were wanting to try and convey through the School based
1334 information, and in a sense, I'm not wedded to the
1335 academic structure of the University, it's just that in terms
1336 of producing the information, the School structure is the
1337 best chance we've got of actually providing that
1338 information, isn’t it? So God knows what we do when we
1339 come into the Civil Engineering side of it with that but
1340 they'll just have to get that together or not having
1341 personalised webpages.
1342 Harriet: I am just thinking that taking Business School, just
1343 going back to the MRes, Medical Sciences; their MRes is
1344 attached to the Faculty rather than to a School, so is it
1345 okay to put that bit? Could you do back to the Medical

1346 Sciences, is that a possibility?
1347 Audrey: Yes. whatever you want.
1348 Sean: Yes, whatever you want.
1349 Audrey: So just before I come back to the positioning
1350 comment, as in where it goes on the page. I mean, the
1351 essential question is, do you want this information up there
1352 in that form or dotted around the page?
1353 Sean: Or like that.
1354 Audrey: or like that.
1355 Voice: Oh, God

Audrey seems to notice the growing number of responses, in other words, growing divergent interpretations and is heard trying to bring the discussion back on track by referring to “the original discussions” (Line 1325) and “some of those principles” (Line 1326). She skilfully directs attention of the group to an issue which she wants to obtain agreement about. Referring back to the main “principles” (Line 1326), she tries to avoid the growth of discrepancies between the project team members’ opinions, which are becoming a potential source of friction in the discussion. Redirecting the team’s attention to “the original discussions” (Line 1325) and “principles” (Line 1326) also suggests that she considers other arguments as peripheral. She keeps order in interactionally visible way using her reference to general guidelines (i.e. taking back to ‘some of those principles’) as an important discursive resource. The discourse marker such as “take back” (Line 1326) can suggest a useful conflict avoidance tactic as it refers to the point of time when certain agreements have been achieved. Therefore, Audrey is clearly trying to avoid unnecessary and unproductive contentious discussions by ‘funneling’ them into alignment with the required change (Whittle *et al.*, 2010). Audrey re-directs the discussion by a strong open personal statement “I frankly, just put my cards on the table” (Line 1327) and refers to the voice of the PG students justifying her position regarding School-based information that should be related to PWP (Line 1333-1334). She focuses on searching for the decision through the high level of uncertainty by mentioning: “so God knows” (Line 1338), and provides two firm direct alternatives for non-pilot Schools by stating: “They’ll just have to get that together or not having personalised webpages” (Lines 1339-1341). This utterance presents a formulation (Clifton, 2006) which is heard not only as Audrey’s attempts to summarise some of the previous discussions, but also as ‘an ultimatum’ for non-pilot Schools forcing them to decide. Harriet takes the turn in line 1342 and displays her active followership by asking: ‘Is it okay to put that bit?’ (Lines 1344-1345) and ‘Is that a possibility?’ These questions are heard as her attempt to clarify existing possibilities, which seems not clear enough in Audrey’s explanation. Audrey replies with affirmative statement “Yes, whatever you want” (Line 1347) which is echoed by Sean in line 1348. Thus, in this excerpt, Audrey enacts discursive leadership by accomplishing constructive steps such as diverting discussion from contentious areas, keeping the discussion on track by aligning the diverse concerns with the required change, explicitly verbalising and ratifying an implicit decision in the form of a formulation (Holmes and Marra, 2004).

Scene 4 Middlegame: capturing the opponents' pieces and moving into an occupying square

Table 37 Episode 8 Extract 8 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

1380 Audrey: I think the issue is, and it's always the problem
1381 with personalised web pages, it's when we talk about
1382 decisions of principle but then also issues where there are
1383 specific examples as well, and I think for me, I having been
1384 you know present at a lot of discussions where we've kind
1385 of talked ourselves into quite a massive big migraine, I
1386 think one of the issues for me that's become clear is that it
1387 all becomes clear when you're talking about the School
1388 communication plans, the e-mail correspondence and how
1389 they potentially link in with the personalised web pages.
1390 But of course, we're talking about overarching
1391 personalised web page principles here, but presumably
1392 when you've talked about School communication plans, it
1393 does become clearer because you can then see what they
1394 are wanting to communicate to students, at which points in
1395 time, what they want in the letters and in the e-mails and
1396 what might actually in personalise web pages. Does it
1397 become clearer then?
1398 Agnes: It's not really at that sort of level. At the moment,
1399 we've just sort of set in, to get the personalised web page,
1400 'This is what you've got to do to the website', and that's the
1401 end of it at the moment. So we have not got…
1402 Audrey: Yes, but when you're talking about e-mails to them,
1403 Agnes, that's what I mean, when you're talking about
1404 content of e-mails does it become a bit clearer about what
1405 might be on their School based personalised web pages then?
1406 Anastasia: Not really because we're still in the process.

Note: The lengthy exchange that preceded Audrey's turn has not been included in this extract.

This excerpt is significant for the analysis as it allows observing Audrey's attempts to position herself as an expert. For instance, she emphasises her expertise using the discourse marker 'always' in a phrase such as "it's always the problem" (Line 1380). Another utterance in lines 1383 – 1384, when she is saying: "I think for me, I have been you know present at a lot of discussions," also highlights her expertise. At the same time, she continues framing 'the PWP issue' as the difficult one, adding elements of physical pain “we‘ve kind of talked ourselves into a massive big migraine” (Lines 1384-1385). Audrey also positions herself as an expert by bringing to the fore “overarching PWP principles” (Lines 1390-1391) and demonstrating her background knowledge, which allows to “see” certain aspects “clearer” (Line 1393). By doing so, she continues category predication work and matches her expertise against the project team’s lack of clarity. This is heard in her question “Does it become clearer?” (Lines 1396-1397) where the predicate ‘not being clear about’ the PWP principles and School communication plan is associated with the project team members. After receiving an answer from Agnes (Lines 1398-1401) who confirms that this level of discussion is too advanced as they are just at the very early stages of PWP development within the Schools by saying: “It’s not really at that sort of level” (Line 1398); Audrey continues her explanation (Lines 1402-1405). In her next turn, she invokes another predicate ‘not being clear’ what “might be on their School-based personalised webpage” (Line 1404-1404) addressing her question to Agnes. However, Anastasia takes turn instead providing a response that it is “not really” clear because they are “still in the process” (Line 1406), thus confirming that the members of the team have got limited expertise regarding the question under discussion. Thus, in this strip of interaction, category predication work (Whittle *et al.*, 2015) allows Audrey to frame the situation by positioning the project team members as not well suited to deal with the proposed change initiative (i.e. development of the personalised web page).

Scene 5 Chess endgame and queening a pawn

Table 38 Episode 8 Extract 9 from the Project Team Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010

1489 Audrey: So after that, it's about positioning
1490 on the page and Sharleen, you made a comment about
1491 whether that should be on the left hand side, there have
1492 also been comments about the fact that if there is
1493 information in that column, it's actually too long. Sean,
1494 could I ask you to have a look at the possible options in
1495 that context and maybe if we could, the three of us, have a
1496 chat about that and we'll look at different options? Because
1497 we've got the key things which was, we don't want the
1498 students to have to scroll down too much, we want the
1499 page to look reasonably sensible in terms of the way it's
1500 structured, and of course we have to accept that this
1501 content section might be there and might not be there, so
1502 what the indications are there.
1503 Catherine: If it's not there, can you include a graphic to
1504 even out the size of the columns? Because obviously
1505 there's not that many pictures on it at the moment, and if
1506 something is missing for whatever reason, could you put a
1507 picture in to even out the way that it looks rather than a
1508 load of white and then a big-?
1509 Audrey: If you perhaps have a look at that. Okay. Any
1510 other comments? I'll just hand back to Sharleen then.
1511 Sharleen: Okay. Thank you very much indeed.
1512 Fiona: We are still looking through this document.
1513 Sharleen: Oh, God. (group laughing)

Note: The lengthy exchange that preceded Audrey's turn has not been included in this extract.

The significant moment in this excerpt is heard when Audrey overtly displays that she has taken lead in this long and difficult discussion by demonstrating her 'intrusion' on the territory of the meeting chair ("I'll just hand back to Sharleen then" – Line 1510). By enacting the meeting management functions, Audrey takes the prerogative of the chair of a meeting (Angouri and Marra, 2011; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1997) which legitimates her power in taking away contentious discussions which she judges as irrelevant to the decision that has to be made (Line 1495-1496). Audrey's influence attempt is legitimised by Sharleen who uses a token "Okay" (Line 1511) which is heard as acknowledging and accepting Audrey's authority in running the discussion.

In this sequence of episodes, discursive leadership is enacted by Audrey using a variety of discursive resources. This includes face-threatening activity; re-formulating potentially ‘contentious’ accounts by deleting ‘contentious’ elements and aligning them with the overarching principles of the change initiative; moving discussions forward by narrowing down (i.e. ‘funneling’) divergent interpretations and constantly reminding about what decisions have to be made first; openly confronting other project team members by asking direct closed questions; framing the task, as difficult, complicated and even ‘causing physical pain’.

Episode 9 Eliminating Fuzziness

Table 39 Participants of the Project Team Meeting M2/22 - 04/05/2010

	Participants of the project meeting		**Speakers in Episode 9**
1	Sharleen	Project Director, DAMA	*
2	Fiona	Project Manager, DAMA	
3	Audrey	DAMA	*
4	Amanda	DAMA	
5	Anastasia	Faculty B	
6	Agnes	Faculty B	
7	Deborah	Faculty A	
8	Hannah	Faculty A	
9	Ethan	SP services	
10	Harriet	Pilot School 1	
11	Linda	Faculty B	
12	Gillian	IO	
13	Doris	IO	
14	Sean	DAMA	*
15	George	Faculty 3	
16	Karen	DAMA	
17	Chloe	DAMA	

Scene 1 Chess endgame and checkmate

Table 40 Episode 9 Extract from the Project Team Meeting M2/22 - 04/05/2010

Sharleen: Project team to feed back to Sean on personalised web pages on the technical guide.' Sean, you look overwhelmed?

Sean: I have nothing to report.

Sharleen: Can I encourage you to look at those from the last meeting and pass on any comments? Has it changed since our last meeting? No? Okay, this is your last and final opportunity. not really, but useful for the feedback. So, 'Sean to look into possible options for positioning of content blocks and sections in personalised web pages.'

Sean: I haven't really done very much with this because we've been doing the testing and I didn't want to move the pages too much. I have moved all of the School content though into a School Contents section, so I have done that but I haven't yet looked at possible options of other content areas.

Sharleen: I am just thinking about the reason for that.

Sean: It was to do with a long column.

Sharleen: Yes, if we took a block out, we're making it-

162 Audrey: It's more complicated than that, so I think you can
163 take that off.
164 Sharleen: Okay. The next one was this issue of different semester dates

In the previous meeting (Episode 8), Audrey characterised the issue with a Personalised Web Page as complicated, difficult and even painful, thus framing it in a way that requires more knowledge and expertise about the subject matter. In this excerpt, divergent sensemaking that has become obvious on the previous meeting and multiple interpretations of the issue brought by the project team members are heard as being wiped away from the meeting discussions by her.
This episode opens by Sharleen, who is reading action points from the previous meeting [source: field notes]. She asks for the feedback on “the technical guide” for the Personalised Web Page (Lines 144-145) and nominates the next speaker (“Sean” – Lines 144 and 145). Sean takes the turn, and his reply suggests that no feedback has been received from the project team (Line 147). In her next turn (Lines 148-153), Sharleen addresses the project team asking them for comments [source: field notes]. The use of the word “encourage” in Sharleen’s utterance (Line 148) suggests opening up the possibility for negotiations and inviting other people who are present at the meeting (“you” – Line 148) to contribute to the discussion. Sharleen tries to facilitate the discussion but as her next utterance suggests, she has to move the meeting forward without any interactionally visible response from the project team members “No? Okay…” (Line 150).

In lines 154-158, Sean presents his account by suggesting that he has made some improvements on the page, but they are not significant because he has not moved the pages “too much” (Lines 154-155). Sean’s account does not reveal anything extraordinary and can be heard as Sean is reporting about the existing state of affairs. This account demonstrates Sean’s level of expertise as he has mentioned a range of practices he has been involved in, including “testing” (Line 155), moving “the pages” (Line 155), and moving “the School content” (Line 157). Sean is using the personal pronoun ‘I’ throughout his account, which suggests that he is separating himself from the group and by doing so he is indicating his commitments and responsibilities. Sean is switching to “we” only once (Line 154) when he is justifying the reason why he has not “really done very much” (Line 154).

In line 159, Sharleen takes her turn by interrupting Sean without any ‘polite’ token when asking for an explanation why content blocks and sections should be repositioned. This might be heard as evidence of a more powerful position occupying by Sharleen in the meeting. Sharleen’s request has been addressed by Sean, who takes the turn by replying “It was to do with a long column” (Line 160). Sean’s account starts with a pronoun ‘it’ providing a vague explanation for the issue of repositioning of the content blocks. Using a phrase “a long column” (Line 160) also suggests vagueness as it is pointing to the issue without giving a clear indication of the problem. On the other hand, this might be heard as the reference to the discussion about the positioning of the columns on the webpage that took place on the previous meeting. Sean’s utterance seems to encompass a host of unspecified meanings, and this ambiguity might be heard because Sean is distancing himself from the issue and not providing enough information for any actions to be taken. Sharleen interrupts Sean with her attempt of making sense of the issue, using a minimal alignment token “yes” (Line 161), and suggesting a hypothetical scenario starting with “if” (Line 161), thus framing the possibility of solving the issue of positioning by suggesting an option of taking “a block out” (Line 161). In her account, Sharleen is using ‘we’, not primarily making reference to Sean or herself, but implicating other members of the project team. The unfinished utterance (Line 161) suggests that Sharleen’s account has been interrupted by Audrey, who started her account clear and blunt, without using any hedging token, stating that the issue which Sharleen is trying to discuss is more problematic than simply taking a block out: “It’s more complicated than that” (Line 162). In the previous team meeting, Audrey has been heard as using straightforward criticism against other project team members. However, in this episode she is avoiding straight criticism against Sharleen, and focusing instead on the complicated nature of the issue by using the pronominal term “it” (Line 162).

Audrey’s account (Line 162-163) consists of two parts. In the first part, the problem formulation which sums up the previous points made by Sean (Line 160) and Sharleen (Line 162) regarding the positioning of content blocks and sections in personalised webpages is heard. This shows how Audrey affiliates herself with the statements of the previous speakers. The second part of the account suggests advice-giving activity by formulating what should be done. Starting with the pragmatic marker “I think” (Line 162) she is addressing her utterance to Sharleen by using the pronominal term “you” (Line 162). By doing this, Audrey creates the space for Sharleen’s future actions by using modality “you can” (Line 162) and suggests the decision of taking “that off” (Line 163). Sharleen’s token “okay” (Line 164) can be heard as prompt confirmation of Audrey’s high status in the organisation which has already been displayed in her account (Lines 162-163) by pointing out what Sharleen should or could do. Data reveals no interactionally visible disagreements from Sharleen or other project team members, and the discussion has been followed by a transition to another topic. This absence of interruptions and disagreements in response to Audrey’s account allows her to close the topic altogether with further possibilities for negotiation of meaning in the meeting. Thus, Audrey is finishing her categorisation work started on the previous meeting when she framed the project team as ‘not well suited to deal with the proposed change’.

In this excerpt, Audrey enacts discursive leadership by securing an agreement from the meeting chair to move the source of the potential conflict outside the meeting – “I think you can take that off” (Line 162-163). This ‘diversion’ (Holmes and Marra, 2004) of the potentially contentious issue allows Audrey to avoid overt disagreement of a large group of stakeholders moving the discussion of the issue outside the context of the current meeting.

The excerpt from the project team meeting minutes, which supports the analytical interpretation of the utterances in this episode, is presented in Table 41.

Table 41 Excerpt from the Project Team Meeting Minutes M2/22 - 04/05/2010

Personalised web pages

- Sean has now moved all school content into one block.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

My analysis of the extended sequences of talk-in-interaction demonstrates how the proposed change initiatives have been actively ‘*brought into being’* (Whittle et al., 2014a, p. 89) by the leadership actors who participated in the project team meetings. I used a sensemaking account as a unit of analysis, and showed how leadership actors’ sensemaking about technological change is crucial for persuading the project team members to follow a change initiative and mobilising them towards desirable outcomes. I applied ‘an intrinsically situated methodology’ (Iszatt-White, 2011, p. 133) to illustrate that leadership can be observed in the naturally occurring conversations as an ongoing situational accomplishment. My analysis reveals the skilled ways of utilising the rich repertoire of discursive devices which enabled leadership actors to respond to ‘an ever-changing kaleidoscope of situations’ (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p. 156) by constructing their understanding of the events and shaping the outcomes of their discussions. By analysing the most salient discursive devices used by the participants in the discursive interactions in the chosen episodes, I was able to demonstrate how these discursive devices worked to construct discursive leadership in meetings. In other words, my analysis shows leadership as a situated practice which is enacted discursively by various leadership actors in a plurality of ways depending on the local context.

An overview of discursive devices observed in leadership interactions is presented in Table 42.

Table 42 Catalogue of discursive devices displayed by leadership actors

Discursive devices involved in discursive leadership	***Examples***	***Relevant References***
Discursive leadership is enacted through		
(i) Invoking agenda and maintaining topical coherence	Episode 1 Line 325 Episode 2 Lines 133-135 Episode 3 Line 637 Episode 4 Lines 117-118	Asmuß and Svennevig (2009), Boden (1994), Samra-Fredericks (2003), Svennevig (2012a)
(ii) Using metaphors of coercion	Episode 1 Line 334	Cornelissen *et al*. (2008), Alvesson and Spicer (2011)
(iii) Invoking predicates associated with 'negative' connotations	Episode 1 Lines 344-345 Episode 6 Line 301 Episode 8 Lines 1166-1167	Housley and Fitzgerald (2009), Jayyusi (1984)
(iv) Interest talks	Episode 1 Lines 365-367, Lines 368-370 Episode 8 Lines 1192-1193	Mueller and Whittle (2011), Whittle *et al*. (2010), Whittle *et al.* (2014b)
(v) Rehearsing 'prepared' arguments and counterarguments	Episode 1 Lines 363-372	Symon (2008)
(vi) Listing and itemisation	Episode 1 Lines 353-357 Episode 2 Lines 136-138, Lines 140-141	Fairhurst (2007, 2011), Jayyusi (1984), Orton and Weick (1990), Samra-Fredericks (2003)
(vii) Questioning	Episode 3 Line 650 Episode 8 Lines 1301-1303	Boden (1994), Samra-Fredericks (2003)
(viii) Using formulations	Episode 3 Lines 671-672 Episode 8 Lines 1485-1486	Clifton (2006)
(ix) Motive talks	Episode 6 Lines 314-315	Whittle *et al.* (2010), Whittle *et al.*, (2015)
(x) Triggering emotions	Episode 7 Lines 224-228	Bartunek *et al.* (2006), Cornelissen *et al. (*2014), Holmes (2007), Holmes

		(2006), Iszatt-White (2009), James and Arroba (2005), Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010), Myers (2007)
(xi) Using predicates which suggest vague and multiple interpretations	Episode 6 Line 314 Episode 7 Line 224	Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), Eisenberg (1984)
(xii) Deploying knowledge of 'typified' categories	Episode 1 Lines 327-333 Episode 6 Line 301 Episode 8 Line 1380	Housley and Fitzgerald (2002), Jayyusi (1984), Fairhurst (2007), Larsson and Lundholm (2013), Sacks (1992), Samra-Fredericks (2003), Whittle *et al.* (2015)
(xiii) 'Funneling'	Episode 8 Lines 1191-1193, Lines 1238-1239 Lines 1282-1284, Lines 1326-1327, Lines 1350-1351	Whittle *et al*. (2011), Holmes and Marra (2004)
(xiv) Face-threatening	Episode 8 Lines 1167-1169	Culpeper *et al.* (2003), Bousfield (2008), Lachenicht (1980), Locher and Watts (2005), Samra-Fredericks (2010a)
(xv) 'Scaling-up' using metaphors of inevitability	Episode 3 Lines 661-665 Episode 8 Lines 1169-1170	Leonardi and Jackson (2009)
(xvi) Introducing 'negative spin'	Episode 3 Lines 639-642, Lines 648-649	Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), Pratt (2000)
(xvii) Positive programming	Episode 3 Line 674 Episode 4 Line 131 Episode 7 Lines 247-249	Pratt (2000)

In my analysis, I also focused on the leadership actors’ use of categories and category predicates in project team meetings’ interactions to demonstrate empirically how leadership actors attempted to make sense of and give sense to the implementation of the new IS in the University. Using a powerful discursive lens afforded by membership categorisation, I identified three membership categorisation practices through which leadership has been discursively enacted; they are:

- Reconstituting a category to deflect and eliminate anticipated resistance to the change process;
- Characterising a category to discredit the opposition to the change process in a veiled way;
- Generating category constraints to minimise the effects of divergent interpretations regarding a particular issue.

An overview of category predication work of leadership actors is presented in Table 43.

In what follows next, I present the synthesis of the overall findings but closing this part of the thesis by no means represents the end of the data analysis process as it is still ongoing and insights continue ‘knocking’ at my door, giving me directions for growth and ideas for future research and publications.

Table 43 Category predication work of leadership actors

	Membership Categorisation work accomplished	*Category*	*Category Predicates*	*Source*	*'Social facts' established collaboratively*
Vignette 1	Reconstituting a category to deflect and eliminate anticipated resistance to the change process	Excluded courses	-send their own e-mails and currently opt-out of the central service -absence of legitimate reason for opting out -need ' a steer with a stick' -there are not so many of them	Episode 1, Lines 387-388 Episode 1, Lines 341-324 Episode 1, Lines 334 Episode 1, Line 349	There is local resistance that needs to and can be eliminated if change is to happen
Vignette 2	Characterising a category to discredit the opposition to the change process in a veiled way	DTD department	-never replying to the project team e-mails -having 'funny' bureaucratic procedures -forgetting to switch the system back -omitting the project from being added to the notification log	Episode 6, Line 301 Episode 6, Line 304 Episode 6, Line 315 Episode 7, Lines 210-212	There is a department which has a lack of professional competence, it cannot be controlled and thus can hinder change efforts
Vignette 3	Generating category constraints to minimise the effects of divergent interpretations regarding particular issue	Project team members	-not being in previous discussion -need to go and 'think it through' -not being aware about problems with the webpage -not being clear about overarching principles -not being clear about what might be included on the page	Episode 8, Lines 1165-1167 Episode 8, Line 1168-1169 Episode 8, Lines 1380-1381 Episode 8, Lines 1390-1397 Episode 8, Lines 1404-1405	Project team members are not well suited to deal with the proposed change themselves

Chapter 8 Contributions, Implications, Future Research

Synthesis of Overall Findings and Contribution to Knowledge

The thesis aims to respond to the call for developing more empirical studies of day-to-day communications among leadership actors and other organisation members. In line with my main research aim to explore the 'daily doing' of leadership in situ and in real time in the context of technological change, I presented the analysis and findings in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 producing multiple contributions that are sought to move the theory forward in the areas of organisational sensemaking, discursive leadership and the discursive construction of technological change.

In asking how the theory might benefit from the result of my study, I am aware that taking a discourse analytic perspective, as presented in Chapter 4, my approach to this research is empirically-driven rather than intentionally theory-advancing. Therefore, at the outset, my study has not been conceived as producing a causal variance model by uncovering the true reality that exists out there. However, the theory is nevertheless advanced in a sense, as findings of my study have advanced knowledge in areas that traditionally have existed within the purview of other perspectives; for example, the cognitive view of sensemaking and leadership psychology. As a result of the analysis that has been conducted in this study and findings that have been presented, we now understand more about the social side of sensemaking, rather than assuming its *a priori* status as cognition. We also understand more about the situated accomplishment of leadership which is discursively enacted by leadership actors in different ways depending on the local context rather than treating it as *fait accompli*. Furthermore, being designed as a social constructionist study of technological change, this research is expected to contribute to the philosophy of technology by offering novel analytical insights that can help answer some of the philosophical questions about the relationship between technology and society. Findings offered by this detailed, empirically informed study of technological change can be incorporated in philosophical studies of technology enriching some abstract theoretical models of technological change. Although a full investigation of the contribution of this study to the philosophy of technology is beyond the scope of this thesis, I do suggest that the findings of the study can join the ongoing conversation between the theory of technological determinism and the social construction of technology by demonstrating that, paraphrasing Winner (1993), the 'black box' of technology is not 'empty'. As a result of the analysis that has been conducted in this study, we now understand more about the processes of social negotiation and interpretation of technological change and, in particular, social controversies in which technologies play their role. Thus, it might be suggested that 'theory' as knowledge is indeed advanced by the study presented in my thesis. Now I summarise and discuss the major implications of the main contributions of this study.

In my research, I acknowledge the ambiguity of the leadership phenomenon, and being sceptical about the 'grandiose' top-down image of leadership in the mainstream organisation studies, I took a different path looking for analytic possibilities provided by a discursive view on leadership. Without belittling and diminishing insights gained through the existing research in leadership and appreciating a variety of research conversations in the leadership field, my interest lies in advancing knowledge about the 'daily doing' of leadership by paying attention to its social and discursive sides. Within the existing academic literature, there is already a plethora of discourse-based studies providing various approaches to study leadership. My research pursues an empirical, interactional approach to leadership by stressing its situated and intersubjective dimensions. In this sense, it contributes to the studies that question and reformulate mainstream understanding of leadership by offering empirical exploration of a leadership phenomenon which emerges and unfolds in daily discursive encounters (e.g. Larsson and Lundholm, 2010, 2013; Whittle *et al*., 2015)

I started my thesis with the definition of leadership suggested by Fairhurst and Grant (2010). On the basis of my findings and analysis, I offer a definition of leadership which reflects my understanding of the phenomena that I have observed and analysed.

Leadership is an interpretive sensemaking process of co-constructing a 'landscape' for the next possible actions by generating 'intelligible formulations' for others within which more or less shared meaning is achieved through interactional work of leadership actors.

My study seeks to advance our understanding about how technological change is accomplished through discursive leadership practice. Therefore, I focused on examining interpretive procedures and discursive practices that leadership actors use to make sense of and to give sense to the introduction of the new IS system by drawing on an in-depth longitudinal study of technological change in the University. By designing the longitudinal fieldwork and collecting naturally occurring talk on the project team meetings during the process of IS implementation, my study provided the possibility to be in the ‘right place at the right time’ and to capture ‘the layered everyday communication processes’ as they unfolded in real time (Zoller and Fairhurst, 2007, p.1355). Unlike much work in leadership studies based on interviews and questionnaires, the collected data is not deliberately edited or ‘sanitised’; it appears in this thesis close to its use in the original context reflecting the situated nature of the research setting.

Being empirically driven, my research puts forward a range of interpretive approaches including EDA, MCA, CA and organisational ethnography to examine how leadership as meaning management is discursively enacted in the process of technological change. My study is informed by the tradition of ethnomethodological research, whilst by no means adopting its strict canons, which enables me to explore ethno- (i.e. taken-for granted) methods through which leadership actors construct a meaningful sense of their social reality. Setting an ethnomethodologically-informed lens to study leadership actors’ sensemaking accounts in a set of episodes allowed me to demonstrate empirically how discursive leadership enables and facilitates the organising process in the project team meetings. My analysis shows how ongoing sensemaking about the new IS enables leadership actors ‘to render the organisational landscape intelligible and action-able’ (Mueller *et al*., 2013), in other words, co-construction of an intelligible ‘landscape’ for the next possible action encourages possible and desirable technological change to happen. Thus, my research advances existing work on organisational sensemaking by an empirical demonstration of the organising properties of leadership as ‘sensemaking in action’ (Pye, 2005). In doing so, my study contributes to the existing research which recognises the ability to shape the views of others by shaping and directing their sensemaking through discursive practices in the form of talk-in-interaction as a key leadership skill (e.g. Carroll and Simpson, 2012; Fairhurst, 2007; Larsson and Lundholm, 2013; Whittle *et al*., 2015; Wodak *et al*., 2011).

The key feature of my research is the detailed observations of how ‘leadership work’ is actually ‘done’ (Kelly *et al.*, 2006, p. 186) and how leadership is discursively constructed to accomplish technological change in organisations. The value of a methodology introduced in my thesis to study discursive leadership is that it has the potential for giving greater insights into microdiscursive work of leadership actors that underlies technological change by providing the analytical access to ‘the essentials of the situated accomplishment of leadership work in the very setting in which it occurs’ (Iszatt-White, 2011, p. 132). By scrutinising naturally occurring talk-in-interaction, my analysis offers a nuanced appreciation of the situated accomplishment of leadership and reveals unfolding and emergent qualities of technological change that are grounded in the daily discursive practices of leadership actors. My research thereby contributes to an emergent research agenda that seeks to study the ‘doing’ of technological change by examining members’ interactional accomplishment of such a phenomenon.

Taking a broader view of leadership offered by Fairhurst (2007) which sees leadership as going beyond formal hierarchical positions, I followed the discursive encounters of leadership actors involved in the implementation of the new IS system in the University. By elaborating in greater detail the stories of ‘doing leading’ in technological change presented in sections 5, 6, 7 of this thesis, I offered three empirical illustrations drawn from my extensive dataset of transcriptions of the project team meetings. They demonstrated how leadership actors skilfully use available discursive resources to construct and negotiate their position in team discussions and to shape the views of others. Being informed by ‘an ethnomethodological *mindset’* (Iszatt-White, 2011, emphasis in the original) and giving priority to participants’ own sensemaking, my detailed analysis shows that the leadership actors have an array of discursive devices (see Table 43) which they deploy interactionally to make sense of and to give sense to technological change. For example, the leadership actors deployed discursive devices to frame organisational issues in a way that helped to support the desirable change initiative (e.g. interest talk in Episode 1, metaphors of inevitability in Episode 3) and to eliminate anticipated resistance to change (e.g. metaphors of coercion in Episode 1, face-threatening in Episode 8). Thus, exploring how leadership is discursively enacted and publicly displayed on a minute-by-minute basis by different leadership actors through a plurality of ways depending on the local context, my study reveals the inherently contextual nature of leadership and offers an important advancement in understanding the leadership phenomenon as the situated collaborative accomplishment.

By illuminating the ‘category predication work’ (Whittle *et al*., 2015) of leadership actors through which technological change is enacted, my study makes a contribution to a further understanding of discursive practices through which leadership is constituted in organisational life. Recognising category predication work as ‘a key component of discursive leadership practice’ (Whittle *et al.*, 2015), my study demonstrates how leadership actors use particular category predicates to construct ‘definition of the situation’ and thus shape the course of future actions towards desirable organisational outcome. For example, my analysis demonstrates how leadership actors’ framing of the category ‘Excluded courses’ as the source of local resistance and reasoning about how they can be acted upon, facilitated a sequence of activities undertaken by the marketing managers across the University aimed at eliminating this category (Vignette 1). Through the exploration of category-bound knowledge and category-bound reasoning that leadership actors use to make sense of and to give sense to organisational change, my study reveals how the framing of desirable technological change (i.e. implementation of the new IS across the University) is accomplished through the discursive leadership of the project team members. In doing so, my study provides additional evidence to support the view of leadership as emerging in the interaction of leadership actors within their ordinary and mundane activities in daily organisational life.

Looking beyond the surface of the usual account of leadership, similar to Lewis Carroll’s Alice whose conversations brought her into close encounters not only with Humpty Dumpty, the Hatter, the White Rabbit, the Cheshire Cat and many other characters but also with puzzles, paradoxes and riddles; during my data analysis, I have been caught up by some interesting leadership paradoxes lurking in my data. For example, I observed how leadership actors were interactively involved in ‘face-threatening’ and ‘finger-pointing’ activities by using ‘a stick’ to get things done, and treating a member from another department as the butt of jokes. This discovery made me reflect on a more ‘sinister’ and ‘darker’ side of leadership which is interactionally visible when analysing transcriptions using a microdiscursive lens. Another example is my observation that leadership actors are, in a sense, ‘leading resistance’ rather than ‘leading change’. This insight triggered my interest to the exploration of micro-level forms of resistance, particularly, how resistance is publicly displayed and demonstrably orientated to by the participants themselves in the naturally occurring conversations. Briefly acknowledged, both paradoxes albeit being worthy of in-depth exploration, will remain outside this thesis as areas that are ripe for further research. Other suggested areas for future research will be introduced in the concluding section of this chapter.

Implications for Practitioners

Several authors such as Taylor (2001), Van de Ven (2007) have discussed the importance of the findings of the research to be fed back to the wider society including practitioners and policymakers. However, the attempt to influence the wider audience with the results of the qualitative research seems problematic and for some writers even not possible (e.g. Taylor, 2001) due to the nature of the qualitative research which rejects key assumptions of positivist tradition such as generalisability of results, accurate predictions based on identified causal relationships. Considering that the qualitative research is based on a different set of assumptions which puts the main focus on exploring and understanding meaning rather than changing society, it is reasonable to expect that the qualitative research has got applications that are different from those developed from the quantitative research. Therefore, by using the term ‘implications’, I am not providing suggestions on how to better manage or lead technological change, albeit, being a manager for more than 10 years myself, I believe that this might be the primary instrumental interest of any practitioner. However, as I have mentioned above, in conducting my research I have always kept in mind two audiences: the academics and the managers. Therefore, I believe that I have something to offer to practitioners and make my research interesting to them.

Firstly, accepting that findings presented in this thesis are situated, partial and contingent, I argue that they still have valuable implications not in terms of direct interventions by producing straightforward recommendations for improvement of current and future leadership practices, but in terms of offering an increasing *awareness* of the skilled use of language in leadership practice. Fairhurst (2005), for example, points out the scarcity of training in the skills associated with the management of meaning in most leadership development programmes. Examples from my study could serve as a basis for, what Clifton (2006, p. 216) calls ‘awareness-training’ workshops which can facilitate discussions and stimulate reflections of how discursive resources might be used for the ‘*daily doing’* of leadership.

Secondly, a number of studies have already convincingly demonstrated how analytic findings and observations developed from a conversation analysis may be applied to intervene and shape institutional practices in different workplace settings (Antaki, 2011; Stokoe, 2011). For example, Stokoe (2014) has developed a unique CARM method (‘Conversation analytic Role-play Method’) which has been successfully implemented for delivering more than 80 communication skills workshops for mediators in the UK. Stokoe (2014) suggests the application of CARM for different workplaces using recording and discussing day-to-day activities such as meetings. I suggest that research material collected in the framework of my study (both research transcripts and recordings of naturally occurring interactions) could be used for developing similar learning programmes in business organisations. Similar to Stokoe (2011, 2014) I consider that such recordings could serve as an invaluable source of training materials providing participants with a unique opportunity to reflectively scrutinise the recordings of real meeting interactions rather than using the traditional, often quite abstract, role play method which is often criticised for its inauthenticity.

Avenues for Future Research

Identified avenues for future research are informed by the limitations of the current study. There are certain questions that have been raised during the data analysis but being out of the focus of the current study they have remained unanswered in the process of conducting the research. I suggest that these areas provide intriguing areas that can be developed in the future. I address them in turn.

Emotions in Organisational Sensemaking and Leadership

Naturally occurring data collected in the framework of the current study reveals that sensemaking and sensegiving processes are often accompanied by the emotional labour of leadership actors. This observation supports the existing conversation in the literature which theorises organisational life as an emotional experience (Cunliffe and Coupland, 2012; Kangasharju and Nikko, 2009; Rafaeli and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2004; Samra-Fredericks, 2004a) and explores the role of emotions in organisational sensemaking (Bartunek *et al.,* 2006; Cornelissen *et al.,* 2014; Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010; Myers, 2007) and leadership practice (Iszatt-White, 2009; James and Arroba, 2005), in particular. However, investigating the questions of why and how emotions might occur in organisational context and theorising the role of emotions in organisational sensemaking and leadership goes beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, some intriguing directions remain open for future research. For example, considering that the role of the body has been largely ignored in sensemaking research with some exceptions (Cunliffe and Coupland, 2012), future studies might extend the sensemaking theory by incorporating the insights based on recent developments in the area of ‘embodiment in sensemaking’ (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010) and exploring how the body as a resource of meaning making can be used by leadership actors to generate and/or shape their sensemaking accounts of themselves and their organisational ‘reality’. Furthermore, the potential of addressing ‘embodiment in leadership’ has been highlighted by Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014, p. 24) who argue that in the area of leadership studies there is a lack of attention to materiality of leading and following in general and suggest further development of ‘embodied ways of knowing’ about these processes in future research.

Women and Leadership

Project team members who participated in the meetings that I have observed during my fieldwork have been predominantly represented by women. Amanda's comment about the project 'we are breast-feeding it' suggests an interesting dimension for exploring female discursive leadership in future research. New avenues for future research might focus on understanding the intersection of gender and leadership addressing gendered identities of leaders within organisations and reflecting on the overwhelming dominance of masculine discourses in organisational literature (Ludeman and Erlandson, 2004). For instance, Fairhurst (2007, p. 105) observes that the executive coaching Discourses explicitly exclude the possibility of alpha female, 'because they are not 'alpha' enough'. Therefore, comparative exploration of the alpha male leaders' and alpha female leaders' discursive leadership, for example, seems a very fruitful direction for future research. What does it mean for women 'doing leadership'? How are women enacting leadership and putting discursive leadership into practice? Can a woman's attempt of 'doing leadership' be misunderstood as 'doing mothering'? (Fletcher, 2004). Women, as Fletcher (2004, p. 655) suggests might 'do leadership' and might engage in 'postheroic' leadership practice (collective learning, mutual engagement and empowerment) 'without a recognition that this is leadership behaviour and without expectation of similar behaviour from others.' Therefore, future research might help to enhance an understanding of why women are not as visible as expected in the leadership arena and how they might benefit by moving away from dominating masculine models of leadership.

Sensemaking and Sociomateriality

Reflecting on my research, which foregrounds discourse, it might be noticed that almost nothing has been said about 'the material context' from whence, as Gergen (1999, p. 85) puts it, '[discourse] derives its potency'. Therefore, I refer to some critical voices that have been raised recently towards the 'linguistic turn' in social sciences. This ongoing discussion is echoing another critical question about 'where agency should be located?' (Pentland and Singh, 2012). In the social sciences, 'agency' is typically defined exclusively as an attribute of a person, and human beings are believed to be the sole actors in the interactional scene (Boudreau and Robey, 2005; Poole and DeSanctis, 2004; Vaast and Walsham, 2005). The question of where to locate an agency is particularly pertinent to theorising about technology which offers a complex mix of human and non-human (material) agency (Barad, 2003; Callon, 1986; Latour and Woolgar, 1986; Suchman, 2007). The emphasis on human agency, which is salient in the ‘linguistic turn’, contributes to existing bifurcation between the social and the material world in social sciences (Cooren *et al.,* 2012). A growing number of studies challenge conventional distinctions between the social and the material, and acknowledge the mutually constitutive arrangements between human and material agencies. These studies include such conceptual developments as an actor-network theory (Latour, 1996b); mangle of practice (Pickering, 1995); sociotechnical ensemble (Bijker, 1995); object-centred sociality (Knorr - Cetina, 1997); relational materiality (Law, 2004); material sociology (Beunza *et al.*, 2006). Stemmed from the study of technology, an alternative perspective which is now gaining currency in social studies is related to examining what Orlikowski (2007) calls ‘constitutive entanglement’ of the social and the material in everyday life without privileging either humans or technology, and without maintaining their ontological separation. According to Orlikowski (2007, p. 1437), a *sociomaterial* (emphasis added) approach ‘asserts that materiality is integral to organising, positing that the social and the material are *constitutively entangled* (emphasis in the original) in everyday life… the social and the material are inextricably related – there is no social that is not also material, and no material that is not also social’ Such shift in thinking, advocated by Orlikowski (2007) and other scholars (Orlikowski and Scott, 2008), opens up important avenues by focusing an analytical lens on the sociomaterial aspects of everyday practices.

The growing number of scholars are referring to this promising emerging genre of research labelled as ‘sociomateriality’ (Orlikowski and Scott, 2008) in their analytical endeavour of understanding sociomaterial configurations that constitute organisational practices (Balogun *et al.*, 2014; Jarzabkowski and Pinch, 2013; Leonardi and Barley, 2010). Orlikowski (2007) suggests that focus on the sociomaterial aspects of everyday organisational practices provide the necessary analytical sensitivity for understanding the ongoing production of organisational life. Thus, examining the constitutive entanglements of technology and organisation (Orlikowski, 2007) in the daily sociomaterial practices opens up new ways of thinking about the technology-organisation interplay in the process of technological change by reconfiguring existing taken-for-granted assumptions. Orlikowski (2007, p. 1436) argues: 'Materiality is not an incidental or intermittent aspect of organisational life; it is integral to it.' If we are to follow Orlikowski (2007) and accept this assumption, then we might notice the relative neglect of the role of materiality in existing sensemaking research. In an attempt to rectify the above mentioned shortcoming, an appreciation of materiality in sensemaking has been gradually growing in the sensemaking literature over the last years, and the development of this theorisation can be seen in the works of Cornelissen *et al.* (2014), Stigliani and Ravasi (2012), Whiteman and Cooper (2011). All these various authors demonstrate that it is likely that sensemaking processes are not simply cognitive or discursive but they are inter-linked, affected by and engaged with material artifacts. While acknowledging a prevailing among the social constructionists view that sensemaking is 'an issue of language, talk, and communication' (Weick *et al.,* 2005, p. 409), Stigliani and Ravasi (2012) observe that there is a need for an integrated theoretical framework accounting for interplay between conversational and material practices in sensemaking. This means that in addition to studying social processes of organisational sensemaking, researchers need to appreciate that materiality plays a much greater role in sensemaking than has been previously recognised.

Distributed Sensemaking

There is an ongoing debate in organisational sensemaking literature regarding the extent to which shared understanding, beliefs and agreements are necessary for collective or coordinated action in organisations. This discussion reflects a basic focus of organising which can be succinctly framed by a question: 'How does action become coordinated in the world of multiple realities?' (Weick,1995, p.75). Outlining the contour of possible development of the sensemaking theory, Weick *et al.* (2005) suggest focusing on distributed sensemaking as one of the possible directions for future research. Maitlis and Christianson (2014, p. 102), similar to Weick *et al*. (2005), consider the discussion about distributed sensemaking particularly promising for enhancing an understanding about 'how individuals who hold different pieces of information are able to collectively construct new meaning.' In sensemaking literature, distributed sensemaking has been conceptualised in diverse ways. According to Kendra and Wachtendorf (2006, p. 2), distributed sensemaking is 'the development of awareness of events, needs, and possible actions by individuals and organizations with little or no expectation of such development.' Fisher *et al.* (2012, p. 1) define distributed sensemaking as 'an iterative process in which users save and organise their own sensemaking efforts, which are then available to subsequent users with whom they are neither collaborating nor communicating, and may not even know.' Overall, existing, but still relatively rare studies on distributed sensemaking are predominantly informed by research on distributed cognition (Fisher *et al.*, 2012; Weick, 2005). Data analysis from my study cautiously suggests the distributed character of sensemaking. However, studies on distributed sensemaking are only at the beginning of a research agenda which needs to be taken forward considering the importance of understanding of distributed sensemaking for everyday organising.

Personal Reflections

> ***In long-distance running, the only opponent***
> ***you have to beat is yourself,***
> ***the way you used to be'.***
> *Haruki Murakami*
> *'What I talk about when I talk about running'*

By all means, when I began writing personal reflections, I had no intention to make a plaster cast of my PhD experience. Rather, for me it was an opportunity to introduce a variation on the theme of my personal re-invention that I have undergone and to tell a creative, live and ever-changing story about a transformational shift from a professional accountant to a discourse analyst whilst doing a doctoral degree. And in this process of reflective writing, the events and details are presented in a completely arbitrary order and have not been arranged according to their significance as significance itself remains quite subjective for me; and at this stage, it is quite difficult to judge what event has been more important and significant in my journey. I started my PhD journey knowing not a lot about what I was about to encounter along the way. And I am using this reflective statement as a possibility to grasp my learning experience by 'putting down my thoughts in writing' as Haruki Murakami (2009) used to say. Therefore, in what follows, I am going to focus on what doing a doctorate degree has meant to me as a person and what I have learnt through putting my mind, spirit and body in writing a PhD thesis.

Peter Owen Jones (2015) once wrote: 'Walking, as many of us know, is not just about getting from here to there; it is about what we encounter along the way, both internally and externally.' Being a great fan of walking, I couldn't agree more, although, some might argue that walking as an activity has no relevance to writing a PhD thesis and doing a doctorate degree. However, my experience suggests that the PhD journey can offer an interesting parallel to the walking experience. Let me just refer back to Peter Owen Jones (2015) who also said: 'When we walk, we walk through two landscapes: an exterior land of trees, seas, cities, mountains and fields along the paths that lead into our own interior world.' Similarly, in my PhD journey, I was familiarising myself with the 'research landscape' comprising various ontological and epistemological positions, different research methods and approaches which helped me to explore reality in numerous ways. And this at times was quite provocative by challenging my existing assumptions and offering new ways of understanding reality. I had to be open-minded, flexible enough to embrace these challenges allowing myself to see the world through a different analytical lens. For example, when I started my doctoral journey, there were so many areas and territories of the research landscape that I felt unfamiliar with (social constructionism, discourse analysis and ethnomethodology might be good examples) and, therefore, my road was more rugged than I had anticipated.

Before I make a step forward into my reflection, let me briefly look back. Since my high school, I have always wanted to be a linguist and being an accountant, auditor and management consultant was not definitely my calling but a quirk of fate happened at that time when my country was embracing market economy. Working in industry for more than ten years has significantly influenced my analytical mindset. Critical scholars usually call this - ‘managerial ideology’ - which is based on a belief in ‘a managers’ prerogative to manage’ (Alvesson and Willmott, 2003). This managerial perspective developed during my professional experience and was re-enforced by my MBA degree. Without any doubt, the MBA course provided me with the clear and systematic knowledge about how to manage organisations in the most effective ways and to ensure its long-term survival. Being intrigued by the relationship between organisation and technology, I wrote my Master’s dissertation in the area of customer relationship management (CRM) and information technology (IT), which has been naturally developed into my PhD proposal.

My PhD journey has whetted my appetite by offering various theoretical ways of thinking about organisations and technology and thus opening my analytical horizon to contemporary perspectives of organisational theory. These perspectives demonstrate that social reality is more arbitrary, undetermined and precarious than has been indicated by mainstream management theory. I particularly engaged with the studies exploring organisations as socially constructed rather than objective entities, which I found more insightful than others when trying to understand the organisational phenomenon I was studying. At that time, I have realised that I have got my theoretical ‘blinkers’ thinking about technology only as a way of achieving organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Looking retrospectively, I see my increased interest in social constructionism as a positive response to my growing analytical pessimism towards limitations of the works informed by technocratic agenda.

Being driven by my increased interest of studying organisations as they are, rather than how to manage them effectively, I have developed a strong interest in relationship between organisation and language. Given the challenges of this new, unfamiliar area of knowledge for me, I passionately engaged with literature by examining the philosophical, sociological and linguistic premises of various aspects of organisational life by exploring some very different ways of thinking about how language works in organisations. I constantly sought for new possibilities to enhance, re-articulate and represent my understanding of the crucial role of language in talk of any manager and employee in their day-to-day relations with others. Throughout my research, I maintained my analytical curiosity about the everydayness of organisational life being inspired by the sociology of mundane and analytical works of Erving Goffman, Harold Garfinkel, Harvey Sacks and Deirdre Boden. Even though, one could argue that in the era of globalisation, exploration of mundane reality and day-to-day ordinary organisational practices is not so important for investigation. I have also been inspired by areas which are not directly related to my main analytical enquiry. For example, one of my biggest inspirations is - researchers who are exploring the nature of DNA and who have been fascinated by the micro-world that they were discovering. As Honor Fell (1953) put it in her early sketch of DNA lecture notes: ‘The more closely we examine a natural object the more beautiful, exciting and mysterious it becomes… A single living cell is much more beautiful and improbable than the solar system.’

As I wanted to discover and explore those minutiae details of ‘doing leadership’ that remain unnoticed beneath the purview of mainstream management studies, I have developed almost forensic skills in order to understand the underlying logic of the unfolded processes of organisational sensemaking. In order to generate a more insightful contribution on the processes of leading organisational change, I followed the process of abduction for providing relevant theoretical interpretation for my analytical insights. I have honed my research skills in analysis and interpretation of naturally occurring talk learning from leading experts in the field. However, just as some other researchers have already noticed, it still remains a mystery for me how some of these analytical insights have emerged during my data analysis. As a researcher, whose primary analytical interest is focused on the continuous, unsystematic, hurly-burly of daily organisational work, I understood that my study might result in discovering nothing miraculous. However, during my PhD journey, I have not let myself get away from my empirical commitments; even though the final written piece is presented, perhaps, as a less breath-taking narrative than it has been conceived.

With all honesty, academic writing itself was not coming to me naturally, and I was learning to write while progressing with my research. I made an effort to make it as my daily routine learning from writing genius including Nikolai Gogol, Ernst Hemingway and, of course, my dad, Rifkat Gadelshin. My dad is a poet, and through all his life he has been keeping the rhythm of writing every day. Consistency and concentration are important skills that I have learnt from him, and tried to improve through my PhD journey. I have trained myself into a habit of consistent writing. I bought a wall calendar and decided to give myself a red star for everyday when I was writing. Now, looking back at that calendar, I am really proud of myself as there were just a few days missing. I was proud that I have achieved the level of consistency in my writing and worked with my PhD almost every day especially in my final year that helped me to feel ‘unstoppable’ even when the conditions were not particularly favourable for me. Similarly to walking and regular exercising in the gym, which helped to stay fit during my doctorate journey, a habit of everyday writing, in other words maintaining the rhythm of writing, has made me a stronger person, both emotionally and mentally.

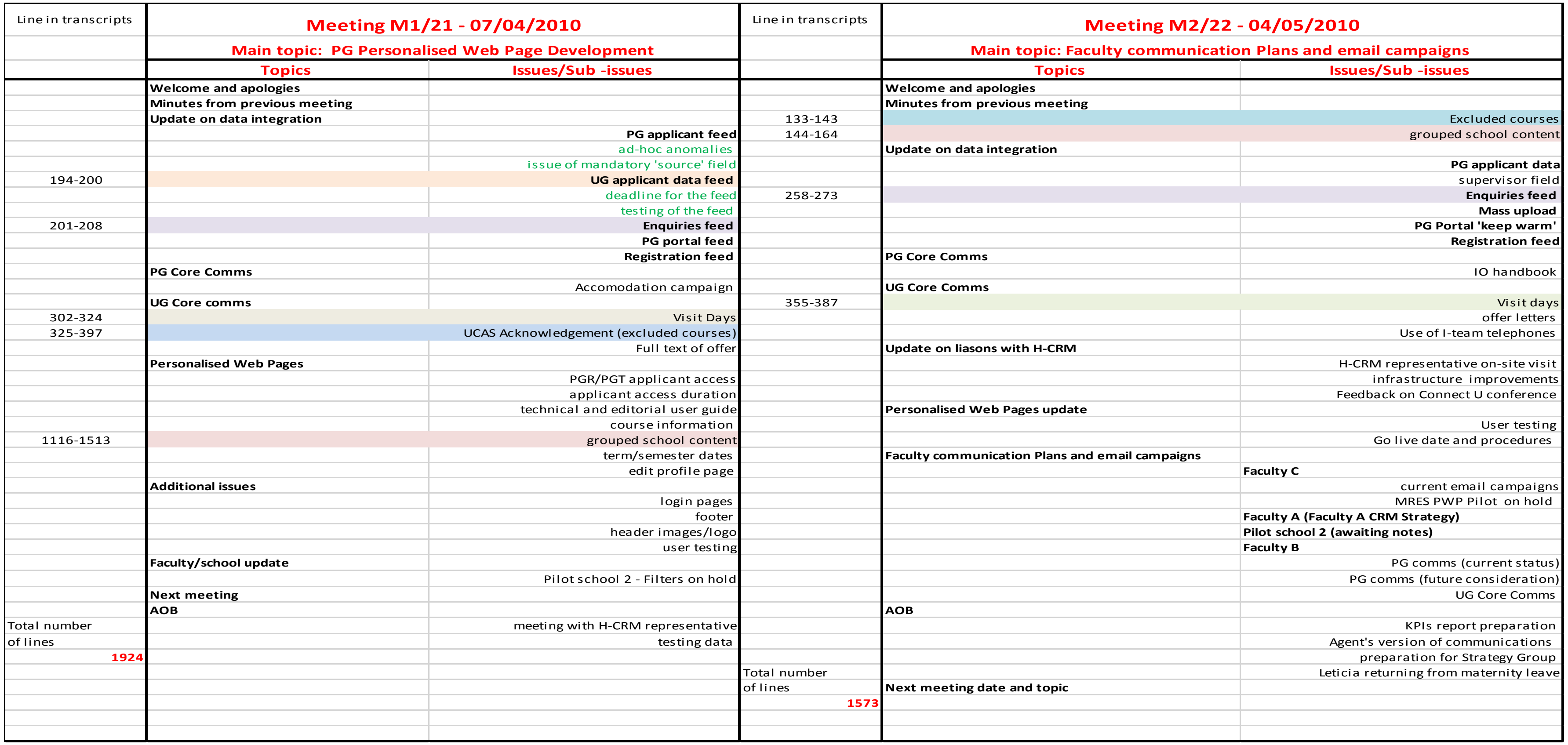
When I started my PhD journey, I set myself a goal to finish my thesis in four years. The most challenging and painful part of my PhD journey was a sense of disappointment by the end of the fourth year when I realised that I would not be able to hit the target of four years as it had been initially planned. The research at that stage was raw, messy and it felt like all my hard work and dedication wasn’t really paying off. I was struggling to put my head around hundreds of pages of collected data and endless volumes of transcripts; they remained silent for me. The process of conducting discourse analysis in the framework of my research proved to be far from being straightforward and allowed for experience of fuzziness rather than clarity. I experienced various things including ‘data suffocation’, uncertainty in which lens to use (I tried CDA, DHA, narrative and storytelling analyses), and, most frustrating, that despite all my efforts to make my data ‘speak to me’, it seemed it ‘didn’t want to talk’ to me. Fatigue was another factor that slowed down my writing progress in a way. It was both: mental and physical. But the interesting thing was that this fatigue disappeared when my lengthy PhD road brought me to my analytical home where I could finally unlock my data being equipped with a ‘a set of keys’ cut by principles of ethnomethodology. The bulky body of my research was suddenly getting into shape; a misty line of discussion has got its clarity and a medley of different ideas has finally got a clear structure. Sounds like magic, isn’t it? But for me, it was not magic, but a result achieved by a consistent way of personal and professional development and also an enormous amount of hard routine work.

Walking can be different. For example, wire-walking. Of course, we can immediately recollect the astonishing and breath-taking high wire walk between the Twin Towers by Philippe Petit in 1974. While wire-walking, perhaps, sounds romantic and exciting, quite a few people know how much sweat and blood it takes to acquire a required foot-skill, to establish a new relationship with gravity, to tame vertigo in order to become a confident wire-walker. Put simply, you have to practise every day. You have to learn how to make small steps, fall, stand up and make another small step and repeat it again and again until you are able to get the balance and recreate it in every step making a fair walk without falling. As Philippe Petit himself mentioned in one of the interviews that wire-walking is a constant invisible fight in motion for regaining a balance between the body and soul. I also remember once reading the blog on wire-walking saying that walking on wire…“is proof, incontrovertible, that if you practise even the most improbable things, they become possible….” I can’t but agree, and I am using wire-walking here as a powerful metaphor which can be related to the process of writing a PhD thesis. Similar to the wire-walking experience, doing a doctoral degree has helped me in a sense to learn how to make small steps, how to overcome my insecurities and a low level of self-confidence in my writing ability, how not to be afraid of making mistakes and ask silly questions, how not giving up when things don’t work as expected and how to find a fruitful balance between my free creative mind and a very planned, rational way of doing things which I have inherited from my professional accountancy past. Even though I have been inspired by wire-walking, I have never tried it so far. However, the level of happiness, confidence and even sense of personal triumph that I have got at the moment when I was writing the final page of my PhD thesis, I believe, is quite similar to the moment that any wire-walker experiences at least once in his/her life. The moment when you understand that this final step on the wire, the one you make before putting your foot on the stable platform, is simply impossible without hard work, motivation, consistency and focus on what you are doing.

My thesis has been grown as a product of trial-and-error which now represents the culmination of an endeavour of learning and exploring the sensemaking and leadership phenomena in organisations for more than five years. Now, finishing my PhD journey, I am still hesitant to call myself a professional academic as I am still relatively ‘young’ and quite ‘new’ to this profession. As any ‘sea boy’ on a deep-sea vessel, I am still afraid to stumble, to take a wrong path, or to sail to the wrong shore. But I can definitely call myself an aspiring academic who is learning to write and publish along the way. And just as in ‘*Alice in Wonderland*’, exploration of the fine-grained level of organisational interactions has guided me to more ‘Curiouser and curiouser!’ insights about organisational life the more I learn about it.

Appendix A

Example of project meetings topics and issues mapping



Line in transcripts	**Meeting M1/21 - 07/04/2010**		Line in transcripts	**Meeting M2/22 - 04/05/2010**	
	Main topic: PG Personalised Web Page Development			**Main topic: Faculty communication Plans and email campaigns**	
	Topics	**Issues/Sub -issues**		**Topics**	**Issues/Sub -issues**
	Welcome and apologies			**Welcome and apologies**	
	Minutes from previous meeting			**Minutes from previous meeting**	
	Update on data integration		133-143		Excluded courses
		PG applicant feed	144-164		grouped school content
		ad-hoc anomalies		**Update on data integration**	
		issue of mandatory 'source' field			**PG applicant data**
194-200		**UG applicant data feed**			supervisor field
		deadline for the feed	258-273		**Enquiries feed**
		testing of the feed			**Mass upload**
201-208		**Enquiries feed**			**PG Portal 'keep warm'**
		PG portal feed			**Registration feed**
		Registration feed		**PG Core Comms**	
	PG Core Comms				IO handbook
		Accomodation campaign		**UG Core Comms**	
	UG Core comms		355-387		Visit days
302-324		Visit Days			offer letters
325-397		UCAS Acknowledgement (excluded courses)			Use of I-team telephones
		Full text of offer		**Update on liasons with H-CRM**	
	Personalised Web Pages				H-CRM representative on-site visit
		PGR/PGT applicant access			infrastructure improvements
		applicant access duration			Feedback on Connect U conference
		technical and editorial user guide		**Personalised Web Pages update**	
		course information			User testing
1116-1513		grouped school content			Go live date and procedures
		term/semester dates		**Faculty communication Plans and email campaigns**	
		edit profile page			**Faculty C**
	Additional issues				current email campaigns
		login pages			MRES PWP Pilot on hold
		footer			**Faculty A (Faculty A CRM Strategy)**
		header images/logo			**Pilot school 2 (awaiting notes)**
		user testing			**Faculty B**
	Faculty/school update				PG comms (current status)
		Pilot school 2 - Filters on hold			PG comms (future consideration)
	Next meeting				UG Core Comms
	AOB			**AOB**	
Total number		meeting with H-CRM representative			KPIs report preparation
of lines		testing data			Agent's version of communications
1924					preparation for Strategy Group
			Total number		Leticia returning from maternity leave
			of lines	**Next meeting date and topic**	
			1573		

Appendix B

Interview Data Summary

	Name	Organisational Role	Date	Duration	Leadership actors / comments
1	Sharleen	Project Director (DAMA)	08/04/2010	00:55:30	Sharleen, Fiona and Erin (as project champion)
2	Fiona	Project Manager (DAMA)	23/03/2010	00:49:07	Sharleen and Erin (project champions; senior), Fiona, Amanda
3	Alina	Outside consultant	31/03/2010	00:20:13	Strategy group and project team
4	Audrey	Head of sub-department (DAMA)	18/06/2010	00:56:29	Sharleen, Fiona and Amanda (supporting role)
5	Amanda	DAMA, manager	21/05/2010	00:32:02	Sharleen, Fiona, Audrey, Amanda, hierarchical structure , Lisa
6	Karen	DAMA, admissions manager	08/09/2010	00:39:19	Sharleen, Fiona, Erin (probably)
7	Catherine	Pilot School 2, recruitment manager	25/03/2010	00:57:54	Sharleen, Fiona, Audrey, Alina, Britt
8	Hannah	Faculty A, marketing manager	19/04/2010	00:37:03	Sharleen, Fiona, Audrey, Harry, Alina
9	Anastasia	Faculty B, marketing manager	24/05/2010	00:38:17	DAMA
10	Rhea	Pilot School 1, marketing manager	04/06/2010	00:30:07	Sharleen, Fiona, Audrey, Amanda
11	Agnes	Faculty B, marketing manager	06/07/2010	00:40:36	Sharleen, Fiona
12	Ethan	Student Progress (SP) Services, manager	13/12/2010	00:49:12	Sharleen, Audrey, DAMA, Britt, Harry
13	George	Faculty C, recruitment manager	22/07/2010	00:42:38	Amanda and Fiona – functional people, Sharleen – not in a functional sense
14	Leticia	DAMA, manager	03/09/2010	00:34:11	Sharleen and Amanda – background
15	Harriet	Pilot School 1, deputy head	04/06/2010	00:30:07	Sharleen, Fiona, Audrey, Amanda
16	Larissa	Pilot School 2, marketing manager	25/03/2010	00:41:58	Sharleen, Audrey, Erin is not considered as a leader because I can't see her

17	Linda	Faculty B, recruitment manager	03/06/2010	00:23:57	Sharleen and Audrey – chairs; Fiona and Amanda more operational
18	Doris	International office, manager	12/07/2010	00:32:04	Sharleen, Audrey, Alina
19	Deborah	Faculty A, marketing and recruitment manager	08/03/2010	00:32:17	Sharleen, Fiona, Alina
20	Chloe	DAMA, specialist	15/10/2010	00:41:52	Sharleen as a champion, Fiona
21	Sean	DAMA, project manager	13/05/2010	00:39:41	Sharleen, Audrey, Erin as a project sponsor
22	Erin	Project Champion	11/06/2010	00:20:13	Sharleen, Audrey, Erin is responsible for budgeting decisions
23	Tina	Faculty C, manager	03/11/2010	00:20:38	Fiona, Amanda and Leticia are on the top of the things, Amanda seems to be very knowledgeable
24	Amelia	Student Progress (SP) Services, manager	13/12/2010	00:49:12	Sharleen, Audrey, Harry, MCD, Britt
25	Cora	DTD, IS manager	27/10/2010	00:37:58	Sharleen, Fiona, Amanda, MCD side not ISS side
26	Nina	DTD, IS project manager	19/10/2010	00:58:50	Sharleen, Alina (but didn’t see her much)
27	Robert	DTD, part-time consultant	08/11/2010	00:44:47	Fiona is my customer and Amanda is the technical contact
28	Aiden	DTD, IS manager	22/11/2010	00:33:08	Sharleen, Fiona, Audrey - key stakeholders rather than leaders
29	Finnbar	School 3, manager	27/02/2010	N/A	

Appendix C

Research Participant Information Sheet

Information for participants

Working title of the project: **MANAGEMENT LEARNING FROM CRM: A CASE STUDY OF A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

PhD Student: Gyuzel Gadelshina, Newcastle University Business School (NUBS)

Supervision Team: Professor Ian Clarke (NUBS)
Dr Andrew Simpson (NUBS)
Paul Richter (NUBS)

Dear Participant,

The proposed research is undertaken by a PhD student from Newcastle University Business School. It is focused on developing insights from observing the interactions between multiple University stakeholders during the conception, design, implementation and development of the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system.

The research site for the study is Northern University which has launched the Student Recruitment CRM Campaign Project on the basis of a bespoke global market-leading CRM product – H-CRM.

The main aim of the research is to explore and to analyse the process of strategic technological and cultural transformation in the University. The results of the study will contribute to better understanding the use of CRM system in the higher education context and the impact of technological change on people and processes across the University.

Fieldwork will be carried out between March 2010 and January 2011. During this period of time you will be asked to engage in several interviews. The Researcher will also observe and record meetings in which you may/or may not be a participant. In addition, you will be encouraged to provide the Researcher with copies of any documents pertaining to or illuminating the process, including: e-mails, reports, meeting agendas and transcripts, other documents related to the project.

The data from this research will be used for such research products as: PhD thesis, academic research papers, presentations and reports of the research findings to the project management.

Ethical issues

The proposed research is based on collecting data from people and about people, so the Researcher is striving to protect participants from undue harm and to minimise disruption as much as possible. To achieve this, the Researcher will be governed by three principles based on Ethical Guidelines of Social Research Association namely: privacy, anonymity and confidentiality.

It is proposed that to achieve the aim of the study, interviews and meeting observations will be recorded and fully transcribed. All the notes, quotes and recordings will be stored in a secure location to which only the Researcher and the team of supervisors will have an access. People’s names and job titles will be anonymised and not be included in reports, PhD thesis and academic papers and presentations, but informants should be aware that they may be identifiable through comments that they make. You will be offered a copy of their interview transcript and provided with opportunity to take out and amend any part of it that you do not wish to be reported in the findings.

We hope that you will be able to help with this important area of research. If you agree to take part please complete the Statement of informed consent for interview and /or the Statement of informed consent for documents.

Your participation in the study is voluntary and you are still free to withdraw at any time, and without giving a reason.

Please, indicate on the consent form if you would like to receive a summary of the key findings of the study.

If you have questions about the research or you would like to get further information about the study, please do not hesitate to get in touch:

Gyuzel Gadelshina

Thank you.

Appendix D

STATEMENT of INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Working title of the project: MANAGEMENT LEARNING FROM CRM: A CASE STUDY OF A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your agreement to participate in the research on the process of technological and cultural transformation in Northern University.

Please read the full informed consent document. You are asked to sign two of the forms and will be given one to keep.

- I was provided with the Research participant information sheet and the Interviewer explained me the purpose of the research.
- I understand that my participation in this interview is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without prejudice and without providing a reason.
- I agree to the interview being audio recorded ....Yes/ No
- I understand that what I say in the interview will be kept confidential by the Researcher. As far as possible all comments will be anonymised in any reports or papers that are produced as a result of the research. My name will not be used in any research reports and nothing will be published that might identify me, but there is a possibility that I may be identifiable through comments that I make.
- I understand that no-one will have an access to the recording beyond the Researcher and her team of supervisors.
- I understand that I will be offered a copy of my interview transcript and provided with the opportunity to take out or amend any part of it that I do not wish to be reported in the findings.
- I understand that the data from this research will be used for such research products as: PhD thesis, academic research papers, presentations and reports of the research findings to the project management.
- I understand that if I have any further questions I can contact the Researcher using contact details mentioned below.

____________________________	______________________	____________
Name of Respondent	Signature of Respondent	Date

____

Signature of the Researcher
Gyuzel Gadelshina
PhD Student

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