

## Chapter 1: Double-voicing in our everyday lives

### Introducing double-voicing (a-head)

(At the end of an academic conference in Western Europe, the organiser walks onto the stage)

Sue: Listen, I am as keen to get to the bar as you are (*laugh from audience*), but I just want to say a few words of thanks to our speakers.

In the course of a working day, many of us will use double-voicing to interact with our colleagues, managers, students, clients, friends, and family. In this example, Sue, the speaker suggests that her audience, the conference delegates, might be very keen to get to the bar where alcoholic drinks are sold. She realises that they are probably tired of back-to-back presentations, and says what she believes are in their minds. She shows linguistic expertise in using a *double-voiced* comment, which anticipates the likely thoughts of her audience and makes a joke at their expense to bring them ‘on side’. The comment also shows some awareness of her audience’s cultural expectations: namely, that it is customary to drink alcohol at academic conferences; it is acceptable for *women* to drink alcohol; and that *as* a woman, she can crack a joke publicly about the delegates’ assumed desire to drink. This small comment indexes the speaker’s self-reflexive ability to enter the world of her audience as a way of building solidarity between herself as conference organiser and a hall-full of tired academics.

In this book I shall explore the diverse ways in which we use double-voicing within spoken interactions in our everyday social and professional lives. I shall propose that there are intricate relationships between the use of double-voicing in everyday talk at work, and the ways in which speakers are relatively positioned by gender and power within specific contexts. According to their ‘subject positioning’ (Davies and Harre 1990), individuals may

or may not be able to draw upon double-voicing as a resource for linguistic expertise. The organiser above was actually a leading academic in the field of linguistics, and thus carried the status and authority to make jokes in collusion with her audience. I suggest that double-voicing can provide a rich understanding of the nuanced ways in which linguistic interactions are negotiated and identities are constructed within everyday settings in social and professional life.

For some linguists, the term ‘double-voicing’ may be unfamiliar, although it has a highly influential, if under-valued role in the history of Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics. The term is associated with the work of the Russian philosopher, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), who coined the phrase ‘double-voiced discourse’ in relation to the study of drama and fiction, and in particular to the novels of Dostoevsky. However, Bakhtin (1984: 194) was also acutely aware of the applications of double-voiced discourse to ‘the ordinary speech of our everyday life’, and he frequently made comparisons between quotidian speech and the language of academic discourse. In the context of this book, ‘double-voicing’ means that when a person speaks, they have a heightened awareness of, and responsiveness to, the concerns and agendas of others, which is then reflected in the different ways they adjust their language in response to interlocutors. This responsiveness goes well beyond normal conversational interactivity, and usually contains a ‘power’ dimension in that double-voicing can be used as a strategy to resist threats from more powerful others, to silence someone else, or even, to give someone a voice. The use of double-voicing is closely implicated with the ways in which power relations are constructed between speakers according to the interplay of social categories such as gender, age, ethnicity, profession and status. A key focus of this book will be upon *gender* identities and relations, although as author, I will be self-reflexive about the interplay of *multiple* social categories that construct

individual identities, as well as of the context-bound nature of all social interactions (Butler 1990).

The purpose of this book is to develop a better understanding of the significance of ‘double-voicing’ within routine linguistic practices, which could be of broad interest to anyone who is interested in the ‘way language works’, as well as to scholars of Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics. Double-voicing is a micro-linguistic set of practices that is mostly used unknowingly in interpersonal, public and institutional discourse yet can produce profound effects on people’s interactions and relationships. Despite its significance, double-voicing has not been fully appreciated as a wider sociolinguistic phenomenon, an issue which this book seeks to address. ‘Double-voicing’ is both a unique linguistic construct and a valuable interpretative tool for scholars and practitioners to comprehend the ways in which speakers routinely engage with each other in social, educational and professional contexts. The book also aims to be of specific interest to scholars of Language and Gender, in that it explores the discursive interaction between power, gender and linguistic expertise in positioning speakers both in a range of institutional settings.

### **What is double-voicing? (a-head)**

To answer this question, we first need to know what *single-voicing* is. Bakhtin (1984) described ‘single-voiced discourse’ as having a direct relationship between language and the objects, people and events in the world to which it refers. Its function is primarily to name, inform, express and represent the referential objects of speech. In using single-voicing, the orientation of the speaker is principally to themselves and to perpetuating their own agenda, rather than to engaging with the interests and concerns of others. As this type of direct, unmediated, ‘fully signifying’ discourse is directed towards its referential object, it constitutes, in Bakhtin’s view, ‘the ultimate semantic authority within the limits of a given

context' (1984: 189). In contrast, double-voiced discourse 'is directed both towards the referential object of speech as in ordinary discourse, and toward another's discourse, towards someone else's speech' (Bakhtin 1994: 105). Whereas a speaker may utilise single-voicing to express one, unmediated utterance, they make use of double-voicing to bring together two (or more) independent utterances to serve their own purposes: 'in one discourse, two semantic intentions appear, two voices' (Bakhtin 1984: 189). I explore Bakhtin's concepts of single and double-voiced discourse in detail in Chapter 2. When referencing Bakhtin's work, I shall use his given terms of single-voiced discourse (SvD) and double-voiced discourse (DvD; abbreviations are author's own), but when referencing these concepts in my *own* work and beyond, I shall adopt the more simplified terms of 'single-voicing' and 'double-voicing'.

The concept of double-voicing largely applies to spoken interactions on an interpersonal level, which will be the primary focus of this book. However, as I review in Chapter 2, double-voicing works on micro and macro levels of interaction within different modes and media. Double-voicing is not necessarily easy to identify in everyday language in the same way as the grammatical components of a sentence, such as a verb, noun, adverb or clause can be. It is highly context-bound, mainly recognisable in contextual use, and thus, localised, ethnographic knowledge is often necessary. However there are a range of linguistic features/resources that might commonly *index* (see p.00) double-voicing such as the use of politeness, hedging strategies, humour, framing, meta-comment, qualification, impersonation of other voices, and so on. Double-voicing might also be signified by paralanguage through the use of such features as intonation, pitch, volume, hesitation and pausing. In some contexts, double-voicing may appear similar to 'being polite', although double-voicing is not synonymous with politeness, which is just one of its many forms of linguistic expression. Double-voicing features may also appear similar to linguistic humour, or the linguistic

enactment of authority. None of these practices are double-voicing *per se*, but they may be used as linguistic resources by a speaker in order to double-voice, or index double-voicing. It would be challenging, in my view, to establish objective criteria by which to identify the linguistic forms of double-voicing, although I am willing to be proved wrong on this! Consequently, it would be difficult to tag transcripts for double-voicing within large corpora without a complementary qualitative analysis and/or detailed knowledge of the local context, speakers involved, and so on. I explain how these categories emerged inductively through the process of conducting a research study in Chapter 4. Furthermore, definitions of double-voicing explored in this book are subject to the limitation that the research I have conducted thus far concerns the English Language only and is confined to western European contexts. Double-voicing may well be both language-specific and culture-specific. Until further research is carried out within diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, I make no claims about double-voicing as a universal or cross-cultural phenomenon.

Just as the *forms* of double-voicing are difficult to identify, complex and interrelated, so are its *functions*, as this book will endeavour to show. I have explored the different functions of double-voicing in previous research (Baxter 2010, 2011), during which I initially identified *four* principal types: anticipatory, corrective, mitigating and authoritative. In on-going research on this topic, I have since added a *fifth* type: dialogic double-voicing. All types are bound by the common feature that the speaker fears that the interlocutor represents a threat (regardless of whether or not this is true), and therefore adopts different types of reaction to ward off that threat.

- ▶ Anticipatory: to anticipate and dilute possible criticism
- ▶ Corrective: to correct or repair a mistake or error, usually their own
- ▶ Mitigating: to mitigate distance, reduce authority and build solidarity with their team
- ▶ Authoritative: to heighten impact and display personal power, especially if this was threatened
- ▶ Dialogic: debating ideas as if the speaker is both the addresser and the addressee

Of the five types, the first and by far the most common type is *anticipatory* double-voicing, which is where an utterance appears to predict or anticipate the thoughts of the interlocutor and adjusts itself in advance. The anticipatory type may be used when a speaker wishes to deflect perceived criticism of their abilities or actions, for example, when a speaker in a meeting says ‘I have probably got the wrong end of the stick but...’ or ‘I realise I am no expert like the rest of you here but...’, or ‘I’m sure you think I’m being a complete pain about this...’. If used repeatedly, this type of double-voicing can make the speaker appear tentative or defensive as it is often linguistically marked by the use of apologies, qualification, hedging and self-deprecating humour. Anticipatory double-voicing can also take the more assertive form of a ‘pre-emptive strike’: anticipating a criticism from another speaker, and ‘striking back’ before the interlocutor has a chance. Arguably, the four following types are also anticipatory in genre, but the anticipatory type ‘shouts’ that it is so in the various forms in which it is linguistically constructed.

The second type is *corrective* double-voicing where the speaker attempts to correct or repair an error, often their own. An example of this might be where a manager in the workplace apologises for unfair behaviour to their team by saying, ‘Sorry I lost my temper but I wanted you to see that....’. This is similar to anticipatory double-voicing in that a speaker recognises that others might criticise them if they do not correct the error, so they self-repair in order to limit the damage to the relationship. Corrective double-voicing is linguistically marked by such strategies as apology, seeking agreement with interlocutors, meta-pragmatic comment and ‘role-breaking’ (stepping out of the interactional frame in order to comment on it).

The third type is *mitigating* double-voicing where speakers aim to reduce the social distance between themselves and their addressees in order to achieve more effective relationships while serving their own agenda. For example, once again from the workplace context, a manager might have pitched an unpopular proposal to their team and followed this up with the double-voiced comment, ‘Look, does anyone want to respond to that? I don’t want you to feel unhappy with this proposal.’ Mitigating double-voicing overlaps with anticipatory discourse, but primarily seeks to connect with others on an affective or relational level. It is marked by the use of personal pronouns, inviting responses, hedging and qualification, self-deprecating comments, meta-pragmatic comment, and other aspects of relational, polite or small talk (Holmes and Stubbe 2003).

The fourth type is *authoritative* double-voicing, which is used to heighten impact and display personal power, especially if a speaker feels threatened. So for example, in delivering bad news, a manager might say to their team, ‘I realise it is tough that you will all lose your bonuses this quarter, but you will just have to learn from this experience.’ Authoritative double-voicing can be tricky to identify linguistically, and often depends on tone, but is often marked by linguistic expressions of authority (Fairclough 1995) such as the use of meta-

pragmatic or qualifying clauses ('I realise it is tough...'), followed by a directive, or a deontic modal phrase ('you'll just have to...').

Finally, dialogic double-voicing is where the speaker debates ideas with themselves as if they are both the speaker and the addressee. This type either explicitly assumes an overhearing but non-speaking addressee, or can provide an opening for other speakers to join the self-debate (Bell 1984). Dialogic double-voicing is used extensively by academics, for example, in the course of a lecture or in academic writing (e.g. Baynham 1999). This is not simply the act of debating two sides of an argument but rather, the act of defending oneself against the anticipated criticisms of the audience, whether students, colleagues or journal reviewers. The perceived voice of the audience/reviewer is always 'in the head of' the speaker/writer and hence, the produced spoken or written discourse is reflexively double-voiced in response. An explicit example of this might be where an academic writer was to say, 'These claims have been extensively debated in research literature, but while they have considerable merit in our view, they do not go far enough.' Dialogic double-voicing is marked by such linguistic strategies as comparison and contrast, meta-pragmatic comment, framing, qualification, and referencing other authorities.

In order to illustrate the different types of double-voicing and how they interweave, I shall now provide examples of authentic double-voicing in action. The examples in this chapter are from e-mail messaging, a global medium of communication well-known for bridging the conventions of both spoken and written discourse (e.g. Crystal 2003). I shall use extracts from emails I have received during my work as a university professor, which reveal some of the ways in which double-voicing is routinely enacted. These emails are exchanged within an institutional frame (Goffman 1974) of working relations between individuals of varying status and levels of authority (student to staff; senior to junior staff, and so on).



Double-voicing is one of the means by which (often unequal) academic relationships are routinely negotiated and sustained.

Student to staff emails (c-head)

Students often make requests or ask favours of their university tutors by email with varying degrees of tact and diplomacy. At my own university, students are expected to follow a code of conduct in relation to the ways in which members of staff are addressed, which are reflected in the following two examples (key instances of double-voicing underlined):

- (1) I do appreciate that you are very busy but would just like to update you on where I am currently at with my dissertation proposal. If you are able to provide any advice or comments on anything I have missed or that doesn't sound appropriate it would be really appreciated.
- (2) Sorry if my email has an erratic and loose structure (forgive me, I haven't written anything of much substance in about 3 months) I have just hit the wall in which I wish to move on the right path in life. Thank you for reading this and I look forward to your response. :)

(Signature)

P.S. I was never taught how to sign off of letters/emails correctly! :D

Applied linguists could provide a perfectly insightful analysis of both the above examples from a politeness theory perspective (see below), and indeed, both the student writers above utilise standard features of 'negative politeness', such as showing deference to the addressee upon whom they are imposing (Brown and Levinson 1987). But additionally, both emails are examples of double-voicing in that they *anticipate* possible criticism from the tutor and attempt to disarm the critical response in advance. Email (1) anticipates that the tutor might say that they are too busy to look at their dissertation proposal, but the anticipated reason given may be a further 'cover' for asking the tutor to look at the proposal at all. Specific contextual knowledge tells us that students are not expected to submit drafts of proposals to

their tutors in advance, and the student is anticipating this criticism. Email (2), rather more unusual in tone, uses both mitigating and anticipatory double-voicing in the form of apologies, self-deprecating comments and excuses in advance to ward off the anticipated response of the tutor – that the message might be badly written. Contextual knowledge in this case tells us that the writer is a final year student of English Language, who knows he should be capable of writing very proficiently!

#### Senior colleague to junior colleague emails (c-head)

In the next two examples, both members of staff who are sending the messages are of a higher status than the recipient and are choosing different ways of enacting authority (‘getting subordinates to do things’), involving types of double-voicing (underlined; pseudonyms used here and throughout):

- (3) As I said, I realise it's possible that wires have somehow crossed, or something has gone astray in the ether, but Helen has no record of receiving what she needs. So even if you think this has already been covered, could you please (re-)send this info to Helen ASAP, copied to me (so that I know when I can relax that it's done!)?
- (4) Being blunt (and I am known for it...) I think we need to do very much better by 28<sup>th</sup> for Modern Languages and Linguistics, explaining in particular the joint strategy for submitting the two groups together and demonstrating the strong interconnections between research in the two groups.

Anticipatory double-voicing is often expressed in the form of a predictive subordinate clause, as occurs in both these examples. In (3) the writer begins with a clause that predicts and pre-emptes the possible criticism from the receiver that the request for information has already been answered. But this is not simply anticipatory double-voicing; it also has an authoritative function, which is to prepare the ground for a directive. This use of authoritative double-voicing reoccurs in the line ‘even if you think this has already been covered’, which indicates that the writer has out-thought the thoughts of the addressee, taken these into account, and

used them as a basis for reissuing an even stronger directive. In email (4), the writer once again uses a mix of anticipatory and authoritative double-voicing which expresses the assumed criticism readers will make of the message, and follows this by emphasising the perceived fault even further ('and I am known for it') in order to reinforce her authority. There is of course an element of humour in this authoritative double-voicing: she is inviting readers to laugh at her directness, which her double-voicing ironically both reinforces and mitigates. Thus we see that the writer has incorporated three types of double-voicing in this double clause, which anticipates, reinforces her authority yet mitigates the effect of her authority. The functions of double-voicing often work in this highly intertextualised way.

#### Peer to peer staff emails (c-head)

In the following two examples, colleagues in both cases are broadly of an equal status but the first example involves a one-to-one exchange, whereas the second example involves one colleague to a whole Department (double-voicing underlined):

- (5) It seems to me that, as long as Jane agrees a revised study leave plan with Matt, then we should just leave her to get on with it because the hours thing is obviously stressing her out. Or am I being over-simplistic as usual?
- (6) Warning: This is a long message, but please do at least skim it to the end - I'm pretty sure you'll find at least something that is new (and hopefully useful!) in it . . . . .
- (7) OK, that's it. I hope you did find something new in this message, and that at least some of it was useful? Many thanks for your patience in reading this far!

In email (5), the writer is using double-voicing to reflect with herself about how to resolve a rather sensitive staffing issue. The meta-pragmatic clause 'it seems to me' explicitly followed by the final question, 'Or am I being over-simplistic as usual?' indicates that the writer is undergoing a dialogic process of self-reflection, and then reaching a solution. But the self-

reflection is also conducted with an assumed, critical reader (Bell 1984). The writer's use of a self-deprecating question is anticipatory in the sense that it expects a negative response to her reflections. The question also serves another purpose: to soften or mitigate the force of the writer's view and make this more acceptable to the assumed-to-be-critical colleague.

In email (6), the writer uses extensive double-voicing to prepare readers for the length and detail of her message. She draws intertextually on the convention of 'Warning' messages to prepare the ground for her readers, as she anticipates that they will not be willing to read such a long message. The writer offers the reader a range of explicit strategies to navigate their way through the message, which again anticipate a negative response. For example, the writer repeats her incentive that readers may 'learn something new' at the start of (6) and end of (7). In (7), an extract from the end of the same email, the writer uses a mitigated type of double-voicing, conveyed by a chatty, friendly style ('OK, that's it'), eliciting response, deference and hedging ('I hope you found...at least some of it useful?') which helps to reduce the distance between her and her sizeable audience and increase solidarity between herself and her colleagues. Note here that paralinguistic such as punctuation can also be a form of double-voicing: the question mark in (7) helps to reinforce the mitigation by indexing the writer's assumption that she is not taking the reader's response for granted. As in 4), 5) and 6) above, the use of double-voicing is multi-functional, combining the need to anticipate criticism, rehearse two or more sides of an argument, and lessen the social distance between writer and reader.

### **Theoretical approach of the book (a-head)**

In introducing the book thus far, I have made a number of assumptions, implied by my use of critical meta-language, about the theoretical framework to be adopted in this book. As a sociolinguist with a specialism in the field of Language and Gender, my research paradigm is

in line with social constructionist and poststructuralist perspectives that people's identities and relationships are *discursively* constructed. According to the discursive perspective, every time a person speaks, s/he is negotiating a social or professional identity by using a range of 'discourse' strategies such as politeness, authoritative language and humour to accomplish their goals (Clifton, 2012). When a person speaks, their choice of discursive strategies signifies wider socio-cultural aspects of their identity such as gender, age, class, ethnicity and status, which may either enhance or constrain the ways in which they interact with others (Crawford 1995). For example, in a school or university classroom context, individuals are continuously negotiating and managing their identities and relationships through the way they speak and interact with their classmates (Baxter 2003). The term 'discourse' in this book is used primarily in two senses (see Cameron 2001): in the singular sense of 'language used in specific social contexts' (such as 'media discourse' or 'academic discourse'), and in the plural sense of discourses as 'language as social practices' (Foucault 1980). I shall surmise that Bakhtin (1984) primarily intended the first sense of discourse in his diverse discussions of double-voiced discourse (see Chapter 2). In this book, double-voicing should be seen as a discursive resource or strategy which can be mobilised within social interactions to achieve particular outcomes and effects. However, in relation to the Foucauldian sense, Bakhtin clearly indicated that double-voiced discourse was inflected by power relations (1984: 108).

In line with the 'discursive turn', language and gender theory has made problematic the common sense use of terms such as male, female, man, woman, boy and girl on the grounds that these make essentialist assumptions about identity that are at best contestable, and subject to social construction. Rather than seeing gender as about binary differences, recent research has reconceptualised gender as multiple, fluid and diverse in expression and representation (Bing, Bergvall and Freed 1996). In this spirit, most research adopting a discursive perspective aims to show how salient social categories may *emerge* through the

course of spoken interaction but are not assumed as ‘a given’. Thus, most current language and gender research takes a grounded, qualitative approach to the derivation of insights about gender: insights should emerge inductively from the data analysis rather than being imposed *a priori* upon the data. Thus the relevance of gender as a social category within analysis needs to be demonstrated through analysis rather than assumed (for example, see Kitzinger 2007, for this debate).

In order to apply a grounded approach to the two studies in this book (see Chapters 3 and 4), I have drawn upon Ochs’s (1992) theory of indexicality which moves the debate on about *when* gender is relevant to research to *how* gender is relevant when analyzing interactional styles (McElhinny 2003; Mullany 2007). I will focus on the linguistic features of double-voicing that may *index* gender as a significant social category within any interaction. Ochs’s theory of indexicality is based on the view that very few linguistic forms *directly* index gender. Direct examples tend to be confined to names and titles that are clearly gendered such as Mrs or Lady, and pronouns such as she/he. As a consequence, linguistic strategies should be seen as being *indirectly* indexed by gender. Ochs (1992: 341) points out that ‘linguistic features may index social meanings (e.g. social stances, social acts, social activities) which in turn help to constitute gender meanings’. So, for example, gender can be indexed by routinely observed, interactional styles that are associated with cultural norms of masculinity and femininity (McElhinny 2003; Mullany 2007). A discursive perspective on double-voicing and its relationship to gender, power and linguistic expertise is the broad theoretical and methodological approach to be utilized in this book.

### **Power, gender and linguistic expertise (a-head)**

The broad aim of this book is to explore and evaluate the diverse ways in which we use double-voicing in our social, academic and professional lives, and furthermore, to provide

scholars with fresh insights about double-voicing as a valuable linguistic construct and interpretative tool. In recognition that double-voiced discourse has been, and could be explored in a multitude of ways, this book will concentrate on three lines of inquiry, arising from the author's research specialisms, which are interwoven to a certain extent: 1) the relationship between power and double-voicing; 2) the extent to which double-voicing is indexed by gender: for example, how double-voicing indexes gender identities and interactions, and 3) the extent to which double-voicing indexes linguistic insecurity or alternatively, linguistic expertise. I now introduce each of these three lines of inquiry in turn.

#### *Power* (b-head)

In line with Bakhtin (1984), a key dimension of double-voicing is its inextricable association with issues of power. Is double-voicing a sign of a powerful speaker or rather, one who lacks power and authority? Clearly, power is a well-researched concept involving various competing theories, and the term 'power' has been used in numerous senses (for discussion, see Lukes 1974). Fairclough (2009) helpfully distinguishes three senses: *power to*, *power over* and *power behind*, all of which inform theories of double-voicing. 'Power to' has the most relevance to the lines of inquiry in this book, as it pertains to power in the most general sense: the capacity or ability to bring about change. Fairclough (2009: 514) suggests that all individuals have the capacity to bring about change to some extent, 'to change their own way of acting and behaving, aspects of the environment within which and upon which they act, the actions and behaviour of other people, and so forth.' Linguistically, each conversational turn a speaker takes allows for the possibility of behavioural/material change by means of the pragmatic force of speech acts such as questioning, directing, stating, and warning others (Austin 1962). With an alternative perspective, poststructuralist theory has posited that individuals are rarely positioned exclusively by social circumstances as powerful or powerless but have multiple 'subjectivities' that provide them with the agency to shift

between different positions of power (Baxter 2003; Davies and Harré 1990). This ‘power to change’ will be strongly relevant to an understanding of double-voicing by means of two case studies: the first focusing on interactions within a university classroom, and the second on how leaders negotiate relationships to manage change in senior meetings. In both cases, individuals in social groups are trying to effect change by using different types of double-voicing, but it appears that some speakers have more agency than others to use power to achieve such changes.

The use of ‘power to’ interconnects with power in the second sense. ‘Power over’ signifies that some people have a greater capacity than others to bring about change by harnessing the capacities and agency of others. According to Fairclough (2009: 514), language provides certain people such as teachers, managers or politicians, with the ‘communicative power’ over others by means of institutional discourse such as classroom interaction, management meetings or media interviews. He suggests that communicative power is power that is exercised, fought for and indeed, fought against, in actual communicative events such as meetings and interviews, on a conversational turn by turn basis. Fairclough’s description of ‘power over’ and how it is exercised connects closely with the discursive perspective described on p.00 above, whereby every time a person speaks, s/he is negotiating a social or professional identity by using a range of ‘discourse’ strategies such as double-voicing to accomplish their goals. Again, an understanding of ‘power over’ will inform analyses of the university classroom and business leadership studies (Chapters 3 and 4), in that speakers’ agency to harness double-voicing at different points in their interactions may index their power (or lack of power) over others.

Fairclough’s notion of ‘power behind’ appears less directly relevant to the two studies in this book, insofar as it does not concern speakers negotiating actual events such as classroom activities or meetings. ‘Power behind’ is more pertinent to ‘the habitual, often



institutionalised forms or practices which shape or influence what people actually do – the conventional forms of various institutionally recognised types of interview’ (Fairclough 2009: 514). Here Fairclough is specifically referring to genres of linguistic interactions and social agents who have control over specific institutional communicative structures (such as the mass media industry). The possible interrelationship between double-voicing and institutional linguistic genres will not be explored explicitly in this book. But ‘the power behind’ concept is implicit within the poststructuralist conception of ‘discourses’ as they incorporate dominant social practices of power/knowledge (Foucault 1980). ‘Power behind’ in this latter sense will inform the use of discourse analysis in the two case studies (see Chapters 3 and 4).

In this book, the principal line of inquiry is the relationship between the ways speakers negotiate power relations in social interactions and their use of double-voicing. This may take many possible forms; for example, speakers who have formal or established power (such as a leader of a team) but choose to ‘soften’ this with their subordinates for relational or business purposes; speakers who have formal authority but demonstrate that they are uncomfortable with it; and finally, speakers who have little formal power (such as university students working in a group) but wish to negotiate and strengthen their positions of power in relation to their peers. I will investigate the role of double-voicing in these cases and others.

#### *Gender (b-head)*

The second line of inquiry is to consider the extent to which double-voicing is indexed by gender: in other words, is gender a factor in terms of how different speakers utilise double-voicing? Traditional language and gender research adopting a ‘dominance’ perspective (e.g. Fishman 1978; 1980) has argued that women show more ‘conversational insecurity’ in their interactions than men do, especially in male-female interactions. This is because women do

more ‘conversational work’ such as listening, asking questions, and introducing topics in order to produce ‘successful’ interactions, particularly with men. Fishman (1978: 397) theorised conversational insecurity as reflecting ‘the male-female hierarchy in everyday interactions’, which she describes as ‘the interactional manifestation of power relations’. However within a socio-historical context of gender inequality, Fishman (1978: 240) did attempt to interpret women’s perceived conversational insecurity in positive ways: that women were trying ‘to turn insecure conversations into successful ones’ to maintain marital relationships.

However, as seen above, current language and gender theory has moved decisively away from assuming essentialist ‘differences’ between men and women’s speech, and I will not be looking for gender differences *per se*. Yet, current research in language and gender (e.g. Baxter 2003; Butler 1990; Holmes 2006; Mullany 2007; Schnurr 2007; Sunderland 2004) has acknowledged that discourses of gender difference remain pervasive in western culture and elsewhere. Accordingly, both women and men are routinely positioned by institutional discourses in ways defined by their presumed sex/gender, and these discourses can leave people of all genders with minimal agency to resist their power. In this book, the relationship between gender and double-voicing will be conceptualised from the poststructuralist perspective that hegemonic power relations continue to *position* women and men differently and unequally in the western world (Baxter 2003; Davies and Harré 1990). I shall investigate the role of double-voicing as a discursive strategy that women and men use to negotiate gendered power relations in classrooms and senior management meetings (see Chapters 3 and 4). I consider whether double-voicing is more likely to be used by girls and women (rather than boys and men) in these contexts. I shall investigate the role of double-voicing as a conscious strategy to negotiate conflict situations in acceptable ways, and as a

discursive resource women mobilise to survive and achieve apparent success in male-dominated business and professional spheres.

### *Linguistic expertise* (b-head)

The book's third line of inquiry is to explore the relationship between the use of double-voicing and linguistic expertise. Does double-voicing index a speaker that appears to lack confidence and competence in given contexts, or alternatively one that demonstrates linguistic versatility? The notion of 'linguistic expertise' is clearly a subjective judgement, dependent on a range of contextual factors such as a speaker's social identity, formal role, purpose, audience and setting. However in most public and professional settings, certain standards of interactional proficiency are assumed, even if they are never formally specified. Fairclough's (2009: 515) views above on genres as 'conventionalised ways of interacting linguistically' at least help to benchmark an understanding of linguistic expertise. Thus, a basic expectation is that speakers use social and institutional forms of communication in conventional, domain-appropriate ways. In previous research (e.g. Baxter 2003; 2008; 2010), I have deployed research interviews to seek the views of participants on what constitutes 'linguistic expertise', for example, by business leaders within a senior meeting context. In this way, definitions of expertise are grounded in participants' perceptions. Using this evidence, I define linguistic expertise here as:

An ability to use language for a specific purpose, audience and context in ways that is perceived as demonstrating a high level of skill according to the participants involved in the given interactional event.

Previous research I have conducted in classroom and business contexts (Baxter 2008; 2011), has indicated that double-voicing serves ambiguous functions – it is often *not* viewed as an index of linguistic expertise. At times, double-voicing can indicate a speaker’s sense of linguistic ‘insecurity’ – language indexing an apparent lack of self-confidence or a sense of disempowerment (Fishman 1980). In today’s world, the idea that women in particular might demonstrate linguistic insecurity appears to be a ‘throwback’ to early theories of linguistic deficiency from which, of course, the language and gender field has decisively departed, as such theories implied a weakness in women, even if these are produced by the sex-role socialisation process (Lakoff 1975). The poststructuralist reworking of linguistic insecurity is to re-conceptualise it as a behavioural and material ‘effect’ of discursive positioning (Butler 1990), and to re-read insecurity as a semiotic index or sign of consistent positioning of a speaker subject as disempowered (Baxter 2003). Indeed, even within the same interactional event, a speaker may *shift* in their use of double-voicing between indexing linguistic insecurity and linguistic expertise. This book seeks to produce a more comprehensive theorisation of the fluid and multi-faceted aspects of double-voicing both in terms of the ways it indexes the shifting subject positions of speakers, and also in terms of manifesting linguistic insecurity or expertise.

### **Closely related concepts** (a-head)

I will use terms and concepts in this book that are closely related to the sociolinguistic fields of politeness, and humour, which, quite evidently, have considerable bodies of research literature devoted to them. While there is insufficient space to expound on these concepts in detail, I shall explicate how politeness and humour overlap with, and inform an understanding of double-voicing in this book.

### *Politeness* (b-head)

When a speaker uses forms of politeness in order to ‘double-voice’, this does not mean that they are necessarily intending to be polite (or impolite). There is of course considerable overlap between forms of politeness and double-voicing, and there are many parallels between politeness theory and the theory of double-voicing to be developed in this book. Indeed, the previous sentences are all examples of *dialogic* double-voicing, as I try to defend my theoretical stance against criticism, but it is arguable whether these would be considered to be forms of politeness as such. As stated above, politeness, as this is locally understood within different contexts, is a discursive resource that speakers who double-voice may use, but politeness does not constitute or subsume double-voicing.

Culpeper (2009) summarised politeness theory by outlining two classic approaches. The first, the ‘social-norm’ view of politeness, posits that politeness is based upon social rules, and the act of breaking those rules incurs sanctions. According to this view, we acquire politeness routines from our social experience of being rewarded for speaking politely or being penalised for speaking impolitely, based on given social norms. The second, rather more familiar theory, the pragmatic view of politeness, concentrates on the communicative strategies speakers employ to maintain or promote social harmony. The concepts of ‘face’, ‘losing face’ and ‘saving face’ were developed by Goffman (1967), Brown and Levinson (1987) and others, in order to theorise notions such as reputation, prestige and self-esteem in everyday interactions. ‘Facework’ according to Goffman (1967: 12) is made up of ‘the actions taken by a person to make whatever he [sic] is doing consistent with face’. Any ‘speech act’ that impinges in some degree upon a person’s face (e.g. orders, insults, criticisms) is a ‘face-threatening act’ (or FTA) according to Brown and Levinson (1987), and face-work can be designed to maintain or support face by counteracting threats, or potential threats to face. The authors suggest that there are five pragmatic super-strategies for doing politeness ordered by the degree of the face threat (Bald on Record; Positive Politeness;

Negative Politeness: Off-record; and Don't Do the FTA). The amount of face threat also involves three sociological variables: the social distance between participants, the relative power of the hearer over the speaker and the absolute ranking of the act. The theory has since been criticised for its attempt to map out universal principles of politeness among all speakers, regardless of context or culture. More recent, social discursive work on politeness (e.g. Culpeper 2005) has usefully stressed that politeness (and indeed, impoliteness) is *not* inherent in linguistic forms but a contextual judgement – a view with which I strongly concur in relation to double-voicing.

Theories of politeness and face clearly do overlap with, and inform our understanding of double-voicing, as I readily acknowledge in this book. At the very least, anticipatory, corrective and mitigating forms of double-voicing (see above) may very well be deployed in contexts where a speaker wishes to 'save face'. The use of negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record strategies can be associated with double-voicing. But as Chapter 2 demonstrates, Bakhtin's concept of double-voiced discourse is strongly in tune with poststructuralist notions of power – not simply in terms of an individual's status in relation to the other, but also in terms of the institutional workings of power through discourses, and the consequent perpetuation of hegemonic, social relations that privilege certain categories of individual over others. From Bakhtin's (1984) perspective, double-voicing may be used by speakers as a 'hidden polemic', either as a disguised means of enacting power or as a covert means of resisting power. In simpler terms, speakers use double-voicing not just to preserve their and other people's 'face', but in order to negotiate complex power relations in their social and professional lives.

### *Humour* (b-head)

Theories of the linguistic enactment of humour constitute another area of overlap and interconnection with theories of double-voicing. However it is not so obvious (as in the case

of politeness) that humour is serving the same or similar purposes as double-voicing. The majority of studies on humour have been conducted in psychology rather than in linguistics, where humour is typically conceptualised as amusing utterances which make audiences laugh (Duncan and Feisal 1989). According to this basic definition, both humour and double-voicing do share a dependence on developing a finely tuned awareness of the interlocutor/audience for their strategic deployment, if not for their successful effect.

More recent linguistic research on humour indicates that there could be further common links between a person's use of humour and double-voicing. Schnurr (2009: 6) suggests that humour can be intentional or unintentional and can be identified where 'participant(s) signal amusement to one another, based on the analyst's assessment of paralinguistic, prosodic and discoursal clues'. Such humour can be deemed successful or unsuccessful, according to addressees' reactions. Schnurr found a 'taxonomy' of humorous devices in her study which included anecdotal humour, fantasy humour, wordplay, role play, self-denigrating humour, teasing, sarcasm and irony. As we shall see in the studies featured in Chapters 3 and 4, speakers who double-voice for different reasons, do make considerable use of self-deprecating humour. For example, Schnurr (2009: 8) defines certain types of humour in ways that are similar to definitions of both anticipatory and mitigating double-voicing:

Directing the humour towards oneself has several advantages for the speaker as it may help him or her to cope with a difficult situation, to protect him or her from 'anticipated deprecation by others' (Hay 2001: 74), and facilitate admitting one's own mistakes.

Other forms of humour listed in Schnurr's taxonomy such as teasing, sarcasm and irony are also linguistic means by which double-voicing may be enacted. Irony, defined by Haverkate

(1990: 81) as ‘a rhetorical device which consists in implying the opposite of what is said literally’ is very close to one description by Bakhtin (1984: 108) of ‘double-voiced discourse’ as ‘a sideways glance at someone else’s hostile word’. In sum, humour, like certain forms of politeness, offers a valuable discursive resource by which speakers may double-voice, whether to anticipate criticism, mitigate distance between people, correct a false impression of themselves, enhance their sense of authority over others or conduct a dialogue with themselves which may be overheard by a critical ‘other’. A speaker may use humour in the context of double-voicing to achieve a more powerful position in settings where they feel threatened, and as a strategy to resist the overturning or subversion of their subject positioning.

In the final section, I review how the five chapters of this book will explore the diverse ways in which we use double-voicing to speak and interact in our everyday working lives.

### **Map of the book** (a-head)

**Chapter 1** has set the scene for the rest of the book by presenting its purpose, theoretical framework, and three interwoven lines of inquiry. These are, first, the extent to which double-voicing is associated with issues of power; secondly, the constitutive interrelationship of gender and double-voicing; and thirdly, how speakers who double-voice index linguistic insecurity and/or linguistic expertise. The chapter has proposed that while double-voicing may be a relatively unfamiliar construct in some linguistic fields, it is a common and inherent part of everyday communication within many social, educational and professional contexts.

**Chapter 2** explores the philosophical background of the term ‘double-voicing’ by presenting Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1963 [1984]) theorisations of ‘double-voiced discourse’. Bakhtin’s definitions of ‘single-voiced discourse’ are reviewed first, followed by his



distinctions between three types of double-voiced discourse. I argue that the third type – discourse as ‘a sideways glance at someone else’s hostile word’ – is most suited to the theoretical terrain explored in this book. A range of closely related concepts developed by Bakhtin are also reviewed, such as polyphony and social heteroglossia. The chapter then assesses how scholars have adapted and modernised double-voicing by means of concepts such as stylisation and super-diversity. The chapter concludes by proposing that double-voicing is an illuminating concept for explaining how speakers negotiate power relations in educational and professional contexts.

**Chapter 3** pursues the book’s three lines of inquiry in the context of a university classroom-based research study. The use of double-voicing is explored during a business simulation activity conducted by two groups of students (women-only and men-only), who are competing against each other to ‘win’ a task. The analysis shows that individual women use single-voicing alongside double-voicing, but single-voicing is not generally supported by the group. The women’s group predominantly uses double-voicing to avoid direct conflict, negotiate compromises and maintain alliances with each other, but this does not enable them to win the task. The men’s group makes greater use of single-voicing and has more apparent success with the task. The chapter explores the implications of these findings in terms of power, gender and linguistic insecurity/expertise.

**Chapter 4** pursues all three lines of inquiry by investigating individual case studies of three senior business leaders – two women and one man. A prominent social issue concerning gender relations is explored – namely, that women are still failing to progress to senior management and boardroom roles at the same rate as men. A micro-linguistic analysis of management meeting transcripts reveals how leaders use all five types of double-voicing to achieve their business goals. The chapter assesses what an understanding of the five types of

double-voicing can contribute to the issue of women's lack of presence at senior management level.

Finally, **Chapter 5** draws together the main findings from the classroom and business leadership studies (see Chapters 3 and 4) to develop insights in response to the book's three interwoven lines of inquiry on power, gender and linguistic expertise. Insights are provided about double-voicing practices that generally index linguistic insecurity, and the possible effects of these on speakers and interlocutors. The chapter also offers insights on double-voicing practices that index linguistic expertise, and recommends ways forward for scholars and practitioners who wish to develop their repertoire of linguistic strategies or skills in professional contexts.