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**Does gender matter? A cross-national investigation of primary classroom discipline.**

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## **Does gender matter? A cross-national investigation of primary classroom discipline.**

Fewer than 15% of primary school teachers in both Germany and the UK are male. With the on-going international debate about educational performance highlighting the widening gender achievement gap between girl and boy pupils, the demand for more male teachers has become prevalent in educational discourse. Concerns have frequently been raised about the underachievement of boys, with claims that the lack of male ‘role models’ in schools has an adverse effect on boys’ academic motivation and engagement. Although previous research has examined ‘teaching’ as institutional talk, men’s linguistic behaviour in the classroom remains largely ignored, especially in regards to enacting discipline. Using empirical spoken data collected from four primary school classrooms in both the UK and in Germany, this paper examines the linguistic discipline strategies of eight male and eight female teachers using Interactional Sociolinguistics to address the question, does teacher gender matter?

Keywords: discipline; interactional sociolinguistics, gender, stereotypes.

### **Introduction**

There is persistent gender segregation in the labour market, with many sectors remaining consistently gendered or dominated by a particular group. For example, during 2016 in Britain, men occupied 23% of all administration and secretarial posts, but 94% of engineering and 86% of architects, planners and surveyor posts. Moreover, 40% of all female jobs were in the public sector compared to 15% of male jobs (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/how-fair-britain/online-summary/key-areas-employment>, accessed 9th June 2017). The concept of ‘gendered’ occupations emerges from the skills and characteristics that men and women are assumed to encompass due to their sex and what their society deems as ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’ traits. Consequently, feminine workplaces are characterised by stereotypical features of femininity

(being caring, facilitative, supportive) and masculine workplaces by those associated with masculinity (aggressiveness, competitiveness, power; [Burke and Collins 2001; Thornton and Bricheno 2006; Trauth 2002]). This is a phenomenon found on an international level (Huppatz and Goodwin 2013; Kauppinen-Toropainen and Lammi 1993; Ku 2011; Williams 1995).

Recently, there have been a number of positive developments resulting in more women entering into occupations once traditionally only assigned to men. But there still remains an occupational market that is dominated by high levels of segregation. Furthermore, we have not seen men's numbers increasing in 'female' occupations. In fact, some countries have even witnessed a decline in these numbers (McGrath and Van Bergen, 2017). As a consequence of gender stereotyping, men often feel deterred from taking up 'feminine' work roles and we witness this trend internationally (Buschor, Kappler, Frei and Berweger 2014; Haines, Deaux and Lofaro 2016; Huppatz and Goodwin 2013; Skelton 2003).

### ***Primary School Teaching: A 'Feminine' Occupation?***

Typically, a job is classed as female dominated (feminised) when its staff composition is more than 70% (Huppatz and Goodwin 2013). In both the UK and Germany, female staff composition of teachers makes up over 85% of registered primary school teachers (StBa 2015; Department of Education 2016). Furthermore, primary school teaching is seen to be a feminised role, deemed by society as appropriate only for those with feminine characteristics (Allan 1993; Britton 2000; Buschor *et al*, 2014). Therefore, school teaching is a job role not seen as gender neutral, but is instead defined in opposition to masculinity (Thornton and Bricheno 2006; Vervecken, Dries and Hannover 2015; Williams 1993). This may be partly (or fully?) responsible for the continued lack of men in this occupation. As a result, there is a growing body of work that examines this occupa-

tion, and a large number of government incentives trying to get men into primary education (Faulstich-Wieland 2013, Spilt, Koomen and Jak 2012). However, the latter clearly attempt to attract men into the profession by carving out a ‘masculine’ niche within the role. For example, one recurrent rhetoric around the argument for ‘needing more male teachers’ is that men provide a role model for male pupils. This ‘role model’ status is inevitably linked to delivering ‘tough’ discipline; and that male teachers are a positive role model for boys (Bullough 2015, Skelton 2003, Spilt, Koomen and Jak 2012).

Such discourse is strongly believed by parents, government policies and often teachers (both male and female) themselves. But this *still* places focus on gender stereotypes (that all men are tough and aggressive). Moreover, empirical research has repeatedly demonstrated that pupils do not view teachers as role models simply based on teacher gender, nor do they even rate teachers that highly in terms of important role models in the first place, with boys ranking them even lower than girls (Thornton and Bricheno 2006). Interestingly, the most important attributes a teacher role model can possess for their pupils children are that of kindness and care (see Thornton and Bricheno 2006: 11). Overall, empirical data have provided precious little support for the pursuit to recruit more male teachers to act as role models (Carrington, Tymms, and Merrell 2008, Spilt, Koomen and Jak 2012).

### ***The Feminization of Teaching?***

In UK and Germany, there has been extensive debate on underachieving boys in the education system, with girls often outperforming boys (Bullough 2015, Reay 2001). This is referred to as the gender gap. There have been various attempts to explain why there is a gap that concern the ethnicity, social class, parental education levels, and the

'feminization' of primary schooling (Brophy and Good 1974; Buriel 1983; Irvine 1986; Skelton 2003). In addition to explaining why such a 'gap' is present, there have been attempts at designing strategies to close the gap, such as utilizing different teaching styles, making the classroom a more competitive environment; and recruiting more male teachers (Carrington et al. 2007; Thornton and Bricheno 2006; Skelton 2003). But in the case of gender matching, research argues that the gender of the teacher does not aid pupil achievement nor increase their motivation in learning (Beaman, Wheldall, and Kemp 2006; Becker 1981; Harrop and Swinson 2011; Jungwirth 1991; Lahelma 2000; Mortimore et al. 1988). The presence of more male teachers does not enhance the educational achievement, or motivation levels, of boys (Carrington *et al.*, 2008; Martin and Yin 1997).

In fact, stereotypes about children and how they behave in the classroom (defined by their gender) can actually cause teacher bias (Becker 1981; LiLi and Walsh 2011; Van de Gaer 2006) with boys often viewed as being more troublesome than girls. Such views have led to recurrent arguments that more men are needed to discipline the boys and often sought for their presumed ability to 'maintain stern discipline in their classrooms' (Plax et al. 1986, 43). There is an argument that over the last decade, classrooms and teaching styles have 'become considerably more masculinised though an emphasis on testing and assessment, performance indicators and stratified and hierarchical management and administration structures' (Thornton and Bricheno 2006, p51). If this is indeed the case, along with the arguments that more men are needed for role models and to enact tough discipline, we would expect to see an increase of men in this occupation. But we don't. So what else can explain the lack of men in this occupation that is evident across the globe?

As statistics show, key targets for male recruitment are repeatedly not being met (Thornton and Bricheno 2006) and in countries including the UK and Germany we have even seen a decline of men entering into the area (DoE 2016; McGrath and Van Bergen, 2017). There may be a multitude of barriers that are causing this phenomenon including the low status and low pay of female occupations, the homophobic comments men often receive when entering into such professions, the slurs of being a sexual predator, and men not wanting to work with women or under female bosses. Arguably, all the aforementioned issues may be caused by one major factor: society's attitudes to work roles (Haines, Deaux and Lofaro 2016). Is it society's gendered stereotypes of what these roles entail, and the characteristics assumed necessary to adequately perform that role causing the continued lack of men in this occupations? If so, can we address this by starting to look at what actually goes on in these workplaces by examining how the job is actually linguistically performed? Defining teaching in terms of only feminine characteristics creates misleading job stereotypes, often causing male teachers to worry about their masculine image (Baar 2013) or even suggesting that male teachers cannot adequately perform a pastoral role (MacDougall 1997). Despite this, there remains a distinct lack of research with a linguistic focus on *actual* teaching practices. By shedding light on how classroom discipline is actually conducted in primary classrooms this gap in research can be addressed. This would be very beneficial to the field because it could help provide realistic insights into such practices and the claim that teaching has become feminised to potentially aid the de-gendering of the occupation.

### ***Stereotypes of 'Gendered' Language***

Gendered stereotypes of language have long existed within society and indeed, earlier studies of language and gender. Although studies have now moved on to place focus on

context rather than differences between the sexes; the findings from previous research are still a very useful resource as they demonstrate the ‘deeply entrenched stereotypical norms of women’s and men’s speech styles’ that still exist in societies today (Mills and Mullany, 2011: 53). Stereotypical masculine strategies include interruption; topic control; using direct, unmitigated orders and criticism; avoidance of personal topics and self-disclosure; and unsupportive conversational behaviour. Women are stereotyped to be; indirect (use hedges, tag questions); collaborative; offer supportive feedback; be polite; and unassertive (Cameron, 2007; Holmes, 2006).

However, it is now widely accepted amongst gender and language scholars that gender is performative and can be actively constructed and displayed through one’s language choice (Butler, 1990, 2004). If language is no longer regarded to reflect one’s gender but is instead actively used to build and maintain a gendered identity, one can then enact both masculinity and femininity through language. Scholars have found that men and women adopt gendered speech styles of the ‘other’ in order to fit in to their surrounding context, using a very similar range of linguistic strategies when in the same work role (Holmes 2006; McDowell 2018; McElhinny 1995; Mullany 2007; Rhoton 2011; Schnurr 2008). This present paper adheres to the principle that men and women can use any linguistic strategies regardless of their gender and provides further support for this. But, as no other terminology yet exists to refer to such behaviour the authors will use the terms ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ in this article when referring to speakers’ linguistic behaviour to highlight the stereotypes of gendered linguistic features that persist in society today.

### ***Discipline in the classroom***

Classroom interaction typically displays an asymmetrical power relationship with the teacher having more speaking rights and control over the interaction (Freebody &



Freiberg, 2000; Liu and Hong 2009; Mehan 1979). This leads to certain expectations and norms concerning suitable behaviour and both teacher and students display sensitivity towards them (Margutti and Piirainein 2011). Teachers frequently react to violations of these norms and expectations (e.g. a student is calling out) by disciplining students. This is where gender stereotypes are prevalent. Leadership, aggression and control are seen to be masculine characteristics, whilst care and nurturing are feminine attributes (Buschor et al. 2014; Holmes 2006). Furthermore, the numerical dominance of female teachers has been said to have led to a softer style of classroom discipline, with more men required to provide tougher discipline (for direct positive effect on male pupils), and that boys show male teachers more respect. However, there is no empirical evidence for these claims (Buschor et al. 2014). Read (2008) in her exploration of teachers' 'tough' or 'liberal' discipline, explored the extent to which such behaviour could be classed as feminine or masculine. Her findings support current thinking in regards to gender as performative, and questions gendered characteristics that are long assumed to belong to each gender. Both men and women were found to practice disciplinary talk in 'masculine' ways (Read, 2008, 615). Linguistic styles were direct and assertive, and used to exert control over pupils, reminding them of the teacher's power and authority in this context. Read classified this as *disciplinarian discourse*, and it frequently occurred in all classrooms. Softer liberal discourse was used to a much lesser extent, and when it was used, it was often combined with 'masculine' linguistic strategies. Liberal discourse is often characterized by a softening of the criticism, where a negative comment is often mitigated. Both styles were used by both men and women. Her work arguably supports the debate that gender is performed, and men and women use whatever linguistic strategy that is necessary to perform their professional identity. This not only challenges the notion that men provide more effective (i.e. stronger) and therefore 'bet-

ter' discipline, it also calls into the question the claim that primary school teaching is completely feminised and that women cannot give 'tough' discipline. Indeed, the performance of discipline is an extremely important element of the classroom, but thus far received little scholarly attention.

### **Methodology**

As disciplining strategies are closely connected to prevalent gender stereotypes (see above) this paper will focus on teachers' linguistic disciplining strategies. We define disciplining following Margutti and Piirainen-Marsh (2011, 305) as 'activities through which teachers and students address some forms of conduct as unacceptable, criticisable or reproachable'. More specifically, we focus on teachers' linguistic behaviour which addresses pupil behaviour that initiates a departure from lesson trajectories at hand and behaviour that threatens the teachers' plan of action at particular moments during classroom activities (Doyle 2006; Waring, Reddington, and Tadic 2016).

This research took a qualitative, multiple-case study approach to study classroom discourse. Fieldwork was conducted in 2 co-educational primary schools in Hertfordshire, U.K and Lower Saxony, Germany, sampled on basis of teacher gender resulting in a total of 8 teacher participants from each country (n=16). This is not a representative sample, but was ample for an exploratory case study and provided a substantial database of classroom interaction. Data consists of both video and audio recordings resulting in approximately 160 hours of data which were transcribed and coded using NVivo 11plus. Video recordings were employed for transcription purposes (i.e. allowing to identify the pupils within group discussions and teacher- fronted whole-class lessons) and for the examination of non-linguistic behaviour (i.e. body language). To warrant our data analysis and interpretation, we have consulted with other researchers in this area of study, and ran several workshops with practitioners (Holmes 2014).

It is noted at this point that the aim of this paper is to generate new insights in the area of discipline by examining the teachers' discipline strategies in both Germany and England. It is however, difficult to make claims about the effect of culture on classroom practices due to an excessive amount of contextual variation across and within classrooms (Oliveira 2009). Thus, it is generally not possible to make statements about cultural linguistic norms as a whole and cross-cultural research has been criticized for overgeneralizing (i.e. ignoring intra-cultural variation) and resting on 'shaky empirical grounds' (Kádár and Haugh 2013, 243). Hence, when referring to cross-cultural differences in disciplining styles in this present paper, we refrain from making generalised claims about the respective cultures as a whole as it is beyond the scope of this present paper.

### **Analytic framework and Data Analysis**

The discursive analytical approach taken in this article was Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS), a multidisciplinary paradigm which allowed a fine grained examination of the data whilst acknowledging the importance of conversational context. Butler's (1990) view of gender as a performed social construct and not a fixed inherent category (social constructionism) has had an impact on language and gender research, encouraging a move away from essentialist perceptions that language is innately linked to gender, to focusing on what we do in order to actively enact a gendered identity. Evidence of adapting one's language to the surrounding context has been found in studies of the workplace (Cameron, 2007; Holmes, 2006; Mullany, 2007), meaning we perform our identities differently according to the context in which we currently find ourselves. Therefore data analysis is situated in the IS paradigm, which embraces the social-constructionist views of gender as a qualitative framework to address the possible caus-

es behind speakers' discursive behaviours. This allows us to draw on micro-linguistic and macro-social information to understand how each teacher constructs their identity (masculine, teacher or otherwise) and why. A detailed analysis of the language used is performed, giving consideration to the possible constraints of the context in which the speakers are situated (Holmes 2006; Milani, 2011).

Data was analysed using linguistic frameworks compiled from previous socio-linguistic language and gender research (Brown and Levinson 1987; Coates 1996, 2004; Holmes 1982, 1986, 1990, 1995). These frameworks are well established and frequently used within IS to categorize linguistic features and their functions. Comparative analysis allowed us to identify patterns of differences and similarities, and empirical findings were drawn together into an overall thematic analysis. For an initial identification of instances of classroom discipline we used Lewis' (see Lewis et al. 2005 and Lewis 2001) disciplining taxonomy.

### **Empirical Results and Discussion**

Results from both countries show that both men and women used both direct (stereotyped as hard/masculine) and indirect (stereotyped as passive/feminine) linguistic styles to perform discipline (Holmes 2006; Mullany and Yoong 2018; Read 2008). The extracts presented in the rest of this article demonstrate men and women acting like the 'other' gender whilst performing discipline in their classrooms. This is not to suggest that men did not use unmitigated 'tough' discipline and negative sanctions, and women mitigated, 'liberal' discipline and positive sanctions. However, our focus in this paper is to explore whether both men and women use the stereotypical speech style of the 'other' gender at any time in order to question whether gendered stereotypes are truly applicable to how discipline is actually linguistically performed.

### *Men and Indirect Discipline*

Extract 1 from the German data shows a teacher-led instructional sequence in which the male teacher Karl introduces a new topic (i.e. environment protection zones). Emily is the first to have been allocated a turn by the teacher. She is interrupted, however, by continuous calling out of the other children in the classroom:

#### **Extract 1**

- 1        {Children are calling out}
- 2        Karl: EMILY.
- 3                (0.2)
- 4        {Children continue talking}
- 5        Emily: Also ehm die Plakette vier die kann also-
- 6                **Right ehm badge four it can-**
- 7        {Children continue talking}
- 8        Karl: HALT MAL.
- 9                **HANG ON.**
- 10                (1.2)
- 11        Tim: KLAPPE.
- 12                **SHUT UP.**
- 13                (0.6)
- 14        Justin: Oh.
- 15        Marie: Oh TIM.
- 16        Tim: SELBER.
- 17                **NO YOU.**
- 18                (1.4)
- 19        Emily: Ehm (.) also es gibt da so welche Diesel und sowas.
- 20                **Ehm (.) there are diesel and things like that.**

In line 2 Karl reacts to the children's calling out by nominating Emily as a first speaker. This is done with a markedly louder voice and could be seen as a first disciplining strategy. He resolves the students calling out in overlap (i.e. children are talking at the same time) by speaking louder than the surrounding talk (Schegloff 2000). This strategy, however, fails (see line 7) and the children keep on calling out even though Emily is speaking (see line 6). In line 8, Karl reacts to this misbehaviour and upgrades his disciplining reaction from increasing the volume of speech (line 2) to stopping the activity. This is done in an unmitigated and direct way (e.g. Mullany 2007). It can, according to Lewis' (2001) taxonomy, be seen as a form a punishment because the activity is stopped, and therefore the opportunity to provide an answer is denied. He utilises a pause (line 10) to refocus the students' attention and give them an opportunity to settle down. This deliberate teacher pause is interrupted by Tim in line 12, shouting 'shut up'. This imperative is causing Justin and Marie to get upset (see line 14-15) presumably due to power relations among peers which do not allow for such pupil directives in class. Line 18 shows a 1.4 second gap after the dispute between Tim, Marie and Justin. It illustrates that Karl does not react to this misconduct (i.e. speaking out of turn, using inappropriate language). He waits until Emily, who was initially interrupted, resumes her turn and then provides supportive backchannel feedback 'hm' after turn completion (line 21).

This targeted ignoring is a common discursive feature of both German male teachers observed. Instead of doing disciplining, the teachers avoid this apparently *face-threatening act* (Brown and Levinson 1987). Therefore, pupils' apparent misbehaviour remains unmarked. Resolving or avoiding conflicts in such a passive way could be seen

as stereotypically feminine (e.g. Coates 2004). This is in stark contrast to literature (e.g. Plax et al. 1986) showing that male teachers are often favoured for their stern disciplining and authoritative teaching styles.

In the next extract, the German children have been working in groups on different tasks (i.e. at different stations). The teacher Jan ends the activity by using a bell:

**Extract 2:**

1. {Jan rings bell to end group work}
- 2 Tim: {Steht auf und schaut T. an} wir haben nur noch eine Station.
- 3 {Stands up and looks at T.} **we only have one station left.**
- 4 Jan: Einfach sitzen bleiben einfach sitzen bleiben.
- 5 **Just stay seated just stay seated.**
- 6 {Children start talking}
- 7 Jan: So.
- 8 **Right.**
- 9 {Tim is not seated.}
- 10 Jan: Tim hast du auch nen Platz?
- 11 **Tim do you have a seat as well?**
- 12 Tim: {sits down}
- 12 Jan: So. Ich möchte mit euch eine wichtige Sache besprechen.
- 13 **Right. I want to discuss an important matter with you.**

Line 1 shows Jan using a bell to end the ongoing activity. This strategy could be regarded as stereotypically feminine (Doyle 2006). Line 2 shows Tim standing up. Jan reacts to this with an imperative construction ‘stay seated’ but mitigates it with the minimizer ‘just’ (line 5). The children keep on talking in line 9. Jan does not react to this by

using a disciplining directive but cuts off the children's talk by using the marker 'so'. This can be seen as a strategy for restoring order with a very low level of imposition (Brown and Levinson 1987) compared to unmitigated directives. In line 11, Jan reacts to Tim's misbehaviour (i.e. not being seated) by using a question. This question serves not only to seek information but also for disciplining purposes (i.e. indirect request for action). Jan's linguistic behaviour could be characterized as stereotypically feminine due to his low imposition and indirectness (Mills and Mullany 2011).

From the U.K data, extract 3 below demonstrates Ben heavily mitigating his discipline strategies when his pupil, Sam, is chatting and then begins to run around the classroom:

**Extract 3:**

- 1 {Children are talking}
- 2 Ben: Sam (.) Sam you seem to be a bit chatty today I don't
- 3 know why what's going on (1.0) that's the first
- 4 warning I don't want to give you another one alright?
- 5 Ben: You've been looking at the water cycle so you've done
- 6 an incredible amount right let's get your white boards
- 7 ready because this is the task (.) now
- 8 {Children take out their white boards}
- 9 Ben: Freeze (2.0) Sam (.) Sam Freeze (1.0) I know it is exciting
- 10 Sam that cameras are in the room but you are not normally
- 11 this chatty (1.0) if I give you an instruction you do it quietly
- 12 come on.

Here we see Ben mitigating his hinting strategy with the hedge 'you seem' and mitigating Sam's level of disruption with 'a bit'. This hinting aims to remind students of the classroom rules; do not talk when you are not supposed to. Following this however,



he appears to make some reference to Sam's usual behaviour, which is not normally to 'be chatty' and provides a reasoning of sorts for his behaviour in line 3. Ben then moves to give a warning, an early stage of punishment, creating a negative consequence if Sam's misbehaviour continues. However, Ben's threat of punishment does not take any concrete form. Rather he is given a vague 'warning', but of what is not clear. Ben carries on to teach, using rewards and recognition to acknowledge pupils' previous good work (line 5) followed by a mitigated request for them to prepare for the next task (Lewis 2001; Holmes 2006). Sam however, has other plans, and started to run around the room. Ben shouts out the imperative 'freeze', and then directs it to Sam by name in line 9, repeating his order. Ben then mitigates his order by providing some form of justification for Sam's misbehaviour- that it is 'exciting to have cameras in the room'. Once again he reminds Sam that his conduct is not his usual behaviour, and reminds him of the classroom rules in lines 10-11 (Lewis 2001). The strategies employed here to perform the discipline work are typically classed to be 'feminine' (Mills and Murray 2011) but were typical in the UK data from both male as well as female teachers.

Along with heavy use of mitigation, male teachers also frequently made use of positive reinforcement during periods of discipline (gaining award points; getting rewards; going up the school reward system). In extract 4 below, the UK teacher Stephan is working with a small group of children teaching phonetics and one male pupil, Jack, is falling behind:

**Extract 4:**

- 1 Stephan: You've lost your sticker and in fact you can earn that sticker  
2 back if you do good work (.) look at how many words Michael  
3 has written already and Adam (.) in fact all of purple group well  
4 done  
5 Jack: <?>

6 Stephan: No don't take (.) a board use a piece of paper everybody else is  
7 doing their work (.) that's brilliant keep going okay? I'm going to  
8 get you all money in the reward bank if you keep going.

Stephan utilises the rewards and recognition strategy several times throughout this short extract (Lewis 2001). He begins by reminding Jack that he can 'earn' his lost sticker back (which was lost early in the day due to Jack's bad behaviour) if he performs well. This mitigates the earlier punishment as well as provides an incentive for Jack to work harder (Lewis et al 2005) which sees him praising the other pupils who are performing well (lines 2 and 3) to encourage Jack to stop misbehaving and carry on with his writing. We see further evidence of this in lines 7-8, where he praises the Jack for finally starting his work (line 7), which is mitigated with the invariant tag question 'okay' (Holmes 1982), and then offers the positive sanction of 'all the money in the reward bank' in line 8 if Jack keeps going with his work (the 'reward bank' is a jar of sweets).

Extract 5 below demonstrates another male teacher, Matt, using mitigated, positive reinforcement for students who are behaving, rather than issuing negative sanctions for those who do not:

**Extract 5:**

1 Matt: Oh who has got their hands up because I'm going to put  
2 people up the sunshine who listen  
3 (Children still chatter noisily)  
4 Matt: Erm we have got a little bit more time of reading but it's  
5 getting a bit noisy and I can't hear Julie and she is only  
6 sitting next to me so (.) really quiet work and I'm going to

7 give lots of house points to those who work quietly

Matt has requested that the pupils to sit on the carpet and sit quietly with their books ready hands up (to show they are settled and ready to work). He uses the inclusive pronoun 'we' to mitigate his instruction by including himself in his order that the children need to carry on with their reading (line 1). In lines 1-2, he uses reward and recognition by offering pupils a move 'up the sunshine', which is his classroom reward system. This fails to work, so we see a further strategy of talking with the students (Lewis 2001), where Matt describes the pupils' bad behaviour and the impact it is having on others in the class (line 5-6); that he cannot hear Julie who is reading out loud to him. This also acts as a negative politeness strategy as Matt is providing his pupils with a reason for his discipline (Brown and Levinson 1987). He also mitigates the pupils' bad behaviour and his own criticism with the hedge 'a bit' in line 5 (Holmes 1990) and ends by offering a positive sanction 'lots of house points' if they quieten down.

Extract 6 presents Keith trying to settle his class down after they have been given instructions on what materials to collect for their next arts and crafts activity. The children have been asked to build a structure with lolly sticks, but to ensure they worked on their project alone they had to 'hide' it by placing books around it, like a fort:

#### **Extract 6**

1 Keith: Now the only person that should be stood up is the assessor (.)  
2 okay everybody else should be sat down and you need to  
3 speak very quietly (1) okay? so we're whispering because  
4 there's potentially lots of questions it's good to ask questions  
5 but we need to be for the people to listen carefully (.) we need  
6 to be relatively quiet (.) okay? (2.0) now (.) we've got twenty five  
7 minutes until break (1) okay (.) now I can see you can see his

8 design so that's not good enough is it? You are not hiding  
9 your work so that's not big enough is it? So you need to go  
10 and get another book (.) give one of your books to Timmy  
11 and go and find another book to hide yours as well (.) okay?  
12 Off you go. Lots of house points for those who work quietly.

Here we see the frequent use of tag questions used to mitigate orders (lines 3, 6, 11: invariant tag 'okay' with rising intonation) and soften his negative criticism (lines 8, 9: 'is it'). Keith also includes himself in his instruction via the inclusive pronoun 'we' (lines 3, 5) which acts to mitigate his instruction to the children to 'speak very quietly' (line 2-3). He then provides a reason for his order (line 5) which is a positive politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987) and finishes with rewards and recognition (Lewis 2001), offering a positive sanction for those that work quietly (line 12).

### *Females and Direct Discipline*

In this extract from the German data, teacher Heike is reading from a book to the children while they are eating breakfast. The students are expected to remain seated until the story is over. Linus, however, gets up in the middle of the story to go to the rubbish bin:

#### **Extract 7**

1 Heike: Ihre Nase hatte die- (0.5) bleibt ihr bitte mal sitzen. Eben  
2 **Her nose had the- (0.5) stay in your seats please. Just**  
3 stand schon wer auf. LINUS?  
4 **now there was somebody getting up. LINUS?**  
5 Linus: Ich wollt schon eben ((shows his plastic bottle)).  
6 **I just wanted to ((shows his plastic bottle)).**

7 Heike: NE (0.3) KOMM MAL BITTE ZURÜCK.  
8 **NO (0.3) COME BACK PLEASE.**  
9 (1.2)  
10 Heike: SO. Finds du das richtig?  
11 **RIGHT. Do you think that is okay?**  
12 (0.8)  
13 Heike: Muss ich jetzt aufhören?  
14 **Do I have to stop now?**  
15 (1.5)  
16 Heike: Warum unterbrichst du das?  
17 **Why do you interrupt this?**  
18 (1.0)  
19 Heike: Eben war schon einer den ich (0.2) nur im Augenwinkel  
20 **Just now there was already someone who I (0.2) only saw**  
21 **wahrgenommen hab. HALLO wenn ich aufstehe und ihr (.)**  
22 **out of the corner of my eye. HELLO when I stand up and**  
23 **wirklich alles wegräumt. Dann bringt ihr auch euren Müll oder**  
24 **you have packed away really everything. Then you should take**  
25 **eure leeren Flaschen weg. Ist nicht in Ordnung.**  
26 **away your rubbish or your empty bottles. It's not okay.**

In line 1, Heike stops reading and asks Linus to sit down. This request is slightly mitigated with ‘please’. She later directly addresses Linus by name, followed by an unmitigated ‘no’, signalling that she treats his conduct as unwanted misbehaviour. She requests Linus to come back to her and face her (line 8). This is again done slightly mitigated with ‘please’. This, could, however also function to strengthen the illocutionary

force of the request. Heike then launches a series of direct, unmitigated questions (line 11, 14, 17). Previous research (Koshik 2005; Schegloff 1984) has shown that questions are often not only used to seek information but can fulfil a variety of other actions in conversations (e.g. requests, complaints). The question ‘do you think that’s okay?’ in line 11 is not followed by a pupil response and the teacher launches two subsequent questions ‘do I have to stop now’ line 14 and ‘why do you interrupt this’ in line 17. It could be argued that these questions do not primarily function to elicit information but rather convey negative assertions and threats. They also function to get the pupil to self-regulate their own behaviour, and to recognise what they did wrong themselves. We see the same linguistic strategies from a U.K female teacher in extract 10.

The ‘hello’ in line 22 further indicates the Heike’s negative stance (i.e. being upset about the incident). In the following, she reminds all pupils of the class rules (Lewis 2001), and clearly verbalises her behaviour expectations. The change from the German address term singular ‘du’ to plural ‘ihr’ in Line 21 shows that Heike is using the misbehaviour of one pupil to reproach the whole class. The sequence is closed by another unmitigated teacher turn ‘it’s not okay’ in line 26, further emphasising the fact that she sees the pupils conduct as unacceptable. Similar to Oliveira (2009) this extract shows that teachers often change from mitigated to unmitigated language over the course of longer disciplining episodes. It also demonstrates that Heike uses a more stereotypically masculine speech style (i.e. direct orders, less mitigation) in order to do disciplining.

In the sequence below from the German data, the teacher Sina has told the children to remove their working materials from their desks and prepare for the next lesson:

### **Extract 8**

- 1                    {pupils are packing up and talking}
- 2        Sina: {walks to the front of the class}
- 3                    (2.5)

- 4                    {students continue packing up and talking}
- 5        Merle: Welche- welcher Zettel? Der neue?
- 6                    **Which- which sheet? The new one?**
- 7        Sina: MERLE? Hast du dich grad gemeldet?
- 8                    **MERLE? Did you raise your hand?**
- 9                    (1.2)
- 10       Merle: {raises her hand}
- 11       Sina: ICH SAGE WAS WENN ALLE LEISE SIND.
- 12                    **I'LL SAY SOMETHING WHEN EVERYBODY IS QUIET.**

Line 2 shows Sina walking to the instructional center (i.e. front of the class) and waiting for the children to stop talking. This, however, does not happen (line 4). Instead, Merle calls out and asks for information about a worksheet the children are supposed to place in their folders (line 6). This question constitutes a first-pair part of an adjacency pair (i.e. question and answer) that makes an answer from the teacher relevant as a next action (Schegloff 2007). Sina, however, ignores this relevance and launches her disciplining agenda with a question in line 8. Similar to the extracts before, the question here is not only used to seek information but also for disciplining purposes (i.e. reminder of classroom rules). Merle shows her understanding of this by raising her hand in line 10. Sina then closes this sequence in line 12 by using an *if/then-contingency* (i.e. only if the students are quiet she will say something) addressing all students at once to strongly invoke her institutional power (Evaldson and Melander 2017).

Her linguistic behavior could, at first glance, be interpreted as stereotypically feminine (i.e. mitigating disciplining directives through questions). A closer look at the structure of the sequence, however, shows that Sina dominates the talk by enforcing a

topical agendas (i.e. disciplining) and ignoring Merle's questions. With the conditional construction at the end, she not only disciplines Merle but the whole class by connecting the misbehavior of the class (i.e. continuous talking) to a positive consequence (i.e. answering the question) for Merle. Thus, Sina's speech style can be described as dominant and controlling which is frequently associated with masculinity (Holmes 2006, Mullany and Yoong 2018).

Female teachers in both countries tend to utilise negative sanctions to discipline students (i.e. going down the school reward system, getting sent out of class; losing their lunch break) alongside 'tough' unmitigated discipline. In extract 9 we see the teacher, Jill, shift from using direct to indirect directives. She performs her teaching using softened directives, but switches seamlessly to a direct style when carrying out discipline to a disruptive student:

### **Extract 9**

- 1 Holly: In many ways from one thing Harry hated summer  
2 holidays more than any other time of the year for  
3 another Harry really wanted to Harry's own work  
4 Harry was forced to do it  
5 Jill: Billy come and sit over here please you are  
6 talking too much  
7 Holly: In sequence in the dead of night Harry also  
8 happened to be a wizard  
9 Jill: Now (.) which word is repeated too often?  
10 Billy: {Shouting out} Harry  
11 {Teacher selects student with his hand up}



12 Jill: Tom?  
13 Tom: Harry  
14 Jill: Harry  
15 Jill: So we've got lots of Harry's do we take all of  
16 them out  
17 Jill: Now I would like you on your whiteboards  
18 {Billy screams}  
19 Jill: Billy do you need to go Billy do you need to go  
20 out of this class (.) Billy look at me (.) the  
21 next time I talk to you (.) you will be going out  
22 {Children are muttering}  
23 Jill: Now (10.0)  
24 {Children quieten down}  
25 Jill: I've asked you Billy I'll talk to you at break  
26 time  
27 Jill: Now on your whiteboards please (.) the underlined  
28 Harry's (.) I'm giving you thirty seconds okay  
29 can you put a pronoun in there please shh shh  
30 shh  
31 {Children start the task}

Jill begins by directly naming the pupil, and follows immediately with a punishment, which is to move Billy in line 3 (Lewis, 2001). This is followed by the explanation 'you are talking too much', which goes against classroom rules. Billy then further misbehaves by breaking another classroom rule in line 6: he shouts out an answer without being selected to do so by the teacher. Jill ignores this behaviour, and instead

allows another pupil to answer, one who had followed classroom protocol. This rewards Tom (Lewis et al, 2005) whilst simultaneously punishing Billy. In line 15, we see a behaviour that Jill does not ignore. Billy screams loudly, resulting in Jill's interrogative 'do you need to go out Billy' which functions as a warning. This is followed by a direct command 'Billy look at me' and a clear threat of punishment, a consequence of his repeated bad behaviour. These direct, unmitigated strategies still do not work, and Billy continues to disrupt the lesson. In line 20 we see further escalation of punishment; Billy loses part of his time to play at break when he must stay in the class to be scolded by the teacher. The delivery of this punishment is direct, and the pupil is informed as to why he must stay in at break, 'I've asked you Billy'. This discipline is performed in front of the entire classroom, perhaps adding an element of deliberate pupil embarrassment.

In extract 10, two male pupils, Tim and Bob, are messing about and two other boys, John and Fred, get out of their seats to watch . At the same time, Mike, does something bad to Steve. Tammy the teacher deals with these two situations with direct orders, criticism and negative sanctions:

#### **Extract 10**

- 1 Tammy: {shouts at John and Fred} SIT BACK DOWN NOW
- 2 {Tammy goes over to talk to John and Fred and something is
- 3 going on between Mike and Steve which catches her eye}
- 4 Tammy: MIKE DO YOUR WORK
- 5 Tammy: You alright Steve (.) what did he just do?
- 6 Steve: <?>
- 7 {John tries to show the teacher his work but teacher ignores this
- 8 and walks over to Mike}
- 9 Tammy: What did you just do?
- 10 Tammy: So what did you do?

11 Tammy: What did you do?  
 12 Tammy: Speak to me.  
 13 Tammy: What did you do?  
 14 Tammy: Was it a very kind thing?  
 15 Tammy: You need to apologise  
 16 Tammy: Say sorry  
 17 Mike: Sorry  
 18 Tammy: Steve turn round he is saying sorry  
 19 Mike: Sorry  
 20 Tammy: {to Mike} You don't do that in this school (.) you're  
 21 going down a diamond. If somebody is being noisy  
 22 you let me know you don't deal with it yourself do  
 23 you? Now get on with your work .

In this extract, Tammy utilises several unmitigated direct orders (lines 1, 4, 12, 15, 16, 18, 23) when disciplining the pupils. She directly questions Mike to get him to think about what he did to Steve in an attempt to make the pupil self-regulate his behaviour. This is a form of talking with students and hinting (Lewis 2001) as Tammy is attempting to get Mike to think about his actions and whether his behaviour was acceptable in the classroom environment. Mike does not respond to this line of questioning, and only responds in line 17 after Tammy directly orders him to apologise. This is the same strategies used in the German data (see Extract 7) as we see both teachers using questions that convey their negative stance towards the misbehaviour of the children and their expectations for them to stop. These questions put pressure on the children by enforcing topical agendas (i.e. not a very kind thing) and thereby restricting pupil options in formulating a response. The face-threat is maximized by the continued pursued of an

answer even though room for response is restricted (no sufficient pauses given). In lines 20-23, we see her reminding Mike of the school rules (reorientation in line 20) which is then followed by a punishment of the removal of privileges; 'going down a diamond' (the classroom reward system). What we also see here is deliberate embarrassment of the student. Tammy does address the pupil quietly on a one-to-one basis. Instead she addresses him loudly in front of the entire class, so much so that the other pupils all stop their work to watch and listen. As in previous examples (extracts 8, 9) when a teacher is unsuccessful we see escalated levels of punishment used via direct unmitigated threats and orders. The direct, unmitigated style visible in extracts 7-11 has been described as 'typically masculine' discipline behaviour in both educational discourse (Lewis 2001) and gendered discourse (Holmes 2006). But such behaviour was typical in our data from all teachers regardless of their gender.

## **Conclusion**

This paper aims to challenge gender norms in two ways: (1) by focussing on interactions involving men enacting their teaching identity in normatively feminine contexts we challenge the emphasis on gender as the most salient category in interpreting behaviour; (2) recognising the multiplicity and fluidity of gendered behaviour we represent cultural and occupational contexts where other explanations can be offered. Despite differing in culture and gender, all eight teachers utilised a mixture of linguistic strategies considered typical of a feminine style and a masculine style for comparable purposes. Each teachers' linguistic performance could be to some extent determined by their mutual workplace culture with the linguistic repertoire of their setting having some form of influence on their linguistic choices (Holmes and Schnurr 2006; Powell, Bagilhole, and Dainty 2009). The teachers use language that allows them to fulfil discourse

tasks essential to their profession- in this case, disciplining. Teachers need to constantly adapt and style shift, employing strategies that are best suited to each individual pupil. Arguably then, men and women have a wide range of communicative skills in their linguistic arsenal. And as competent teachers, use whichever style (both masculine and feminine) required to perform their teaching role.

Such findings are similar to previous research concerning women in masculinized jobs, where women move away from femininity to embrace masculine characteristics in order to perform their job (Barrett 2004; Baxter 2011; Rhoton 2011) and studies on men in feminine jobs, where men utilize feminine speech styles in order to perform their professional identity to the best of their ability (Cameron 2007; Holmes 2006; McDowell 2018; Mullany 2007). What can be deduced then is that gendered identity is therefore not always of primary importance in the workplace, as people can focus instead on their occupational role construction (Holmes 2006). Of course, this is not to suggest that male teachers and female teachers do not ‘do’ masculinity or femininity in other ways. But that they are using the unmarked speech styles in this environment as the work role guides, shapes and permeates their discursive choices (Holmes and Schnurr 2006). Arguably then, gender is not an overriding variable here in being a teacher. We can argue that the skills needed are simply those required for the job, which is of key importance in breaking the entrenched gendered assumptions about the role of primary school teaching. De-stereotyping the role is of key importance as we *need* more qualified teachers in both the UK and Germany. Men often decide against becoming a primary teacher because they think it is a female profession (Warwick, Warwick and Hopper 2012). We must re-interpret language use as reflecting professional identity rather than gender identity. Recruiting should instead stress the competencies all teachers share (i.e. instructional skills) and not simply follow role-model ar-

guments (e.g. tougher discipline). By raising awareness of primary school teachers' linguistic behaviour we may be able to start de-gendering the job and only then may we see more men taking up such professional occupations.

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## Appendix: Transcription conventions

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| .     | Falling intonation                              |
| ?     | Rising intonation                               |
| ,     | Continuing intonation                           |
| <?>   | Indecipherable speech                           |
| WORD  | Loud speech                                     |
| (.)   | Very brief pause                                |
| (1.0) | Longer pause with length in seconds             |
| :     | Lengthening/drawing out of final syllable/sound |
| (( )) | Paralanguage or transcriptionist comment        |

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