

Language and gender in a US reality TV show: An analysis of leadership discourse in single-sex interactions

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Abstract

This paper examines issues relating to language, gender and leadership in the debut season of the reality TV show *The Apprentice* (USA). In particular, it looks at the ways in which two male and two female project managers 'do leadership' through discourse in single-sex interactions. The analysis shows that these project managers display leadership styles which are by and large in accordance with the gendered norms and expectations. It is found that while their leadership styles are not evaluated entirely positively, the male managers receive both positive and negative comments for using predominantly masculine speech styles and the female managers who 'do leadership' by employing a largely feminine discourse style are perceived negatively. It is also argued that the single-sex contexts of interactions can be seen as being constructed intentionally in the TV show in order to capture the gender-stereotypical speech styles of 'doing leadership'.

1. Introduction

In the last decade or so, there has been a growing body of language and gender research which investigated the interplay between gender and workplace communication. One of the reasons is that many workplaces constitute rich and complex sociolinguistic contexts, where communication is shaped by a wide range of sociolinguistic variables, including power, status, and gender, as well as situational and contextual factors, such as the specific organizational culture (Drew and Heritage 1992; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Schnurr 2009). Another reason is related to the gendered connotations attached to the concept of 'workplace discourse'. Given that men have historically occupied key managerial positions in many workplaces, it has been argued that workplace norms are predominantly masculine (Baxter 2010; Kendall and Tannen 2001; Mullany 2007; Sinclair 1998). However, with women's increasing participation in the workplace over the last two decades, feminine interactional styles have led to considerable changes in modern-day workplace discourse, possibly altering the predominantly masculine communication styles (Cameron 2003; Coates 2004; Peck 2006).

This paper aims to examine issues relating to gender and leadership discourse by drawing upon interactional data from the debut season of

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the popular reality TV show *The Apprentice* (USA), given the scarcity of research on the media representations of gender and workplace discourse. As Evans (2005) suggests, media representations play an important role in shaping the ways in which audiences understand and make sense of the social world. It is felt that the media can contribute to the audience's perceptions of what constitutes appropriate gendered behaviour (Gill 2006; Matheson 2005; Ross 2010). In particular, some feminist scholars are concerned with the socializing and normalizing consequences of stereotypical representations of men and women in the media (Fernandez-Villanueva et al. 2009). In view of the potential influence of the TV show on the audience's perceptions of gender and workplace communication, this paper explores the media representations of gender and leadership discourse in the 'simulated' workplace as portrayed in the TV show *The Apprentice*.

2. Language, gender and leadership discourse

In line with the social constructionist approach, gender is conceived of as a social construction, rather than a 'given' social category. Specifically, gender is something that we do (Zimmerman and West 1975), or something that we perform (Butler 1990). As Kendall and Tannen (2001: 556-557) put it, "gendered identities are interactionally achieved".

According to Ochs' (1992) notion of 'indexicality', gender is indirectly indexed in language, whereby discursive and linguistic choices are associated with certain stances, roles or practices, which are in turn associated with gender. As people construct their gender identity, they may draw upon discourse styles which may be indexed as 'gendered' (Holmes 2006; Schnurr 2009; Talbot 2010). For example, masculine styles of interaction are characterized by competitive, contestive and challenging ways of speaking, whereas feminine speech styles are characterized by co-operative, facilitative and smooth interaction (Holmes 2006; Schnurr 2009). Specifically, masculine speech styles are discursively realized in the production of extended speaking turns, the dominance of the speaking floor, the one-at-a-time construction of the floor, and the frequent use of interruptions (Coates 1997, 2004; Talbot 2010; Schnurr 2009). On the other hand, a feminine discourse style, which places emphasis on the relational aspects, is linguistically expressed in collaborative construction of the floor in conversation,

avoidance of confrontations, and the use of politeness strategies and hedging devices, as well as minimal responses and supportive feedback (Coates 2004; Holmes 1995; Sunderland 2004; Talbot 2010).

As mentioned earlier, the notion of leadership is closely linked to gender, given its association with masculinity. As Marra et al. (2006: 240) suggest, leadership is a “gendered concept”. Since leadership positions in different workplaces have traditionally been dominated by men, masculinity is indexed indirectly via the doing of leadership (Martin Rojo and Gomez Esteban 2005; Sinclair 1998). As Hearn and Parkin (1989: 21) note, “the language of leadership often equates with the language of masculinity to include qualities such as aggression, assertiveness, abrasiveness, and competitiveness”.

In tune with the social constructionist perspective, leadership is seen as a process or a performance, rather than merely as the achievements of a leader (see Baxter 2010; Holmes 2006; Holmes et al. 2003; Schnurr 2009). In particular, what is of interest to sociolinguists is the language of ‘doing leadership’, or leadership discourse. According to Holmes et al. (2003: 32), “‘doing leadership’ entails competent communicative performance which, by influencing others, results in acceptable outcomes for the organization (transactional/task-oriented goal), and which maintains harmony within the team (relational/people-oriented goal)”. In other words, Holmes et al.’s (2003) definition of leadership here focuses on the communicative aspects of ‘doing leadership’. In addition, the definition draws attention to both the transactional and relational aspects of doing leadership. While communicative behaviours concerned with transactional or task-oriented goals are closely linked with masculinity, verbal behaviours oriented to more relational or people-oriented goals are associated with femininity (Marra et al. 2006; Holmes 2006; Schnurr’s 2009). As regards the discursive characteristics of communication associated with these differently gendered leadership behaviours, Marra et al. (2006) and Schnurr (2009) point out that whereas normatively masculine strategies of leadership are characterized by assertiveness, directness, competitiveness, display of power, dominance, individualism, and task-orientation, a normatively feminine speech style of leadership is characterized by indirectness, politeness, collaborativeness, supportiveness, nurturing, caring, egalitarianism, and relationship-orientation (see also Holmes and Stubbe 2003).

3. *Data: The Apprentice*

Data used in the study are drawn from the debut season of *The Apprentice*. Filmed in 2003, the show was broadcast on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) from 8 January 2004 until 15 April 2004. It had an average viewership of 20.7 million people each week in the United States. It made use of “business savvy and business scenarios as the basis of competition, to pit businesspeople against each other, and to purport to be able to identify the next highly successful executive” (Kinnick and Parton 2005: 430). In its debut season, sixteen contestants compete in an elimination-style competition, vying for the top job with its \$250,000 salary. During the 15 episodes of the show, they embark upon a televised, extended job interview in order to become an apprentice of Donald Trump (henceforth DT), a well-known American real estate magnate as well as host of *The Apprentice*.

In the TV show, the contestants consisting of eight men and eight women are divided into two teams, initially divided according to gender, called corporations. Each week, each team is required to select a project manager to lead them in the assigned task of the week. The two teams compete against each other every week in a business-oriented task. Every week, the winning team is rewarded spectacularly, while the losing team faces DT in the boardroom. At the end of each episode, DT makes the decision on who did the worst job in the losing team and, consequently, should be fired with immediate effect. In view of its popularity in the USA and around the world, *The Apprentice* is considered a valuable site for investigation, especially with regard to the notion of leadership. More importantly, the division of the contestants into two teams based on gender in the debut season of *The Apprentice* permits an analysis of gender and leadership discourse in single-sex interactions. And rather than presuming that gender is relevant in these interactions, the foregrounding of gender in the TV show ‘warrants’ the gender focus and the analysis of gendered discourse in this paper (cf. Swann 2002). It should be noted here that in Episodes 1 to 4, the contestants are divided into two teams based on their gender; in later episodes, however, the teams have a mixed gender composition.

This paper examines the ways in which two male project managers and two female project managers ‘do leadership’ in same-sex groups of contestants. In *The Apprentice*, these managers are engaged in acts of ‘doing leadership’ in single-sex teams, and their leadership discourse is

considered analyzable in the sense that it constitutes a coherent, meaningful, and typically continuous stretch of talk. Although numerous interactions in the show are potentially useful for analysis, they are piecemeal in nature (and are sometimes cut off by the insertion of particular individual interviews) and do not form a continuous stretch of interaction. As such, these interactions are not chosen for analysis.

4. Data analysis: Two male managers' leadership styles in single-sex interactions

4.1 Analysis of Jason's leadership style

I shall first examine how Jason does leadership in the men's group by drawing on a normatively masculine discursive style. In Excerpt 1 below, the men's group is meeting to discuss the plan to arrange an advertising campaign to promote jet service. Jason is chairing the meeting in which the group has to make critical decisions concerning the advertising campaign.

EXCERPT 1¹

(Episode 2)

1 JAS: so you know what?
2 what we should do is this
3 I'll- I'll have to be the floater
4 I'll go from back and forth okay +
5 I think Nick +
6 I think Bill + need to do creative okay
7 I think you guys should come up with okay
8 here's how we're gonna do it
9 that's it
10 come up with your print ads
11 talk to who you need to talk to
12 you're thinking corporate
13 you're thinking young and sleek
14 come in the //middle\
15 TROY: /can\\ I just interject real quick?

¹ See Appendix: Transcription Conventions. Also note that italics are used for commentary provided by DT or other contestants to the programme makers during the individual behind-the-scene interviews which do not constitute a part of the interaction.

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16 these two gentlemen are our clients
17 we should really find out what they want to have accomplished
18 KWA: who are our clients?
19 TROY: William J Allard and Ken Austin
20 they are the ones that have employed us + to do their marketing
 campaign
21 we should find out what they want to have done
22 JAS: honestly do I think we need to meet them?
23 I don't think we need to meet with them +
24 what are we seeing //them for?
25 KWA: /I disagree\\with that
26 NICK: what's the //objection ()?
27 KWA: /I think\\ you should know what your customer wants=
28 NICK: =I'm not sure
29 what do you hope to gain from the meeting?
30 what questions would you ask them?
31 JAS: here's what we need to do
32 we're doing it right now
33 okay + we don't have time to go and meet with them
34 I mean it's gonna take an hour
35 I think it's a waste of time

In this excerpt, Jason is witnessed as performing a leader identity by drawing upon a number of discourse strategies indicative of a typically masculine discursive style, including so-called “bald-on-record”, unmitigated directives, challenging questions, and *I*-statements. It needs to be noted, however, that the example shows a rather extreme case of using a masculine style in doing leadership.

In the excerpt, Jason first issues the statement, *what we should do is this*, to signal that he is about to announce the strategy of the advertising campaign, establishing his status as project manager (line 2). He goes on to propose the division of labour in the form of statements rather than suggestions (lines 3-9). In particular, he uses a *need*-statement to get Nick and Bill to do the creative aspects of the campaign: *I think Nick + I think Bill + need to do creative* (lines 6-7), which can be said to be typical of a masculine discourse style, despite being mitigated by the pragmatic particle *I think* (lines 6-7). He also issues his directives firmly and decisively in the form of imperatives: *come up with your print ads* (lines 10), *talk to who you need to talk to* (line 11) and *come in the middle* (line 14). Here, his way of giving instructions can be coded as

normatively masculine (Holmes 2006), even though his directives in lines 10 and 11 can be considered as evidence of empowering others, typically associated with women (see Fletcher 1999), by giving his members freedom in trying out their ideas and getting things done in their own ways. Also, by specifying his own role explicitly as *the floater* (line 3), he spells out his responsibility to oversee and supervise the whole project. In doing so, he, again, establishes his leadership position within the team by invoking his dominant and central role in the team.

It is notable that Jason's use of *okay* (lines 4, 6 and 7) does not intend to seek agreement from the members of the team, or solicit comments from the members. Rather, *okay* is used to check the understanding of the members, ensuring that every member of the team fully understands what he has said so far. This interpretation can be supported by the absence of pausing after the utterances of *okay* to invite possible comments or questions. Also, he does not use a rising intonation to possibly signal its function as a question. Rather he uses a falling intonation. It is evident that the team members share such an interpretation, as they have not given any responses after his use of *okay*, not even minimal responses such as *mm*. And, rather than using the inclusive pronoun *we* consistently which emphasizes collective responsibility and expresses solidarity, Jason chooses to use the pronouns *you* (lines 11, 12, 13) and *you guys* (line 7) to establish status differentials between him and the other members. Note that he only uses the inclusive pronoun *we* twice (in lines 2 and 8) in situations where his involvement is clearly evident.

It is also interesting to note the frequent use of the first person pronoun *I* by Jason in the meeting (lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 22, 23 and 35). Here, the repeated occurrence of *I*-statements could be interpreted as emphasizing his status as project manager to make executive decisions. By conveying the message that 'I am the one who is taking centre stage in the meeting', the use of *I* may also be regarded as implicitly evoking the authority bestowed upon him in giving instructions, and highlighting the status differential between him and the other members. As Peck (2006) notes, the use of the egocentric pronoun *I* is an example of strategies associated with directness. So, we can see that the repeated use of the pronoun *I* in such a way is typical of a masculine, direct discourse style.

In lines 16-17, Jason rejects Troy's proposal to meet with the clients in a direct and explicit way by producing a challenging question: *what are we seeing them for* (line 24), implying that he sees no point in meeting the clients. And by saying *here's what we need to do* (line 31), Jason not only signals his intention to return to the agenda, but also implies that his decision is final. He also orders the team to do what he proposes *right now* (line 32), making his directive all the more imposing. And rather than providing explanations for rejecting Troy's suggestions, he merely expresses his disagreement explicitly by saying *I think it's a waste of time* (line 35), albeit mitigated by the pragmatic particle *I think*. It seems that he does not think that it is necessary to justify his rejection, implying that he possesses ultimate jurisdiction regarding the entire plan of the campaign.

Here, we can see that Jason employs a conventionally masculine style in 'doing leadership', characterized by his explicit orientation to the transactional and task-oriented goals. His way of delegating specific tasks to the team members clearly shows his firm, authoritative, and decisive style of leadership. Jason issues his commands in the form of imperatives without mitigation or modification. He even signals that his words are final by saying *that's it* (line 9). And when he rejects suggestions from his team members, he does not provide any justifications. It is evident that his direct and unmitigated interactive style indexes masculinity, discursively displaying overt power as project manager.

As we shall see in Excerpt 2 below, Jason's normatively masculine leadership style is not only recognized, but also highly commended by one of his team members, which is evident in the comments made by Nick in the boardroom meeting with DT.

EXCERPT 2

(Episode 2)

- | | | |
|---|-------|---|
| 1 | DT: | go ahead Nick |
| 2 | NICK: | I think Jason performed well |
| 3 | | especially the way we started off |
| 4 | | midway through |
| 5 | | he took the reins |
| 6 | | he took charge |
| 7 | | made quick decisions |
| 8 | | cos we had to get things in under certain timelines + |

9 and I thought he performed well
 10 his choices were well thought out=
 11 DT: =are you saying that
 12 because you don't want Jason to pick you as one of the /two?\
 13 NICK: /not one bit\ not one bit
 14 I thought his decisions were real sharp and well thought out

In Excerpt 2, Jason's masculine leadership style is judged positively by Nick, who comments that Jason's decisions were *well thought out* (lines 10 and 14) and *real sharp* (line 14). In particular, Nick notes that Jason *made quick decisions cos we had to get things in under certain timelines* (lines 7-8). It seems here that a masculine leadership style is recognized and valued particularly for the efficiency it brings to the decision making process, especially under a tight schedule.

4.2 Analysis of Sam's leadership style

In the next excerpt below, we shall see how another male manager, Sam, does leadership by drawing upon a range of conventionally masculine discursive strategies in the men's group in Episode 3. As we shall see, the men's group is asked to decide on where to go next to get another bargain. Nick is talking to Bill on the phone who is out on the streets, and Sam is with Nick in the office.

EXCERPT 3

(Episode 3)

1 NICK: [*talking to Bill on the phone*] Bill it's Nick
 2 do you have a pen handy? +
 3 you're gonna go to 75 + + West 47th Street
 4 it's called All Rare Coins and the //number-\
 5 SAM: /oh oh oh\ oh oh- just get him the address
 6 NICK: I'm gonna give him the phone //number\
 7 SAM: /I do not\ want you to give him the phone number
 8 please don't give him the phone number
 9 NICK: [*talking to Bill on the phone*] the coach is telling me not to give
 you the phone number
 10 BILL: I have no idea why
 11 he is impossible
 12 BOW: they could quite possibly kill Sam

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- 13 SAM: [talking to Bill on the phone] Bill + the reason you don't need
the phone number
14 is because there's no reason to call
15 I'm gonna get you the location
16 NICK: just in case they get lost and the cab driver doesn't know Sam
17 SAM: no
18 NICK: *we elected Sam to be the project manager*
19 *because we wanted him to put up or shut up*
20 *he had had all these grandiose visions of things*
21 *and we wanted to see if he could actually put them into action*
22 *and get us a victory*
23 KWA: *personally I'd describe his leadership style as just downright*
unproductive
24 KWA: Sam=
25 SAM: =I'm listening
26 KWA: gold isn't negotiable
27 basically it's based on the spot price
28 that's gonna be in the market at that time
29 but it fluctuates throughout the day
30 however I don't think it was necessarily imperative
31 for us to drop that for 15 minutes to get there
32 I mean it's not gonna fluctuate that much=
33 SAM: =I don't- I don't want you to make any suggestions right now
34 get the hell out of there

Like Jason, Sam adopts an authoritative, conventionally masculine leadership style, characterized by the use of such discursive strategies as direct, unmitigated directives and expletives. In lines 1-4, Nick is talking to Bill on the phone, giving him instructions as to where to go next. In line 5, Sam interrupts Nick with five *ohs* before Nick can give the phone number of the shop to Bill who is at the other end of the phone. He also orders Nick to give Bill the address only, but not the phone number. Note that he issues the directive in the form of an imperative: *just get him the address* (line 5). Here, the word *just* (in line 5) does not serve as a hedge to attenuate the force of the directive, but it means that Nick should only give the address and not the phone number.

Nick then explains to Sam that he is just going to give Bill the phone number (line 6). In response, Sam issues another directive in the form of a 'want-statement' (West 1998): *I do not want you to give him the phone number* (line 7). By using the *want-statement*, Sam reiterates the

command, telling Nick not to give Bill the phone number. He goes on to issue another directive in the form of an imperative: *please don't give him the phone number* (line 8). Despite the use of the conventional politeness marker *please*, Nick's response, *the coach is telling me not to give you the phone number* (line 9), implies that Nick interprets Bill's *want*-statement as a command, rather than a polite request.

From line 13 onwards, Sam picks up the phone and explains to Bill why he does not give Bill the phone number in an explicit and direct way: *the reason you don't need the phone number is because there's no reason to call* (lines 13-14). Here, Sam's objection to giving Bill the number is solely based upon his personal definition of the situation, and he does not justify his decision. He then reiterates the decision to give Bill the address only, not the phone number by stating *I'm gonna get you the location* (line 15). Here, he uses the personal pronoun *I* to emphasize his role as project manager who wields the power to make the final decision. In response to Sam's overt rejection, Nick explains the possible reasons why Bill might need the phone number in a mitigated manner: *just in case they get lost and the cab driver doesn't know* (line 16). And by providing the possible circumstances under which Bill might need the number, Nick is making the suggestion to Sam that he should give Bill the phone number. Notice that Nick uses the hedge *just* (line 16) and the conditional *in case* (line 16) to attenuate the force of his suggestion. However, Sam reiterates his rejection explicitly and uncompromisingly by using the direct disagreement particle *no* (line 17) without any modification. By doing so, he conveys his objection in very strong terms, and signals that his decision is final and no negotiation is possible. Again, Sam does not provide any reasons to Nick as to why he insists on his position.

Despite the fact that Kwame provides a detailed and elaborate account explaining why they do not need to get to the gold shop right away (lines 26–32), Sam issues a directive in the form of a '*want*-statement', latching onto Kwame's utterance in line 32: *I don't- I don't want to you make any suggestions right now* (line 33). Again, his directive is unmitigated and aggravated, directly rejecting Kwame's suggestions. And despite Kwame's detailed proposal to do otherwise, Sam makes it clear that he does not want to listen to any more counter suggestions (line 33), which shows his authoritarian and dictatorial style of leadership.

Sam goes on to command Bill, Kwame and Bowie to get to the designated location by using a bald-on-record directive in the form of an imperative: *get the hell out of there* (line 34). Note here that by using the masculine discourse feature of the expletive *hell*, Sam not only intensifies the force of the directive, but also expresses his impatience. In doing so, Sam exhibits absolute power and authority in making decisions, and displays his firm control over how the job gets done. In sum, Excerpt 3 illustrates how Sam does leadership by adopting a normatively masculine, authoritative and dictatorial style of discourse.

Considering Sam's performance as the project manager, Kwame displays strong disapproval of his leadership style, and regards his style as *downright unproductive* (line 23), particularly for his authoritarian style of decision making and for his failure to consider and value the ideas of his team members. Similarly, Jason's masculine and authoritative leadership style is not approved by another team member Nick who comments that *we wanted him to put up or shut up* (line 19). Here, Nick again shows his disappointment with his authoritarian style of leading, and wants to see him step down as project manager or even get fired.

In what follows, I shall now turn to the performance of leadership by two female project managers in the TV show.

5. Data analysis: Two female managers' leadership styles in single-sex interactions

5.1 Analysis of Katrina's leadership style

As we shall see below, Katrina draws upon a range of discursive strategies typically associated with a feminine register in 'doing leadership'. Excerpt 4 shows a conversation between Katrina and Jessie, in which they have a disagreement over how decision making should be done in the team.

EXCERPT 4

(Episode 4)

- 1 JES: *[taken from the individual interview] but I could tell Katrina
 was irritated that*
2 *maybe I went ahead and did something*
3 *and didn't consult the group*

- 4 KAT: *[taken from the individual interview] the tables downstairs
weren't being effective +*
5 *I approached Jessie and said +*
6 *shut it down*
7 *she took great offence to that*
- 8 JES: well if you wanna change it + you're the leader
9 so you tell me
10 you're obviously getting mad that I'm thinking on my own
11 KAT: no I'm not getting mad at you for thinking on your own
12 all I'm saying is that
13 I've been told four times that this is a bad idea
14 JES: why are you spazzing out?
15 are you upset because +
16 KAT: I'm upset because you're upset=
17 JES: =I'm not upset at anything
18 I think you're getting frustrated
19 because + because something isn't working right
20 and then you're just trying to find fault
21 so you have somebody to blame it on
- 22 KAT: *[from the individual interview] I think Jessie's upset because
she wasn't leading +*
23 *and + that saddens me*
24 *because I was more supportive when she was the leader*
- 25 KAT: when all of us are trying to work as a team
26 and I feel like one person doesn't agree with what we're doing
27 that's what frustrated me from the beginning
28 JES: but I think all the ideas (we came up with) were all the same
- 29 JESS: *[from the individual interview] with the last three tasks, I knew
from the very beginning*
30 *we were going to win +*
31 *but this one + +*
32 *I don't know I don't know*

In the excerpt above, Katrina is witnessed using a normatively feminine discourse style and orienting to the relational needs of her team member. In line 8, Jessie says that *if you wanna change it, you're the leader* (line 8), implying that even though she may not necessarily agree with Katrina's decision, she will not object to her decisions, given Katrina's

role as the project manager of the group. Jessie goes on to issue a direct challenge telling Katrina to give clear instructions to her: *so you tell me* (line 9), and speculates that Katrina got angry with her since she made decisions by herself without consulting Katrina: *you're obviously getting mad that I'm thinking on my own* (line 10). Interestingly, Jessie's indirectness here is indexical of masculinity, and her confrontational stance could be seen as a challenge to Katrina's leadership role.

In response to Jessie's speculation, Katrina explicitly denies Jessie's claim: *no I'm not getting mad at you for thinking on your own* (line 11). By saying that she does not get mad at Jessie, she orients to maintaining a harmonious relationship with Jessie and attempts to pay attention to her positive face needs. She then states what she thinks of Jessie's ideas: *I've been told four times that this is a bad idea* (line 13). It is noteworthy here that Katrina does not criticize Jessie directly; rather, she shifts the target of the criticism to the decision itself by saying *this is a bad idea* (line 13). And, instead of stating that it is she who thinks that Jessie's idea is bad, she says *I've been told* (line 13). By using the passive voice where the agent of the criticism may be omitted, she impersonalizes the criticism and distances herself from the negatively affective speech act. Here, we can see how Katrina attenuates the face-threatening criticisms directed at Jessie, and this could be seen as a prime example of 'doing leadership' in a conventionally feminine way.

Katrina can also be seen to display orientation to the relational goals of doing leadership by paying attention to the emotional states of Jessie. In line 14, Jessie asks Katrina why she is getting mad: *why are you spazzing out*. Note that Jessie's use of the colloquial expression *spazzing out*, originating from the word *spastic*, in describing Katrina's emotional states, may be said to carry offensive connotations. Jessie goes on to ask Katrina *are you upset because*. In line 16, Katrina replies that she is upset because Jessie is upset. Here, by recycling the same lexical items *upset* and *because* in her response (line 16), she could be said to display a certain degree of a cooperative discourse style. Moreover, by saying *I'm upset because you're upset*, she also shows her concerns about, or at least awareness of, Jessie's emotional state of being upset. In this way, she may be oriented to the relational goals here and attempts to address Jessie's distress through displaying her understanding and sympathy.

Furthermore, Katrina explicitly emphasizes the importance of the group and teamwork, which is associated with relatively feminine

leadership styles. In line 17, Jessie denies that she is upset, and goes on to speculate that Katrina is frustrated because something is not working well and she is trying to put the blame on somebody else (lines 18-21). In response, Katrina explains that she is frustrated because Jessie does not agree with what the team is doing: *when all of us are trying to work as a team and I feel like one person doesn't agree with what we're doing* (lines 25-26). Here, she uses the phrase *I feel like* (line 26) to attenuate the negative impact of her criticism, thereby making it less directly confrontational. And by emphasizing the concept of *a team* (line 25) and by using the pronouns *us* (line 25) and *we* (line 26), she lays emphasis on the importance of teamwork and plays down her own authority, thereby enacting an egalitarian and consensual mode of interaction, which is characteristic of a feminine leadership style.

Here, the excerpt demonstrates how Katrina, as project manager, pays attention to the face needs and emotional states of her team member. In so doing, she achieves the relational or people-oriented goals of 'doing leadership'. It is evident that she does not pursue an authoritative leadership style, but prefers to lead using a feminine, collaborative style. Indeed, there is little evidence that she is intent upon evoking her power or status explicitly at any point in the interaction. In the individual interview (lines 22-24), she states explicitly that when Jessie was the leader in the previous week, she was more supportive of her decisions. Again, this illustrates that Katrina sees the importance of supportiveness in the achievement of leadership, and embraces a normatively feminine and collaborative style in 'doing leadership'.

However, as can be seen in the interview commentary, Jessie expresses doubts about whether they are going to win (lines 29-32). Implicitly, she shows her disappointment with Katrina's leadership style which could be classified as normatively feminine. It can be seen here that her feminine style is not perceived positively or judged as particularly effective. Excerpt 4 illustrates that another team member, Tammy, does not show approval of Katrina's leadership style either.

EXCERPT 5

(Episode 4)

1 TAM: *[taken from the individual interview] it was confusing to me*
2 *cos no one knew what was going on really*
3 *and then when George tried to corner Katrina our project*
manager to see what was going on

4 *she really couldn't coherently articulate what the plan was*
 5 *cos she really was just flying by the seat of her pants*

In this excerpt, Tammy remarks that Katrina has not explained the arrangements of the plan clearly and explicitly enough to the group (line 2). Further, Tammy comments that Katrina has not given much careful thought to the whole plan of the task (line 5), nor is she able to articulate the plan clearly (line 4). Here, her inability to deliver and explain the arrangements in an assertive, forceful manner is being pointed out. Overall, given Jessie and Tammy's evaluations of Katrina's leadership styles, it seems clear that her feminine style of leadership is perceived negatively and is not approved of by her team members.

5.2 Analysis of Amy's leadership style

Excerpt 6 shows how Amy draws upon a range of feminine discursive strategies in 'doing leadership' in the women's group in Episode 2. Amy chairs a meeting with the group, right after she has confirmed a meeting with the CEO of Marquis Jet on the phone. In this meeting, they are going to decide who will go and meet with the CEO.

EXCERPT 6

(Episode 2)

1 AMY: okay guys
 2 so we have an appointment today +
 3 with the CEO and the senior vice president of marketing at half
 past twelve
 4 here's what I recommend
 5 we send two +
 6 maybe three up there?
 7 you guys continue //brainstorming\
 8 OMA: /I wanna\\ go with you
 9 because I wanna develop that- that
 10 I wanna make sure that I provide that research background=
 11 AMY: =I would like to recommend
 12 since we've got a local from New York +
 13 that you go ['you' here refers to Ereka]
 14 and I also think for the productivity of our group +
 15 that Omarosa you should stay here
 16 cos I think that it would be good for all of us

- 17 since there's some tension
 18 OMA: *believe me*
 19 *I thought that was the most + ineffective decision that Amy*
 could've made
 20 *she left her team without a timeline or a plan of action*
 21 [. . .]
 22 OMA: *the other women who were sitting around waiting as well*
 thought
 23 *okay + we might as well get out of here too*
 24 [. . .]
 25 KRI: *we had no idea what to do*
 26 *so all we knew was +*
 27 *we better get to the airport with a camera crew*

In this excerpt, Amy uses a relatively feminine leadership style in giving out instructions and making decisions in the group meeting. She first starts the meeting with the standard discourse marker *okay* (line 1), immediately followed by the casual, informal address term *guys* (line 1), which serves to invoke collegiality among the members of the group. In line 2, she uses the inclusive pronoun *we* (line 2) to express joint responsibility. She then declares that she is about to give her instructions to the group by phrasing her instructions as 'recommendations', rather than commands: *here's what I recommend* (line 4). By using the metadiscoursal *recommend* (line 4), she could be seen to soften the force of her instructions, possibly allowing room for negotiation among the group. And by giving instructions in such an indirect way, she enacts power in a covert, implicit manner, which is characteristic of a normatively feminine way of 'doing leadership'. In lines 5-6, she goes on to give the instruction of sending some of them to meet with the CEO. Here, she uses the hedge *maybe*, a pause (marked by +) as well as a rising intonation, all of which signal tentativeness and serve to tone down the force of her instructions, whilst paying attention to the face needs of the members. Notice also that Amy uses the inclusive pronoun *we* twice (lines 2 and 5) in the course of giving instructions, which may serve to emphasize solidarity with the members and invoke an in-group identity.

It is also notable that Amy makes use of normatively feminine strategies in rejecting a group member's ideas, a very common face-threatening act which occurs in meetings. In line 8, Omarosa expresses her desire to go with Amy to meet up with the CEO, overlapping with

Amy's utterance in line 7, and goes on to give explanations for her request in lines 9 and 10. Rather than 'doing disagreement' explicitly, Amy responds by carrying on with her 'recommendations', together with justifications and rationalizations for her decisions: *I would like to recommend* (line 11). Again, she uses the metadiscoursal *recommend* (line 11), together with the polite expression *would like* (line 11), to mitigate the illocutionary force of her instructions. Amy goes on to provide her rather elaborate explanations for her rejection in lines 12-17. It is noteworthy here that she draws particular attention to the 'group' as a whole by invoking the notion *our group* explicitly (lines 14-15). Also, she explains that *it would be good for all of us* (line 16), again orienting to the 'group' by using the collective pronoun *us*. Here, the emphasis on the group could be viewed as a means to reinforce the group's sense of identity as a closely-knit community as well as downplaying her authority in making decisions as the project manager. Note also that the pragmatic particle *I think* (lines 14 and 16) and the epistemic modal *would* (lines 11 and 16) serve as hedges, which function to further mitigate her rejection of Omarosa's request to meet with the CEO, whilst also possibly attenuating her overt enactment of power.

Also, Amy utilizes detailed and elaborate explanations to mitigate her rejection of Omarosa's request, paying attention to her member's positive face needs. As Schnurr and Chan (2005) point out, giving explanations constitutes a particularly valuable discursive strategy and can be viewed as "a strategy for mitigating the illocutionary force of negatively affective speech acts, and thus minimizing potential face-threats" (Schnurr and Chan 2005: 30). Indeed, the repeated use of the connectives *since* (lines 12 and 17) and *cos* (line 16) also provides evidence that she expends effort in justifying her decisions by providing explanations in order to gain Omarosa's compliance. Overall, the use of mitigating devices, the provision of 'recommendations' and detailed explanations, as well as an explicit orientation to the 'group' as a whole could be classified as feminine ways of 'doing leadership'. By drawing upon a range of typically feminine discursive strategies, Amy can be viewed as enacting her leadership role in a ways that is consistent with the normative expectations for her gender.

It should be noted that Amy seems to do decision making by authority which may be indexed for masculinity. However, we should also notice that the discursive strategies with which Amy uses to convey

her decisions are very much typical of a feminine speech style which pays attention to the relational goals in the interaction. In so doing, she enacts power in a covert and implicit way. And by using conventionally feminine discourse strategies, she can be seen negotiating her gender and professional identities at work. Her performance of leadership could be cited as an example of how women leaders balance their gender and professional identities in doing leadership (Holmes 2006; Marra et al. 2006). By engaging in such a balancing act discursively, women leaders can 'do femininity' and achieve their transactional leadership objectives simultaneously (cf. Schnurr 2010).

However, based on her team members' comments, Amy's leadership is cast in a rather negative light. For instance, Omaorosa criticizes Amy for making the most ineffective decision (line 19) and for not devising a timeline (line 20). Kristi also comments that the group has no idea what to do even after the meeting held by Amy (line 25). Here, these comments point to Amy's perceived inability to deliver key decisions in a clear, firm and explicit way and in creating a clear timeline, thereby resulting in the impression that she does not effectively get her message across to the group. Although it may be the failure to create a timeline, rather than Amy's feminine leadership style itself, which is the main cause of these negative perceptions, her leadership is clearly perceived as being ineffective by her team members.

6. Discussion

As revealed in the analysis, the two male and two female project managers are shown to largely conform to the normative gendered norms when enacting leadership. However, their leadership styles are not evaluated entirely positively. While the male managers receive both positive and negative comments for the use of the predominantly masculine speech style, the female managers do not get any praise for utilizing the feminine discourse style of leadership. In other words, we can see that the exclusive use of the masculine or the feminine speech style is not viewed as an effective or preferred means of doing leadership, and that conforming to the normative gendered speech norms in performing leadership does not necessarily guarantee positive evaluations.

What is interesting is that the predominantly masculine leadership style is not portrayed as the 'default' means of doing leadership. While the masculine leadership style is given some positive comments, it is seen as problematic and is not entirely approved. In other words, the TV show seems to challenge the appropriateness of the masculine leadership style and cast doubt on its effectiveness in doing leadership. However, while the reality TV show raises questions about the appropriateness of the masculine leadership style and challenges its status quo, it does not portray the masculine style entirely negatively, especially when compared to the representations of the feminine style of leadership. One reason may be the strong associations of leadership with masculinity (Hearn and Parkin 1989; Sinclair 1998), since the norm of the workplace is still predominately masculine (Kendall and Tannen 1997). As Martin Rojo and Gomez Esteban (2005) also note, the criteria used to measure competence in leadership continue to be associated with the notion of masculinity.

With that said, a masculine discourse style of leadership is still represented as preferable to a predominantly feminine discourse style. As the analysis shows, while the two female managers are viewed as adhering to the gendered expectations in doing leadership by employing a predominantly feminine discourse style, they are not perceived positively for their leadership ability. In particular, Katrina is depicted as displaying feminine qualities, such as emotionality, which are clearly incompatible with the commonly conceived notion of leadership. Such kinds of representations may not only denigrate the linguistic features typical of the feminine style of leadership, but also perpetuate the problematic belief that women are unable to perform leadership roles effectively. Although feminine leadership styles are now increasingly perceived as preferable by both male and female workers (Baxter 2010, 2012), the representations of gendered styles of 'doing leadership' in *The Apprentice* do not seem to carry the connotations of "different, but equal" (Case 1994: 161; see also Cameron 1995). Instead, while displays of masculinity in the workplace are still likely to result in success, displays of femininity may lead to derision and marginalization (Peck 2000).

It is also interesting to note that the single-sex interactional contexts seem to impact on the deployment of gendered styles of leadership by the project managers in *The Apprentice*. One possible explanation is that the

single-sex composition of the group can serve as a cue that signals particular gendered expectations for the project managers, thereby prompting them to employ leadership styles that accord with the gendered norms for their gender. In other words, the explicitly gendered contexts may underline the prominence of specific gendered norms and lead to an awareness of the gendered norms and conventions among members of the group, including the project managers. As Carli (2006) suggests, both men and women are likely to adjust and modify their styles of communication depending on the gender of the people with whom they are interacting, based upon the assessment of how the other people are likely to behave, and how they themselves are expected to behave. As a result, the gendered contexts may impose considerable constraints on the range of possible ways which are deemed appropriate in 'doing gender' and 'doing leadership' simultaneously.

Another related reason may be that these project managers may try to conform to the gendered expectations in order to be considered as a member of the same-sex group. Here, the concept of 'nexus of practice' may be relevant. According to Scollon (2001), a 'nexus of practice' refers to a constellation or a set of repeatable actions and practices which are recognized by a social group. In Scollon's (2001: 178) words, it is "the regular, smoothly working set of linkages and sequences among practices that can be recognized by someone else in the vague sense of 'doing the right thing'". It should also be noted that these practices are in the form of mediated actions (Scollon 2001) understood in the sense of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990), i.e., a system of internalized, durable and transposable dispositions which generates similar practices and perceptions, but which can be adjusted to specific situations. And certain practices become tacitly recognized as the accepted ways of doing things in the habitus. While the people are rather loosely connected in the nexus of practice, there are networks of implicit practices and expectations that mark group membership (Scollon 2001). In the reality TV show, upon recognition of the single-sex group as a 'nexus of practice', the project managers can be seen to be drawing upon the scripts for acceptable forms of masculine and feminine behavior from broader society for the purpose of 'doing leadership'. Accordingly, they perform the expected ways of doing things within the single-sex group in order to signal their membership, that is, by using normatively gendered styles of leadership in the same-sex interactions. In other words, the use of normatively

gendered discourse styles by the project managers may be shaped by the overtly gendered contexts (or nexus of practice), which contribute to “the gender stereotyping and expectation[s] of ‘appropriate’ gender-specific behavior” (Hay 2002: 28).

Finally, it is worth noting that the gender-stereotypical representations of leadership styles in *The Apprentice* may be attributable to the gendered arrangement of the two teams at the beginning of the TV show, i.e., the division of the contestants into two groups based on gender. Clearly, such an arrangement is highly artificial, since it is rather uncommon in reality that workplaces are either made up of men or women exclusively. In other words, the explicitly gendered arrangement may be viewed as a deliberate strategy for the TV show to capture normatively gendered styles of leadership in the two single-sex groups, thereby creating an impression to the audience that men and women use differently gendered leadership styles in same-sex interactions. By claiming to reveal the ‘reality’ in the commercial world, the TV show may disguise the highly artificial and constructed nature of the show. As Matheson (2005: 103) points out, the media “present us not with reality but with a selected, edited, polished version of the real”. In other words, even though reality TV shows purport to reflect the ‘reality’, they always and necessarily reflect portions of the reality (Matheson 2005: 103). As such, the reality TV show may be produced in such a way that appeals to the audience by presenting familiar and easily recognizable gendered images in an explicit manner. It is therefore argued that these gender-stereotypical representations of leadership discourse may serve to reproduce and reinforce the discourses of ‘gender differences’ (Sunderland 2004) which are still prevalent in the popular culture.

7. Conclusion

This paper has shown that the four project managers ‘do leadership’ in ways that largely conform to the traditional gendered expectations in the context of single-sex interactions. While their leadership styles are not evaluated entirely positively, the male managers receive both positive and negative comments for the use of predominantly masculine speech styles and the female managers who ‘do leadership’ by employing a largely feminine discourse style are not perceived positively. In addition, the analysis has suggested that the single-sex composition of the groups

impacts on the enactment of differently gendered leadership styles by the project managers. It is therefore argued that the single-sex groups can be viewed as being constructed intentionally in the TV show in order to typify the gender-stereotypical speech styles of 'doing leadership'. It should be noted, however, that given the small size of the data analysis, the analysis of these managers' leadership styles should not be considered generalizable to other contestants in the show, or to other reality TV shows.

In closing, it remains to be seen whether these gender-stereotypical representations in the popular media are likely to undergo any changes towards more gender-neutral representations, given an increased awareness of gender-related issues among the general public in recent years. Further research could be carried out to investigate language and gender representations in other forms of popular media by adopting a multi-disciplinary perspective through drawing on various methodologies from various disciplines such as discourse analysis, organizational studies, psychology and sociology.

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Appendix: Transcription Conventions

<u>yes</u>	underscore indicates emphatic stress
[laughs]	paralinguistic features in square brackets
+	pause of up to one second
xxx // xxxxx \ xxx	
xxx / xxxxx \\ xxx	simultaneous speech
=	latching between the end of one turn to the start of the next
(3)	pause of specified number of seconds
()	unintelligible word or phrase
(hello)	transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance
?	raising or question intonation
-	incomplete or cut-off utterance
[comments]	editorial comments italicized in square brackets
<i>words in italics</i>	commentary from behind-the-scene individual interviews