

**Multilingual repertoires and strategic rapport management: a comparative
study of South African and Dutch small business discourse**

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ABSTRACT

In this era of globalisation and the consequent increase in social, economic and physical mobility, small businesses are transforming into sites of increasing language contact (Harris and Bargiela-Chiappini 2003). This study explores situated language practices within two small multilingual businesses. The first is a bicycle rental and repair shop located in Amsterdam (the Netherlands), which is a city with a dynamic multilingual society. The second is a tyre fitment centre in Grahamstown (South Africa), which is a city characterised by a stable triglossia of English, Xhosa and Afrikaans. Using Linguistic Ethnography (Rampton 2007) as my data collection method, I spent a total of eight weeks in these businesses. For the analysis I draw on Spencer-Oatey's (2000b; 2011) Rapport Management Framework and sociolinguistics of globalisation (Blommaert 2010). This combination allowed me to explore situated language practices in relation to a contemporary context of increased globalisation.

The analysis is structured using Spencer-Oatey's (2000b) concept of rapport orientations. The orientations are presented as one of the key factors that influence the choice for a certain strategy. The orientations thus seemed a constructive way of showing how the observed strategies were employed by the participants of this study and what function they fulfilled in a certain context. However, difficulties emerged during the analysis with applying this concept to some of the more elaborate and complex data. As a result my argument developed into two different strands. The first demonstrates how individuals turn to their multilingual repertoires to negotiate agency and power relationships in small business discourse. The analysis reveals that people at times deliberately promote and maintains discordant relations, which can be understood as a rational response to the individual's social and economic context. The second discusses the problems that emerged during my analysis with applying rapport management orientations to my data. I propose theoretical developments, warranted by my data, to create an Enhanced Rapport Management Framework suitable for the analysis of complex small business discourse.

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1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, globalisation and the consequent increase in social, economic and physical mobility have changed the face of business discourse. Many studies in the field of multilingual business discourse focus on large organisations and multinational corporations, where multilingualism is prominently present (e.g. Lüdi, Höchle and Yanaprasart 2010; Nair-Venugopal 2001; Poncini 2003). The effects of globalisation and mobility, however, reach further than multinationals. Harris and Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) note that processes of globalisation are transforming small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) into sites of increasing language contact, creating complex and multi-layered settings for interactions in the workplace.¹ In light of these transformations, researchers such as Harris and Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) and Virkkula-Räisänen (2010) signal the pressing need to examine the multilingual workplace.

Processes of migration are also challenging established sociolinguistic concepts and theories on topics such as *identity* and *community* (Collins and Slembrouck 2005). Blommaert (2003) emphasises the need for language studies to explore the effects of globalisation and mobility on situated discursive practices and the interconnectedness between various levels of context in which these practices are embedded (e.g. local, national, transnational). Moreover, Blommaert argues that the focus of such studies needs to move from languages to language varieties and repertoires: “What is globalised is not an abstract language, but specific speech forms, genres, styles, and forms of literacy practices” (2003: 608). Following Collins, Slembrouck and Baynham (2009), I explore language use and language contact while investigating issues that are unique to the contemporary context of globalisation. More specifically this study aims to explore the manifestations of multilingual repertoires, rapport management, and discourses of power in small business discourse. Drawing on linguistic ethnography, the Rapport Management Framework and a sociolinguistics of

¹ In South Africa a SMME is defined as an enterprise with fewer than 200 employees and an annual turnover not exceeding R39 million (DTI 2008). In the European Union the correct term is small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), referring to enterprises with fewer than 250 employees and a turnover not exceeding €50 million (European Commission 2003).

globalisation for a variety of data collection and analytical tools, it examines naturally occurring face-to-face interactions. The data was collected over a period of eight weeks in two small multilingual businesses: a bicycle rental and repair shop in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and a tyre and exhaust service centre in Grahamstown, South Africa.

Section 1.1 describes the background and motivation for this study that have led to the formulation of the research questions set out in section 1.2. Section 1.3 describes the context in which this research is embedded. Lastly, section 1.4 provides a structural outline of this thesis.

1.1 Background and motivation

Contemporary processes of social, economical and physical mobility provide a unique and intricate context for the study of situated language use. Sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 elaborate on the effects that this has on the professional individual and why it is worth examining how individuals draw on the linguistic resources available to them to achieve interactional goals and manage power relations within small business discourse. Section 1.1.3 motivates the choice of Rapport Management Theory and linguistic ethnography to explore these phenomena.

The goal of this research is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the various manifestations of multilingual repertoires and the use of rapport management strategies by participants within these two multilingual workplaces. The topics explored in this study are specific to the place and time of these two cases. One of the motivations for this study is that processes of globalisation and mobility are challenging established notions and theories surrounding business discourse. This denotes that notions and theories are subject to changes in temporal and spatial processes. However, Blommaert and Dong (2010) note that by applying a set of theoretical models, the data become part of larger categories. Thus, findings can contribute to refining and developing existing theories or to the development of new concepts and theories, as long as one applies adequate theoretical apparatus to the analysis. My approach to the analysis is further explored in 3.4.

The complex and multi-layered nature of multilingual small business discourse requires a theoretical and methodologically eclectic approach (Bargiela-Chiappini *et al.* 2007). This study aims to contribute to the emerging research traditions of linguistic ethnography, Rapport Management Theory, and a sociolinguistics of globalisation. Socially, this study aims to show how multilingual repertoires can form a source of expert power, facilitating empowerment of marginalised minorities in the workplace. The findings of this research can also aid in consolidating workplace models of communication used for communication and management training. These models are often borrowed from traditional psychology without considering ethnographic and sociolinguistic studies based on empirical data drawn from authentic business interactions (Sarangi and Roberts 1999: 2-3).

1.1.1 Individuals' multilingual repertoires as resources

Business discourse research has often taken a top-down perspective, i.e. the perspective of the organisation or institute (Vine 2004). Yet, increasing language contact in the workplace has significantly affected the day-to-day work of the professional individual. There is a growing need for individuals to communicate with people from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which results in interesting and sometimes challenging communicative situations (Virkkula-Räsänen 2010). These situations can be negotiated through the use of individuals' multilingual repertoires. Linguistic repertoires are sets of language varieties and registers that speakers can choose from in interactions (Gumperz 1964). A multilingual repertoire can consist of various languages, language varieties, styles, registers, lexical items, as well as a range of strategies that can be used to construct, maintain or challenge social relationships. The choice to use one variety or register over another in a certain situation is never neutral. Every choice is a socially mediated decision that influences the dynamics and the context of the interaction (Blommaert and Dong 2010). Thus, multilingual repertoires can be seen as useful resources for the individual to build and maintain rapport and deal with language contact in an effective and strategic way. Exploring these repertoires and looking at the linguistic codes available to individuals and their patterns of choice provides useful insights into the linguistic manifestation of power and the intricate ways in which people manage rapport in the multilingual workplace (Saville-Troike 2003; Virkkula-Räsänen 2010).

1.1.2 Individuals' multilingual repertoires and power

Multilingual repertoires can prove to be a powerful tool in business communication (Collier 2010; Marschan-Piekkari, Welch and Welch 1999). A workplace can be seen as a *community of practice* (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), in which members jointly negotiate the norms of appropriate behaviour and develop a shared repertoire. Employees negotiate their own conventional ways of speaking and these conventions can control and regulate access to the workplace and the opportunities within it (Sarangi and Roberts 1999). A new member will have to learn the specific discourse relating to the profession and the community of practice and possessing a rich multilingual repertoire can help an individual to adapt to this established discourse within a business. The notion of communities of practice is further discussed in 2.2.

Moreover, many scholars have perceived multilingual repertoires as a source of expert power (Collier 2010; Marschan-Piekkari *et al.* 1999). A larger repertoire leads to greater levels of information exchange and thus can lead to more powerful positions within the business structure (Marschan-Piekkari *et al.* 1999: 431). However, it depends on the setting, participants and topic whether a speaker possesses the relevant linguistic codes for the communicative event at hand. Each code in a repertoire has a certain value attached to it, and, as Heller (2008) notes, it is those in power who control the value of various codes.

Thus, while possessing the relevant varieties may facilitate access to the community of practice and even be a source of expert power, not possessing the varieties of the mainstream discourse can be a source of exclusion and limit an individual's opportunities. This creates an interesting position for marginalised minorities, since their linguistic competence can, on the one hand, prove to be a source of expert power in business conversations, yet on the other hand, both in South Africa and the Netherlands, they are often subject to stereotypes and biases held by powerful members of the community of practice and by society at large. The manifestations of multilingual repertoires, rapport management, and power will be explored in this study by drawing on a variety of ethnographic and pragmatic methods for data collection and analysis.

1.1.3 Pragmatics and ethnography

Businesses form a complex and multi-layered context for situated linguistic practices and the field of business discourse is characterised by multimethod approaches that allow for a rich and comprehensive understanding (Bargiela-Chiappini *et al.* 2007). The present study draws on the insights of linguistic ethnography and Rapport Management Theory in order to fully grasp the complexities of the management of interpersonal relationships and the strategic uses of linguistic repertoires in multilingual small businesses.

The data collection tools and principles I use are derived from linguistic ethnography. This emerging research approach aims to combine ethnographically explored contexts with fine-grained linguistic analysis of spoken data (Rampton 2007). A distinctive feature of linguistic ethnography is that it addresses complexity as a whole, which allows the researcher to uncover the connections between various aspects of communicative events (Blommaert 2007). This makes linguistic ethnography a highly suitable approach to the study of multilingual interaction in the complex and multi-layered contexts of small businesses (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken 2007). It also makes it an ideal approach to achieve a deeper understanding of the normative and appropriate behaviour of a particular community of practice, which Schnurr and Chan (2011) argue is essential for a study of situated language practices in order to understand the appropriateness of certain rapport management strategies. The linguistic analytical tools that are combined in this study with this linguistic ethnographic approach are derived from Pragmatics and discourse analysis.

Similar to linguistic ethnography, Pragmatics focuses on context and the influence that it has on the construction of meaning in interactions. Enfield (2009: 60) argues for a greater focus on the relational in pragmatics, arguing that relationships are a “primary locus of social organization” and should therefore be a “key focus for pragmatics”. Spencer-Oatey (2011) observes that there are different approaches to the study of interpersonal relationships and that each approach often uses slightly differing terminology. For instance, Holmes and Schnurr (2005) talk about *relational practice*, while Locher and Watts (2005) refer to *relational work* and Spencer-Oatey (2000; 2011) introduces the term *rapport management*. The present study uses and

critiques Spencer-Oatey's (2000) Rapport Management Framework, which she developed to explore how language is used in the management of relationships.

Rapport Management Theory and linguistic ethnography make a great alliance as they both assert a focus on language use in context. Rapport Management Framework explores the linguistic choices speakers make in the management of relations. These choices are informed by the context in which they are embedded, which can be ethnographically explored. This ethnographic understanding can in turn be informed by the fine-grained linguistic analysis of the situated linguistic practices and so both approaches inform each other. The combination of the two traditions has thus proven a valuable approach for the present study of multilingual small business discourse. A more detailed exploration of the principles of linguistic ethnography and how I have applied them in this research can be found in 3.2.1. Section 2.3 discusses Spencer-Oatey's (2000) Rapport Management Framework as well as the foundational work by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) on Speech Act Theory, and Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) work on linguistic politeness, in which Spencer-Oatey's work is embedded. The following section outlines the research questions that are pragmatically and ethnographically explored in this study.

1.2 Research Questions

The initial step in exploring language patterns in communicative events is to describe the relevant components of those events (Hymes 1967). The first question addressed in this research intends to build an inventory of the codes available to the participants.

- 1. What repertoires do participants draw on in multilingual business interaction?*

As I mentioned above, Blommaert (2003) argues that language studies need to move their focus from abstract language to more nuanced varieties and speech forms within linguistic repertoires. This question, therefore, intends to explore not only languages, but also the various varieties, dialects, sociolects, registers and speech styles available to the participants. In addition, an individual's linguistic repertoire consists of a set of strategies that can be employed to establish, maintain or challenge social relationships

(Saville-Troike 2003). The second research question therefore aims to examine the strategies used by the participants.

2. *What rapport management strategies do participants employ?*

I am interested in how particular strategies that I observe are used to negotiate face and situated identities (Sarangi and Roberts 1999). For example, is teasing necessarily perceived as a face-threatening act and, if so, how do the participants try to minimise this threat? Question (1) and (2) describe the components and practices of the situated interactions. The following question links these practices to the immediate context of the interaction.

3. *How does the interplay between repertoires and strategies affect the dynamics of the interaction?*

This interpretive question explores the effects of the choices made by participants on the development of the interaction. As described in 1.1.1, linguistic choices are deliberate moves by speakers through which they can either reinforce or contest existing power relations. The final question is:

4. *How do these interactions reproduce and transform power relations in business discourse?*

This explanatory question attempts to draw the outcomes of the situated linguistic manifestations of power and discursive patterns in both businesses into the broader macro context of the Dutch and South African society at large.

Fairclough (2001) describes three 'levels' of social organisation in which these four research questions can be embedded, as shown in Table 1.1. The first level is the immediate social environment in which the discourse occurs. Questions (1) and (2) describe this immediate social situation by exploring its components. The next level is the direct context of the institution, in this study the two small businesses, which provides the context for question (3). The last level is that of South African and Dutch society at large which is addressed in research question (4).

<i>Levels of social organisation</i>	<i>Research questions</i>
The immediate social environment	Questions (1) and (2)
The social organisation	Question (3)
The society as a whole	Question (4)

Table 1.1: Fairclough’s (2001) three levels of social organisation

1.3 Context of study: Amsterdam and Grahamstown

While meaning and participant roles are locally constructed, they are to a large extent influenced by the wider socio-cultural context (Vine 2004). Thus, the study of situated language use is inherently contextual (Rampton, Tusting, Maybin, Barwell, Creese and Lytra 2004) and in order to understand the significance of the observed language patterns it is necessary to aim for a comprehensive understanding of the various contextual levels in which this research is embedded.

The data for this study was collected from two small businesses, embedded in two different sociocultural contexts. One is McBicycle, a bicycle rental and repair shop located in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and the other is Warrick’s a car service centre in Grahamstown, South Africa. The two sites are regarded as two individual case studies, but I would like to emphasise some advantages of the comparative aspects this brings to the analysis. Viewing the two cases alongside each other allows the observed linguistic practices to become meaningful in contrast. They highlight each other’s distinctive characteristics and essentially make “the familiar strange and the strange familiar” (Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein 2012: 8). This ethnographic process of ‘strange-making’ (LeCompte and Schensul 1999) allows me to recognise the distinctiveness of the linguistic practices that may have gone unnoticed had I only focused on a single workplace. Saville-Troike (2003) even argues that ethnography is inherently a comparative approach since patterns of language use become meaningful in comparison. The two businesses are comparable in size and nature of work and interaction. They are different but similar, as will be described in this section. This section describes the relevant contextual aspects on the macro-level of Amsterdam (1.3.1) and Grahamstown (1.3.2) and the meso-level of the two businesses, McBicycle and Warrick’s (1.3.3).

1.3.1 The linguistic ecology of Amsterdam

The Netherlands recognises two official languages: Dutch and the regional language Frisian. Yet, its population of almost 17 million is highly multicultural and multilingual. This cultural and linguistic diversity is the product of both historical and contemporary processes of globalisation and mobility. This section discusses the effects of these processes on the linguistic ecology of the country's largest city and capital Amsterdam. Compared to cities such as Los Angeles, Tokyo or Paris, Amsterdam is small city with approximately 790 000 inhabitants (over a million in greater Amsterdam) (Bureau Onderzoek en Statistiek 2012). Nonetheless, Amsterdam was home to the world's first multinational company (the Dutch East India Company) and much of its cosmopolitan atmosphere remains (Nell and Rath 2009). The many international companies based in Amsterdam today are an indicator of the role it plays in today's global economy. One of the criteria for the ranking of global cities is the level of immigration. Although many scholars and research bureaus base their ranking primarily on economic criteria, Nell and Rath (2009: 12) note that migration levels form a powerful example of "globalisation from below". The heterogeneous immigrant population of Amsterdam is one of the main contributors to the city's multilingual character.

Today, about 50,5% of Amsterdam's population are first-generation (foreign born) or second-generation (local born) immigrants (see Table 1.2). Van Amersfoort and Cortie (2009) distinguish four main immigrant groups in Amsterdam: post-colonial immigrants, labour immigrants, expatriates, and international commuters. The first significant wave of immigrants took place in the second half of the 20th century, as a result of the decline of European imperialism after World War II (Kuiken 2009). The independence of Indonesia in 1949 resulted in the migration of Moluccan soldiers and 'Indonesian Dutchmen', who predominantly spoke Malay. Surinam became independent in 1975 and Surinam immigrants introduced Surinam Dutch, Sranantongo, Sranan and Sarnami, which are all still spoken in Amsterdam. Lastly, migrants from the Dutch Antilles and Aruba brought Papiamentu to the Netherlands. The second group are the labour immigrants from the 1960s and 1970s who came to the Netherlands to fill a gap in the Dutch labour market. These migrants came mainly from Turkey and Morocco and brought Turkish, Arabic and various Berber languages

to the country. Also belonging to this group, but not mentioned by Van Amersfoort and Cortie (2009), are the more contemporary labour immigrants from Eastern Europe. The third group consists of expatriates who “settle in a foreign country but remain dependent on an external agency – a foreign government or company for their social position” (Van Amersfoort and Cortie 2009: 82). Expatriates in Amsterdam are mainly from industrialised countries and include diplomats and employees from international corporations with branches in Amsterdam. Fourth is the heterogeneous group of international commuters who have entered the Dutch labour market or are staying long-term in the city, e.g. artists, professional athletes, researcher or travellers who decided to stay in Amsterdam. Expatriates and international commuters are of the most interest for the purpose of this study since they are highly represented in the city’s centre where McBicycle is situated.

<i>Groups of origin</i>	<i>Absolute number</i>				<i>Percentage</i>			
	<i>first generation</i>	<i>second generation</i>	<i>native</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>first generation</i>	<i>second generation</i>	<i>native</i>	<i>total</i>
Surinamese	38 655	29 883		68 538	56,4%	43,6%		100%
Antilleans	6 934	4 957		11 891	58,3%	41,7%		100%
Turks	22 071	19 448		41 519	53,2%	46,8%		100%
Moroccans	34 200	37 260		71 460	47,9%	52,1%		100%
Other non-Dutch	124 660	81 163		205 823	60,6%	39,4%		100%
Dutch			390 813	390 813			100%	100%
Total	226 520	172 711	390 813	790 044	28,7%	21,9%	49,5%	100%

Table 1.2: Population of Amsterdam by origin and generation, 1 January 2012 (Bureau Onderzoek en Statistiek 2012; table adapted from Nell and Rath 2009: 13)

Besides the large immigrant population in Amsterdam, there are two other significant contributors to the cities multilingual character. The first are the Dutch natives of whom many have knowledge of two or more languages. Most Dutch people have at least a basic proficiency in English (Booij 2001). English is introduced in the last two years of primary school and it is a compulsory subject in high school (next to the optional French, German, Spanish and other languages). The second contributors to the linguistic diversity are the approximately 4,9 million people that visit the city each year (Bureau Onderzoek and Statistiek 2008). Together these three groups –

immigrants, multilingual Dutch natives and tourists – create a dynamic and diverse multilingual setting. All three groups are represented in McBicycle’s customer base, which is described in further detail in 3.3.1.

1.3.2 The linguistic ecology of Grahamstown

The cultural and linguistic diversity in South Africa is, similar to the Netherlands, the result of various migration processes. However, these processes started long before the first waves of immigrants reached the Netherlands in the second half of the 20th century. Since South Africa’s contemporary linguistic ecology has its roots in these earlier migrations processes, I briefly discuss them here. From around 500 AD the first Bantu-speakers arrived in small consecutive waves in Southern Africa. Here, Bantu-speakers came into contact with indigenous groups in South Africa: the Khoikhoi and the San. The Khoikhoi and San languages are now close to extinction but have left their linguistic traces in the form of, for example, click consonants and vocabulary found in Zulu and Xhosa (Mesthrie 2002). The 17th century saw the first arrival of the Europeans in South Africa. Afrikaans is the creolised result of Dutch colonisation from 1652 and English was introduced in 1795 through the British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope and subsequently spread when English settlers arrived in the Eastern Cape (1820), Natal (1848-1862) and the Witwatersrand (1870s) (De Klerk 1996). After an Afrikaans-English bilingual policy during the apartheid years, the inherently multilingual character of South Africa is now reflected in its 1996 constitution, which recognises eleven official languages. Nine of them are from the Bantu (Niger-Congo) language group: Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana, Pedi (or Northern Sotho), Venda, Swati, Ndebele and Tsonga. The remaining two languages are English and Afrikaans, which are both West Germanic languages from the Indo-European language family.

Three of these languages are the dominant languages spoken in Grahamstown, which is a city in South Africa’s Eastern Cape Province. Education forms its largest industry and it also home to a provincial High Court. With a population of approximately 50 217 residents (Census 2011, Frith 2013) Grahamstown is considerably smaller than Amsterdam. In comparison to Amsterdam’s dynamic and diverse multilingualism, Grahamstown’s society is characterised by a stable form of *diglossia* (or *triglossia*).

Ferguson (1959) first used the term *diglossia* to refer to two or more varieties of the same language used in different contexts or domains. Fishman (1971) argues that this concept also applies to the use of two or more languages in different domains. Fishman's definition is applicable to the situation in Grahamstown where the three major languages are Xhosa, English and Afrikaans (reflecting the wider linguistic ecology of the Eastern Cape). Table 1.3 shows that Xhosa (66,5%) is the largest first language spoken language in Grahamstown, followed by Afrikaans (17,3%) and English (12,5%).

<i>First language</i>	<i>Numbers of speakers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
isiXhosa	30 008	66,53%
Afrikaans	7 788	17,27%
English	5 633	12,49%
Other	1 145	3,71%
Total	49 687	100%*

* *Unspecified first languages excluded*

Table 1.3: Linguistic distribution in Grahamstown Census 2011 (Frith 2013)

Although Xhosa is the largest first language, it is mainly used in informal domains (e.g. at home) and has a covert prestige (e.g. as a sign of in-group solidarity). English, on the other hand, is used in a wide range of functions in formal domains (e.g. business and education) and carries more overt prestige. Afrikaans is commonly spoken among blue-collar workers and also used in formal domains (e.g. there are a few Afrikaans schools in Grahamstown), but to a lesser extent than English. This contemporary linguistic hierarchy of languages and varieties and the domains in which they are used dates back to the mid-19th century. English settlers arrived in large numbers in 1820 and Grahamstown developed rapidly into the largest settlement in the Eastern Cape. The economic development led to an increasingly diverse population and a consequential social stratification, which affected the city's physical development. Marshall (2008: 61) describes the town as follows:

In many ways the town was a microcosm of the whole frontier, with its disparate peoples at once engaged in continual conflict and struggle, but increasingly incorporated, if unequally, into a single economy and society.

The geographical lines of the town were drawn along racial and class lines, with the Xhosa and Khoikhoi being confined to the outskirts of the town (Marshall 2008). Irvine (2012) examines racial integration in contemporary Grahamstown and concludes that it is still a city divided by class and race. Grahamstown's linguistic ecology thus has its roots in the 19th century and is characterised by a stable form of triglossia. Other linguistic influences are a result of present-day processes of mobility and globalisation and are brought in by immigrants from other African countries (e.g. Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ghana) and by international students and academics attracted to the city's many schools and Rhodes University.

1.3.3 McBicycle and Warrick's

This section briefly describes the two businesses and provides motivation for the choice of these particular businesses as my research sites. A more detailed description of the two workplaces can be found in 3.3.1. McBicycle, based in Amsterdam, is a bicycle rental and repair shop and Warrick's, in Grahamstown, is a shop for tyre and exhaust services. In Amsterdam the main means of transport is bicycles (the streets are narrow and parking space limited), whereas in Grahamstown it is cars. Since Grahamstown is not as bicycle-orientated as Amsterdam is, there are no bicycle repair and rental shops comparable to McBicycle. The nature of the work in both businesses is very similar; both are repair shops and both have a similar balance between customer-employee and employee-employee interaction. This balance offers interesting insights into the adaptability of an individual's repertoire in different contexts.

Another reason for selecting these particular research sites is the same as the reason for selecting Amsterdam and Grahamstown: the sites fit the multilingual profile I was looking for. McBicycle's employees come from the Netherlands, Sweden, England, the United States and Italy, and their customers are Dutch locals as well as a wide array of tourists from all corners of the world. Warrick's linguistic diversity reflects that of Grahamstown and the Eastern Cape. Both employees and customers speak English, Afrikaans and Xhosa to varying degrees. Although English plays a significant role within the domain of business there is still an important role to play

for other languages within small businesses. In fact, Wright (2002) argues that any South African business needs to maintain a diverse linguistic competence since employees, customers and third parties are linguistically varied. A superior at Warrick's told me that they have hired somebody with various African languages in his repertoire for this reason. She also told me that this turned out to be unnecessary in her opinion, because the only language used in customer interactions, according to top management, is English. However, the perception of Warrick's management differs from the everyday reality in employee-customer interactions, as shown in the analysis.

In summary, both Amsterdam and Grahamstown have multilingual societies, which largely resulted from processes of migration and as a result of contemporary processes of physical and socio-economic mobility of people. English plays an important role in both societies and both businesses. The difference lies in the nature of their multilingual characters: Warrick's displays a static triglossia that reflects the three main languages of Grahamstown and the Eastern Cape, while McBicycle's linguistic ecology is dynamic and highly diverse. The two business also differ in their organisational structure: Warrick's organisational structure is very hierarchical with pre-determined non-negotiable role-descriptions, whereas the role-expectations in McBicycle are more loosely defined and the power relationships more equal.

1.4 Structure of this thesis

This thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the relevant literature. It covers key terms and previous research surrounding multilingual business discourse. It also discusses Spencer-Oatey's (2000) Rapport Management Framework as an approach to the study of interpersonal relationships in workplace settings. Lastly, it explores some sociolinguistic notions, such as communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991), frontstage and backstage (Goffman 1959), and a sociolinguistics of globalisation (Blommaert 2010) that can be useful in describing and interpreting workplace interactions in a globalised context. Chapter 3 explores the basic principles of linguistic ethnography and how they are applied in this study, and describes the various tools used for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 is the analysis of the data and includes a discussion of the findings. It consists of two

integral arguments. One focuses on the linguistic resources used to manage rapport in small business discourse. The other identifies the limitations of the Rapport Management Framework as applied to my data set and subsequently proposes ways of overcoming these limitations and improving the analytical strength of the model in the analysis of small business discourse. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the findings as they relate to the research questions drawn up in Chapter 1. It also reflects how these findings contribute to existing theoretical approaches towards multilingual business discourse and the potential for further research.

2. Literature review

This chapter first positions this study in the broad field of business discourse by looking at some of the theoretical and empirical research on this topic (section 2.1). A model that has been used by various business discourse researchers to examine the relational aspects in workplace interactions is Spencer-Oatey's (2000) Rapport Management Framework. Building on Austin (1962) and Searle's (1969) foundational work on Speech Acts Theory and Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) Politeness Theory, Spencer-Oatey developed a framework to explore how language is used to manage relationships. The Rapport Management Framework and the pragmatic traditions that have informed it are discussed in section 2.2. Schnurr and Chan (2011) argue that any analysis of rapport management strategies needs to consider both the normative and appropriate behaviour of the community of practice in which these strategies are embedded as well as their wider sociocultural context. Collins, Slembrouck and Baynham (2009) similarly argue that studies of language use need to consider how the contemporary processes of globalisation and mobility influence local linguistic practices. For this reason, I draw on various sociolinguistic notions to explore the links between situated language use and its social context, which I believe can make a valuable contribution to the analysis of situated rapport management. Section 2.3 discusses the notion of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991) and section 2.4 explores Blommaert's (2010) sociolinguistics of globalisation and the descriptive tools that it provides.

2.1 Small business discourse

Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (1999: 2) define business discourse as:

talk and writing between individuals whose main work activities and interests are in the domain of business and who come together for the purpose of doing business.²

In other words, business discourse is in this study understood as all written and spoken text that individuals produce to achieve personal and organisational goals within a business setting. Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken (2007) further

² Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (1999) distinguish business discourse from professional discourse, which refers to interactions involving a layperson. However, since this study looks at both types of interactions but focuses on the language use of the individual employees I will use the broader term *business discourse*.

characterise businesses as a complex and multi-layered setting for social interaction, which has given rise to an interdisciplinary field that relies on an eclectic theoretical and methodological approach to achieve a deeper understanding of the complex links between business and language. The present study uses Rapport Management Theory (Spencer-Oatey 2000) to explore the management of relationships and draws on insights from sociolinguistic notions such as communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991) and Blommaert's (2010) sociolinguistics of globalisation to link these situated practices to the context in which they are embedded.

In addition, my study focuses on the multilingual workplace, since this has become the reality for many businesses and professionals in an increasingly globalised world (Harris and Bargiela-Chiappini 2003). Many studies of multilingual business discourse have focused on large organisations and multinationals, often focussing on the effects of a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce on aspects such as leadership discourse and language policies (e.g. Lüdi, Höchle and Yanaprasart 2010; Poncini 2003; Virkkula-Räisänen 2010). Yet, as mentioned in 1.1, processes of globalisation and mobility also have an increasing effect on small businesses and their employees. Of the research on multilingualism in small business, a large proportion has focused on immigrant entrepreneurs. These often involve a critical or ideological dimension that relates to the empowerment of minority groups. For example, Collier's (2010) ethnographic study of four immigrant, women-owned businesses showed that the owners' L1s and L2s were successfully employed in achieving interactional and transactional goals. Other studies on multilingual entrepreneurs include Lee (2003) and Wescott and Griffith (2010). However, a multicultural workplace is a natural setting for the majority of professionals and since many people spend a large proportion of their time at work it only seems natural to study individual multilingual practices in this context. Therefore, my study focuses on small businesses but distinguishes itself from research on small entrepreneurial enterprises by studying two larger, well-established SMMEs with multilingual and multicultural workforces.

Another distinction in research on multilingual business discourse can be made between top-down approaches that explore the effects of multilingualism on the level of the organisation (e.g. Marschan-Piekkari, Welch and Welch 1999; Schnurr, Marra and Holmes 2007), and bottom-up approaches that focus on the linguistic practices of

individuals in multilingual workplaces (e.g. Bailey 1997; Paramasivam 2011). These differences in focus on either organisational or individual aspects reflect the more general dialectic between agency and structure in the social sciences. Rampton (2011) observes a shift in the study of multilingualism and language use away from a focus on social structures towards an emphasis on the agency of speakers. This post-structuralist approach does not view individual language use as a mere product of its social context, but instead emphasises the agency that speakers express by manipulating the linguistic resources available to them (Dyer 2013). However, scholars such as Heller (2007) and Rampton (2011) warn against a too great reliance on the post-structuralist view of individual agency. Heller (2007) notes that social structures (e.g. established routines, policies, business organisation) can no longer be seen as fixed and essentialist but argues that linguistic choices are still influenced and facilitated by their context. The present study explores this tension between the agency that speakers negotiate by drawing on their multilingual repertoires and the facilitating and constraining influence of the larger organisational and social structure on these linguistic choices.

To summarise, instead of focussing on large multinationals this study explores strategic language use in small businesses. Furthermore, it focuses on the professional individuals and how they strategically draw on their multilingual repertoires to manage their relationships. It focuses on individual agency while taking into consideration how this is influenced by the organisational structure. A theoretical and analytical framework that explores such strategic use of language in the management of relationships is Spencer-Oatey's (2000) Rapport Management Framework. Her model and the foundational work in which it is embedded are discussed in the following section.

2.2 Rapport management

Spencer-Oatey (2000) developed a theoretical and analytical framework for the analysis of language use in rapport management, which incorporates aspects such as face concerns, power and politeness. Her Rapport Management Framework builds on Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1978; 1987), which is in turn based on Austin (1962) and Searle's (1969) foundational work on Speech Act Theory. The

section begins with a description of the latter two traditions before turning to Spencer-Oatey's model of rapport management.

2.2.1 Speech Act Theory

Austin (1962) broke with a long tradition of language philosophers by arguing that every utterance can be seen as the performance of a social act. His influential speech act theory examines utterances from the perspective of their function instead of their form and therefore provides a very useful tool for describing and analysing language use in business interactions (Van Rees 1992). Searle (1969) adapted the work of Austin and established five categories of illocutionary speech acts: representatives or assertives (e.g. denying), directives (e.g. suggesting), commissives (e.g. promising), expressives (e.g. thanking), and declarations (e.g. sentencing). Both Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) taxonomies of speech acts have been criticised by scholars such as Levinson (1979) and Schegloff (1988) for examining utterances in isolation and thereby overlooking the dynamic nature of discourse. More recent applications of Speech Act Theory, however, look beyond the utterance in isolation and focus on the interactive nature of discourse. Vine (2004), for example, uses a speech act approach to analyse the expression of power through the use of directives in a New Zealand workplace. Another consideration is that Speech Act Theory presumes that individuals are involved in cooperative interactions, with equal positions and equal control over the course of the interaction (Fairclough 2001). Such equal interactions are rare in natural conversations. Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) build on Speech Act Theory but acknowledge that power relations and social distance between the interlocutors affect the choice and the (in)directness of the speech acts used in the interaction. Their Politeness Theory is one of the main influential approaches to linguistic politeness (Spencer-Oatey 2002).

2.2.2 Linguistic Politeness

Central to Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness is Goffman's (1967) notion of *face*, which is defined as the public image speakers present and maintain in every interaction. Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) propose that face has two components: *positive face* is defined as the desire to be approved and valued by others and *negative face* is the desire not to be imposed upon. They describe various linguistic strategies

that participants can use to perform face-threatening speech acts (FTA) and explain how these choices may affect the course of interaction (Campbell and Davis 2006). Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish four main types of strategies that are available to a speaker, as shown in Figure 2.1. The least face-threatening option is an *off-record strategy*, such as metaphors, rhetorical questions, irony or understatement. These are indirect strategies that are used to hint at the speaker's intention, while leaving some room to negotiate the exact meaning. Then there are *bald on-record strategies*, which do not include any form of mitigation and are used in situations that require accurate and effective communication, e.g. when warning someone about a fire or a falling object. When a speaker wants to be both clear and polite there are two types of mitigating strategies. *Positive politeness strategies* attend to the hearer's positive face and aim to enhance the hearer's self-esteem. These include creating solidarity, attending to the hearer's needs and complimenting. *Negative politeness strategies* attend to negative face by mitigating an imposition, for example through hedging or being apologetic.

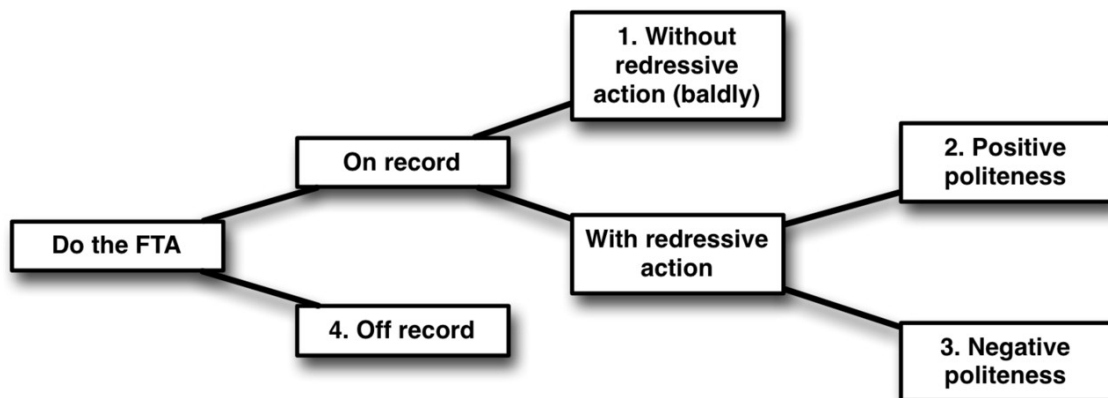


Figure 2.1: Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown and Levinson 1987: 69)

The numbers in Figure 2.1 indicate the degree of face-redress needed for the particular face-threatening act. The higher the threat the more likely it is that the speaker chooses a high-numbered strategy. In this hierarchy Brown and Levinson regard negative face threats as more serious as threats to positive face.

Matsumoto (1988) argues that Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) conceptualisation of negative face overemphasises the individual and his or her rights. She points out that negative face is a central concern in European and American culture, but that this

emphasis on autonomy hardly exists in Japanese culture. In Japanese society one's position in relation to others and acceptance by others is far more important. The observation that Brown and Levinson's notion of negative face is too individualistic is in line with Goffman's original conceptualisation of face. Goffman (1967) states that face is discursively constructed with others and thus not inherently individual (Locher and Watts 2005). Another point of critique is Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) focus on a speaker's orientation to maintain harmony and social equilibrium (Locher and Watts 2005). Other scholars point out that speakers sometimes deliberately choose to behave in a rude or inappropriate manner, which is also a fundamental aspect of the management of interpersonal relationships (Culpeper 1996; Locher and Watts 2005). Spencer-Oatey (2000) incorporated this critique on the individualistic and harmonious focus of Politeness Theory in the development of her Rapport Management Framework.

2.2.3 Rapport Management Framework

Spencer-Oatey (2000) extended Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) work on linguistic politeness and proposed a framework to explore how language is used in the management of interpersonal relationships. She introduces the term *rapport management* to refer to any language use that is used to promote, maintain or threaten harmonious relationships. She therefore takes an important step away from Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) focus on polite behaviour by including defensive and challenging behaviour as aspects of relational talk. However, I argue in 4.3.1 that Spencer-Oatey's definition of rapport management can be refined to better reflect the discordant side of rapport management. She also distinguishes four rapport orientations that speakers can hold and which can change during the course of an interaction (Spencer-Oatey 2000). An individual can hold a rapport-enhancement orientation (i.e. a desire to strengthen the relationship between the interlocutors) or a rapport-maintenance orientation (i.e. a desire to maintain harmonious relations). In addition, an individual can also hold a rapport-neglect orientation (i.e. a lack of interest in maintaining relations) or a rapport-challenge orientation (i.e. a desire to challenge the existing relations). These orientations also acknowledge discordant rapport management, but with the exception of García (2009) and Esbensen (2009), scholars tend not to employ the rapport orientations as an approach towards the

analysis of rapport management. Instead, they tend to focus on the types of strategies they observe (e.g. Campbell and Davis 2006; Collier 2010; Paramasivam 2011) and these often centre on harmonious aspects of rapport management, as discussed in 2.2.3.3. In this study I take a functionalist approach to the management of interpersonal relationships and in order to explore how language is used from the perspective of the user, one has to examine the speakers' rapport orientations. Applying this theoretical concept of rapport orientations to authentic interactional data proved problematic at times and Chapter 4 reports on the theoretical developments I propose to create an Enhanced Rapport Management Framework that suitable for the analysis of complex small business discourse.

The Rapport Management Framework as proposed by Spencer-Oatey (2000) further proposes that rapport management involves two interrelated components: the management of face and the management of sociality rights. Her understanding of face relates to Goffman's (1967: 5) definition of the notion, i.e. "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". Sociality rights entail "the personal and social entitlements that individuals claim as part of their professional role or status in interactions with others" (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken 2007: 41-42). The management of face and the management of sociality rights both include a personal or individual component as well as a social or interdependent component. From which I derived the following diagram displayed in Figure 2.2.

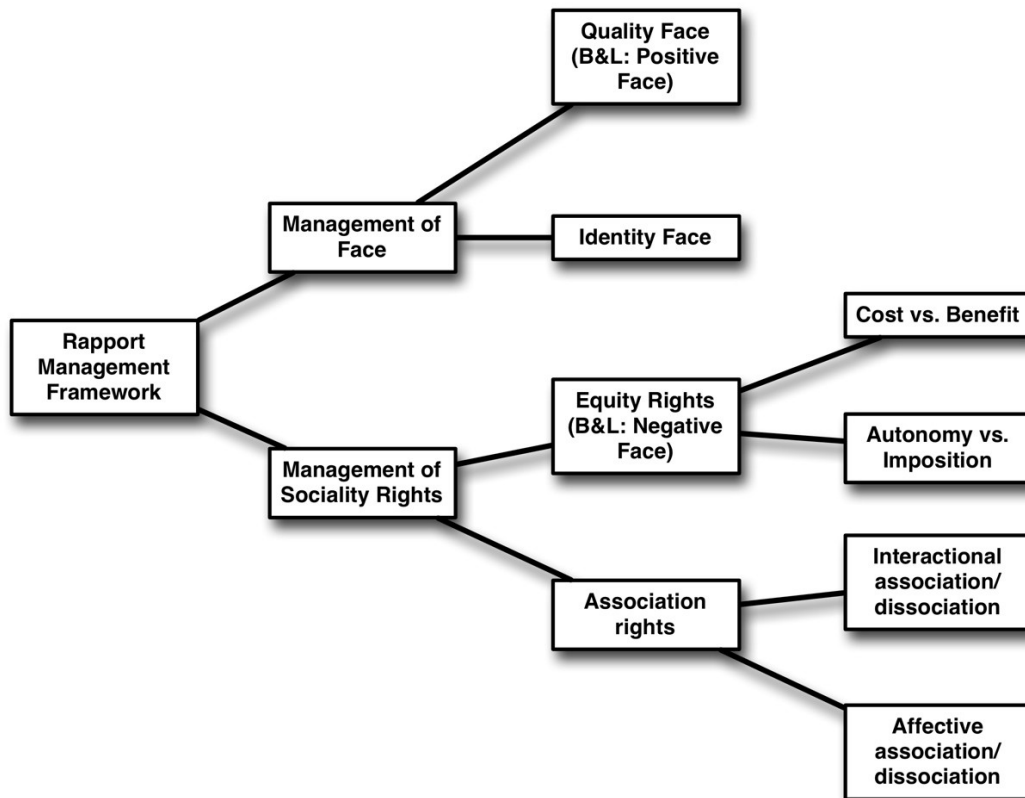


Figure 2.2: Spencer-Oatey's (2000) Rapport Management Framework

Figure 2.2 shows that the Rapport Management Framework incorporates Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) notions of positive and negative face. Her notion of *quality face* encompasses Brown and Levinson's *positive face* and *equity rights* incorporates the notion of *negative face*. However, Spencer-Oatey (2000; 2005) refines the notion of positive face and regards negative face as a sociality right rather than a face concern. The following two sections discuss the management of face and the management of sociality rights in more detail and the subsequent section 2.3.3.3 focuses on the rapport management strategies that can be used to manage face and rights concerns.

2.2.3.1 Management of face

Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) conceptualization of face, particularly negative face, places a great emphasis on the individual. Spencer-Oatey (2000) develops this by drawing attention to the interpersonal or social side of face. She argues that there

are two interrelated aspects of face: 1) *quality face* and 2) *social identity face*.³ Quality face is associated with personal self-esteem and relates to people's fundamental desire for "people to evaluate us positively in terms of our personal qualities" (Spencer-Oatey 2000:14). This aspect of face relates to Brown and Levinson's conceptualization of positive face. Social identity face, on the other hand, is associated with the fundamental desire for "people to acknowledge and uphold our social identities or roles, e.g. as valued customer, close friend etc." (Spencer-Oatey 2000:14). In general terms face, as understood by Spencer-Oatey, is concerned with people's sense of worth, identity, honour and reputation.

Spencer-Oatey (2000) agrees with other scholars like Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987) that face is a universal phenomenon. However, while fundamental face concerns are universal, Spencer-Oatey argues that sensitivity to different aspects of face and preferred strategies to manage face concerns are subject to cultural differences. Schnurr and Chan (2011) show how these cultural sensitivities are reflected in the Rapport Management Framework. Some aspects of the framework, they argue, are more readily applicable in certain socio-cultural contexts than in other. In their analysis of workplace interactions in Hong Kong and New Zealand Schnurr and Chan noticed that the distinction between quality and social identity face is more salient in Hong Kong than in New Zealand. Schnurr and Chan (2011) argue that these differences may occur as a result of cultural differences. In Hong Kong there is generally a strong emphasis on the maintenance of hierarchical relationships and on adhering to role expectations. In New Zealand, on the other hand, power relationships are more equal and role expectations less predetermined. Similarly, the differences in rapport management style observed in the two small businesses in the present study appear to be partially the result of differences in organisational structure and wider sociocultural contexts. Besides face concerns, Spencer-Oatey (2000) proposes that rapport management is motivated by sociality rights.

³ I am aware that Spencer-Oatey (2008) omitted this distinction between quality face and social identity face in the second edition of *Culturally Speaking*. However, I find it an interesting and useful distinction to make and therefore use her more elaborate description of the framework.

2.2.3.2 Management of sociality rights

Sociality rights are concerned with personal and social entitlements and involve two

interrelated aspects: 1) *equity rights* and 2) *association rights* (Campbell, White and Johnson 2003). Equity rights relate to our

fundamental belief that we are entitled to personal consideration from others, so that we are treated fairly: that we are not unduly imposed upon, that we are not unfairly ordered about, and we are not taken advantage of or exploited (Spencer-Oatey 2000: 14).

This notion relates to Brown and Levinson's negative face, which, in Spencer-Oatey's model, is seen as a sociality right rather than a face need. Equity rights, in turn, consist of two components. First, the notion of *cost-benefit* concerns the extent to which an individual is disadvantaged or exploited and the belief that cost and benefit should be balanced. Second, *autonomy-imposition* concerns the extent to which an individual is imposed upon.

Social entitlements also entail association rights, which concern the "fundamental belief that we are entitled to an association with others that is in keeping with the type of relationship that we have with them" (Spencer-Oatey 2000: 14-15). The notion of association rights also has two components. First, people expect an appropriate amount of conversational interaction with others, which is what Spencer-Oatey calls *interactional association-dissociation*. What is considered an appropriate amount depends on the sociocultural context, the existing relationships and personal preference. Second, *affective association-dissociation* refers to the extent to which people share feelings, interest and concerns. When sociality rights are threatened, an individual's sense of personal or social entitlement is infringed upon. For example, an individual's equity rights are threatened when he or she is forced to do something that they cannot be expected to do (Spencer-Oatey 2000). Similarly, affective disassociation rights are threatened when a colleague is asking questions that are too personal for one's liking. Both face- and rights-threatening behaviour can be negotiated by a wide range of rapport management strategies, which are discussed in the following section.

2.2.3.3 Rapport management strategies

Spencer-Oatey (2000) distinguishes five interrelated domains of interaction in which rapport management can take place. Each domain leads to a wide range of linguistic options that can be used to manage rapport. Much of the research on rapport

management has been carried out in the illocutionary domain (e.g. speech acts, levels of indirectness). Most of Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) work on linguistic politeness falls in this domain. The other domains of interaction are the discourse domain (e.g. topic choice and structure), the participant domain (e.g. turn-taking and in-exclusion of participants), the stylistic domain (e.g. appropriate tone and register), and the non-verbal domain (e.g. embodied gestures such as eye-contact and hand gestures). The present study focuses on the linguistic strategies in the first four domains and pays less attention to the non-verbal domain.

Some of the strategies discussed in rapport management literature are: the claiming of common ground or emphasising similarities in values and views (Hernández López 2008; Placencia 2004), the use of expletives as solidarity markers (Esbensen 2009; Daly, Holmes, Newton and Stubbe 2004), honorifics and forms of address (Collier 2010; Paramasivam 2011), humour (Schnurr and Chan 2011), and the choice for a particular code. These strategies are predominantly intended to either enhance or maintain rapport and this signals a lack of attention in rapport management studies to rapport challenging strategies and discordant behaviour. Some of the abovementioned strategies can serve multiple rapport orientations. For example, the use of appropriate forms of address is a rapport maintenance strategy, but using an inappropriate term can be used to deliberately challenge the relationship by using an inappropriate term. Similarly, Rogerson-Revell (2007) has shown that humour is both used to build and contest rapport. Schnurr and Chan (2011) further argue that the appropriateness of a certain rapport management strategy depends on both the norms and appropriate behaviour of the particular community of practice as well as the wider sociocultural context. The following two sections explore sociolinguistic notions that can contribute to an analysis of rapport management by drawing links between situated practices and the context in which they are embedded.

2.3 Communities of Practice

The notion of communities of practice was originally introduced by the educationalists Lave and Wenger (1991) as a model to explore the natural method of situational learning. The notion was first applied to sociolinguistic research by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464), who define a community of practice as

an aggregate of people who came together around a mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short – practices – emerge in the course of this endeavour.

Thus the concept emphasises the notion of practice and provides a useful approach to study language use and the management of relationships in context (Holmes 1999; Mullany 2007). It also useful in study of small business discourse as workplaces and their employees, like the ones in the present study, develop distinct communities of practice and they fulfil the three criteria set out by Wenger (1998: 73):

1. they take part in *mutual engagement*, i.e. they come together and interact on a regular basis;
2. they negotiate a *joint enterprise*, i.e. they carry out activities and daily routines together;
3. they *develop a shared repertoire*, i.e. they developed a shared knowledge of the linguistic resources and interactional routines in the workplace, as is illustrated in the analysis.⁴

Britain and Matsumoto (2005) observe a general trend away from the established Speech Community Model towards a Communities of Practice Model and argue that this reflects the general debate surrounding structure and agency in the social sciences. Gumperz (2001: 66) defines a speech community as

any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language use.

Britain and Matsumoto (2005) argue that the Speech Community Model typically entails a top-down approach as it focuses on the social structure that creates this specific language use within a speech community, while a Communities of Practice model focuses on the individual identities within a community of practice, thus preferring a bottom-up approach. However, Mullany (2007) notes that this dichotomy is slightly more subtle. Although the communities of practice approach focuses on language as a form of practice and emphasises individual agency, it also acknowledges the evident influence of social structures (from the organisational structure to society at large) on individual language use. Wenger (1998) describes individual practices as social practices that interact with social structures.

⁴ Wenger (1998) assigns both linguistic and non-linguistic elements to this shared repertoire (e.g. shared tools and ways of doing things).

An emphasis on individual practices also allows for an exploration of the identities that are rooted in such practices, which may reveal, as Bucholtz (1999) suggests, that individuals can have multiple identities and can be involved in multiple identity practices. This insight plays an important explanatory role in my analysis of the interactional behaviour of Warrick's and McBicycle employees. The analysis focuses both on interaction amongst colleagues (i.e. in-group members of the community of practice), and between employees and customers (i.e. in-group and out-group members). The idea of multiple identities at play can explain some of the differences in interactional behaviour between these two types of interactions, as demonstrated in 4.3.3.

Another valuable aspect of the Communities of Practice model is that it acknowledges and emphasises the existence of degrees of membership, i.e. a community of practice consists of periphery and core members (Wenger 1998). New members start off as periphery members but as they gradually understand and acquire the normative and appropriate behaviour of that particular community they slowly establish themselves as core members. Drawing on the shared repertoire of the community of practice is an important resource to signal group membership (Eckert 2000). In the recognition of degrees of membership lies significant explanatory power, as Schnurr and Chan (2011) note that a speaker's linguistic choices can be influenced by the degree of membership. Their study of teasing and self-denigrating humour in a New Zealand and a Hong Kong workplace showed that employees draw on a range of listener's strategies to manage the potential face-threatening situations that arise when a superior uses self-denigrating humour. These strategies often adhere to the asymmetrical relationship between the interlocutors and were depended on the speaker's degree of membership. They also found that the type of response strategies differed between the two workplaces, which is why Schnurr and Chan argue that both the organisational cultures of the communities of practice as well the wider socio-cultural context should be taken into consideration.

The notion of communities of practice plays a central role in the present study. Both research sites form distinctive communities of practice whose normative behaviour and processes need to be grasped in order to understand the rapport management

choices made by its members. See 3.3.1.3 for a detailed description of both communities. In addition, the process that new members go through is also of interest to researchers who try to establish themselves as group members in their role of participant observer, as described in 3.3.2.1. Whereas the notion of communities of practice focuses on the immediate setting of the interactions, Blommaert (2010) developed a model to explore the effects of an increasingly globalised context on situated language practice. His *sociolinguistics of globalisation* is discussed in the following section.

2.4 A Sociolinguistics of Globalisation

Collins, Slembrouck and Baynham (2009) argue that studies of language contact and situated interactional practices need to incorporate an understanding of how these situated practices are affected by a contemporary context of globalisation and mobility. I aim to achieve this by combining the Rapport Management Framework with insightful concepts from Blommaert's (2010) sociolinguistics of globalisation. Before discussing the three central concepts in Blommaert's (2010) model, I want to draw attention to the move from a focus on small-scale spatial relations, embedded in, for example, Goffman's notions of frames, footing and front- and backstage, towards a focus on large-scale spatial relations in the work of Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck (2005), Silverstein (2003), Stroud and Mpendukana (2009) and Vigouroux (2005) amongst others.

Space and scale are generally no longer seen as static notions, but are instead understood in dynamic terms, i.e. "as being constantly created, (re)produced, organised, and negotiated by social actors" (Vigouroux 2005: 241). The turning point came, according to Vigouroux (2005), in the 1970s when Marxist geographers described space as a social construct and, in the 1980s, scholars argued that society in turn was also spatially constructed. Yet, this dynamic notion of space is already embedded in Goffman's notions such as frames and footing. One of Goffman's (1959) notions that I find particularly useful in examining workplace interactions is his dramaturgical concept of front- and backstage. Goffman suggested that social life occurs in two different regions. The frontstage is "the place where the performance is given" (Goffman 1959: 110) and the backstage is where the speaker prepares for the

performance but does not need to keep up appearances. Each stage organises and frames situated patterns of language use and thus defines the particular linguistic choices available to an individual. Sarangi and Roberts (1999) suggest that this distinction between front- and backstage in broad terms can be seen as a distinction between customer-employee interactions and interactions amongst colleagues. The present study adopts this view of workplace interactions occurring in front- and backstages. A description of these two regions in the two businesses examined in the present study is provided in section 3.3.1. Goffman (1959) describes the notion of front- and backstage in terms of small-scale spatial relations. More recent scholars apply his notions to more large-scale processes, such as Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck (2005) who reevaluate Goffman's dynamic understanding of space and scale in light of the contemporary context of globalisation.

Globalisation processes affect situated language use in two significant ways. Firstly, an increase in the mobility of people generates an increase in the mobility of linguistic resources (Blommaert 2010; Blommaert and Backus 2013). As linguistic repertoires move through different spaces (e.g. different countries or neighbourhoods) they maintain their shape, but the meaning, function and value attached to certain codes depend on local dominant patterns of language use. For example, a doctor might possess a rich repertoire that proves highly valuable in an international medical research centre in Vancouver, but if this repertoire does not contain Xhosa it is worth considerably less in a rural clinic in the Eastern Cape. Another example would be a speaker with an Amsterdam accent associated with the lower classes. In a high-class jewellery shop in Wassenaar (a wealthy suburb of The Hague) this speech variety will likely lead to stigmatization and negative evaluation of the speaker, whereas the same lower-class accent becomes a resource in a repair shop, such as McBicycle, where an Amsterdam identity is part of the corporate identity. In this context, the accent may function as a tool for upward mobility and opportunity within the workplace. As a consequence of increased mobility, linguistic repertoires can no longer be seen as static objects of research, but instead need to be understood as dynamic and mobile resources (Blommaert 2010). A second major effect of globalisation is the increasing interconnectedness between various contextual scales. Scholars such as Fairclough (1992), Rampton (2007) and Vigouroux (2009) draw attention to the interconnectedness of various scales, arguing that situated language practices are

produced in their immediate, physical context but that they also inform and are informed by the wider social, political and historical levels they are embedded in. Globalisation has foregrounded the mutually shaping role between various levels of context (e.g. local, national and supranational), which has created a complex and challenging setting for the study of situated language use (Blommaert 2003).

The main challenge posed by these developments is that they problematise traditional sociolinguistic notions, such as *identity*, *speech community* and *linguistic repertoire* (Heller 2003; Collins and Slembrouck 2005; Blommaert and Backus 2013). In an attempt to accommodate these challenges, Blommaert (2010) developed a *sociolinguistics of globalisation* as a descriptive framework in which globalised language phenomena can be explored. He explains that the aim of such a framework should be to explain the interconnectedness between different scales of linguistic practices and offer new theoretical concepts that are better equipped to capture the complex and layered nature of situated language patterns in this era of globalisation. Blommaert (2010) proposes three theoretical tools to explore the connection between global processes and local patterns of language use: sociolinguistic scales, orders of indexicality and polycentricity, which are the topics of the following sections.

2.4.1 Sociolinguistic scales

Scales form the contextual levels in which language practices can be observed and understood. Different scales involve different “forms of normativity, patterns of language use and expectations thereof” and will thus attach different meanings and values to a particular communicative event (Blommaert 2010: 36). Vigouroux (2009) argues that situated events are the product of an interaction between various historical, social and geographical scales. Blommaert’s (2007; 2010) conceptualisation of scale includes both spatial and temporal scales, which has a wider scope than Fairclough (2006) gives to the notion of scales. Fairclough only assigns a spatial dimension, while Blommaert argues that normative appropriateness not only emerges in different spaces, but is also created through long and complex historical processes. Scale, according to Blommaert (2010), thus includes both space (e.g. local, regional and national) and time (e.g. temporary versus timeless, contemporary versus historical). A communicative act may jump between such scales. For instance, an event may jump

from a personal and situated scale to an impersonal and general scale, as shown in the following fictional example:

(2) S1: I will clean the filter and then change the oil.

S2: The oil is normally changed first.

By using passive voice, speaker 2 lifts the event to a higher scale, trying to evoke normative validity or a sense of authority by alluding to the collective norm of a community bigger than the two speakers. This might be their workplace community or even the professional community of car mechanics. Blommaert (2010) calls this process ‘upscaling’ and it shows how the relationship between spaces and scales is also one of power differentiation (Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck 2005). Some scales are valued as more prestigious and powerful than others and access to these scale levels is determined by the linguistic resources available to an individual.

Stratified scales form the context in which situated events need to be seen and understood (Blommaert 2010). The notion of sociolinguistic scales allows for an examination of the interconnectedness between micro-levels (e.g. situated events) and macro-levels (e.g. national language policy) (Schnurr and Chan 2011; Collins and Slembrouck 2005). Places of language and cultural contact, like the two business sites in the present study, form a vortex of possible spatiotemporal frames in which situated practices can be and need to be understood. These spatiotemporal frames are frames of indexicality, which brings us to the second key notion of Blommaert’s (2010) model.

2.4.2 Indexicality

Indexical meaning is the meaning attributed to linguistic forms in context and these indexical meanings occur in patterns, which Silverstein (2003) refers to as *indexical orders*. These clusters of indexical meaning often become associated with certain linguistic practices. For example, registers are clusters of language forms that signal a particular role and they can be used to organise interactional events. For instance, a car mechanic may use jargon to signal or index his or her expert power in an interaction with a customer. The concept of indexical order refers to the interplay between micro- and macro-frames of analysis (Silverstein 2003; Collins and Slembrouck 2007), such as between situated phenomena, such as speech acts or the use of personal pronouns, and general social categories, such as *male*, *white* or

foreign. In South Africa, the use of English has indexical meaning on a historical and political scale. A good competence in English is generally associated with power, status and access to upward social mobility (De Klerk 2006; Kamwangamalu 2003). In turn, African languages carry social and cultural heritage (Wright 2002). Thus, a shift in code or style signals a shift in scale-level and every scale involves different indexical frames that offer different opportunities and restrictions on linguistic resources. Herein also lies an important source of intercultural miscommunication. Linguistic resources take on various values and functions as they move across various scales. These resources will be interpreted and evaluated in the local dominant indexical frames and problems emerge when local functions are projected on travelling resources (Blommaert 2003).

Blommaert (2010) concludes that indexical orders, that is clusters of indexical meaning, are constrained by a stratified general repertoire, which operates on a higher level of social structuring. Within these larger, general repertoires, some linguistic forms are systematically perceived as valuable or not valuable. Blommaert calls this *orders of indexicality*. When linguistic repertoires move from one context to another, they move through orders of indexicality and each scale offers different indexical potentials for linguistic repertoires. For example, an extensive multilingual repertoire can prove very valuable in an international school in Brussels, but that same repertoire would be useless in a remote village in Norway if Norwegian is not part of that repertoire. Orders of indexicality define what is perceived as appropriate and acceptable linguistic behaviour and what is seen as inappropriate or deviant behaviour within a certain scale or context. As a result of the inherent systematic evaluation that is attached to these potentials, patterns of indexicality are inherently patterns of control and thus of inclusion and exclusion (Blommaert 2010). The following section discusses Blommaert's third concept, polycentricity, which explains how orders of indexicality are structured.

2.4.3 Polycentricity

Blommaert (2010) proposes that orders of indexicality are organised into polycentric systems consisting of various closely linked centres of indexicality. These centres are often clusters of semiotic features (e.g. topics, places, people and their identities and

roles) and styles (e.g. linguistic varieties). A certain topic often brings about a certain style, suggests particular roles and relationships and often belongs to a certain place. For example, when a mechanic starts to use a particular register or jargon she is indexing her membership of an expert group, which is something likely to occur in the communities of practice in my study. Goffman (1981) refers to these style switches as shifts of *footing*. When speakers change their positions this is often accompanied by changes in linguistic forms and, therefore, shifts in style and register are significant in that they might signal a shift in orientation to a particular centre of authority. Clusters of features and styles are formed by normative patterns that entail a certain evaluative authority. In every interaction, a speaker can orient towards multiple centres of authority. These authorities can take the form of individuals (e.g. parents, the boss, the popular colleague), collectives (e.g. peer-groups) or abstract entities or ideals (e.g. the church, freedom, democracy) (Blommaert 2010).

Although many communicative events might look monocentric, there are always multiple sets of norms to which an individual can orient. For example, extract (27) (in 4.3.4) shows a customer-employee interaction in which there are multiple centres of authority the interlocutors can adhere to. The employee seems to adhere to the norms he derives from his peer-group, the McBicycle community, while the customers seem to adhere to the abstract idea of a *customer-is-king-approach*. In this case, these centres create conflicting norms of appropriate behaviour that causes a confrontation between the customers and the employee. Orders of indexicality impose differences in value onto different modes of linguistic behaviour or norms emanating from different centres of authority. Social structures thus impose or regulate situated language use, but individuals have an important degree of agency. Individuals choose to orient to a particular centre and they can either follow or violate the norms that emanate from it (Blommaert 2010).

To summarise, the notions of scales, orders of indexicality and polycentricity provide useful conceptual and descriptive tools for an exploration of linguistic behaviour in a globalised context. Blommaert (2010) poses that language can occur at different scale-levels and that mobility of linguistic resources across these scales involves important shifts in function and value, that is each scale is dominated by different orders of indexicality. Orders of indexicality are organised into polycentric systems

and each polycentric system consists of multiple centres of authority that emanate sets of norms to which a speaker can adhere. Together these notions form a descriptive framework that emphasises power as they suggest a stratification of value for linguistics resource.

2.5 Conclusion

Many business discourse studies focus either on multilingualism in large corporations or on small immigrant enterprises. My study lies between these two extremes and explore the individual agency in established small businesses. Spencer-Oatey (2000) developed a framework to explore how individuals' use language to manage interpersonal relationships. Her Rapport Management Framework takes an important step away from Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) Politeness Theory by acknowledging the discordant side of rapport management. However, most of the rapport management literature seems to focus on the management of harmonious relationships and overlook challenging behaviour. Yet, rapport challenging plays in central role Warrick's and McBicycle and therefore receives significant attentions in my analysis.

Moreover, in order to interpret the appropriateness and effectiveness of a certain rapport management strategy it is important to understand the norms and cultural of a particular community of practice as well as the wider sociocultural context (Schnurr and Chan 2011). My analysis of language use and strategies is therefore combined with insights and conceptual tools derived from Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice model and Blommaert's (2010) sociolinguistics of globalisation. The next chapter describes how I combined these analytical traditions with a linguistic ethnographic approach in order to make my data set meaningful.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and discusses the methodological approach taken in this research. The chapter is divided into three main sections. It begins with a discussion of the basic principles of ethnography, and linguistic ethnography in particular, and how I have applied these principles in my research (3.2). The second section describes the data collection process. It will characterise the selected research sites and participants and explain the variety of data collection tools used, the purpose of the types of data they yield and the possible limitations of each set of tools (3.3). The next section describes the cyclical and iterative analytical process that I applied and how this process draws on a variety of theoretical traditions to come to an understanding of the rich and complex data set (3.4). Lastly, the description of my methodological approach is summarised and concluded in section 3.5.

3.2 Linguistic Ethnography

Linguistic Ethnography (LE) is an emerging research field that explores the relationship between language and society by applying linguistic analysis to ethnographically grounded studies (Creese 2008). It draws together various methodological and theoretical traditions. Methodologically, linguistic ethnography is characterised by traditional ethnographic tools, such as participant observation and interviews. Theoretically, linguistic ethnography positions itself alongside anthropological traditions of language studies, primarily linguistic anthropology and Hymes' work on the ethnography of communication (Creese 2008). A further influence comes from Applied Linguistics, which is the reason why language as opposed to culture is typically the analytic point of departure in linguistic ethnography (Creese 2008). Linguistics and ethnography differ in some epistemological assumptions (Creese 2008; Rampton 2007). Some scholars perceive these as insurmountable differences that cause tensions within the field. The main difference is that ethnography considers context to be essential to any interpretation of language use, while many sub-disciplines of linguistics separate language from the context in which it is used (Maybin and Tusting 2011). In this research, however, I side with Rampton (2007) and Blommaert (2007) in regarding the differences between the two approaches as complementary. The argument that linguistic ethnography makes is that

ethnography can benefit from the fine-grained analytical frameworks that linguistics has to offer (Creese 2008). Linguistics, as Rampton (2007) describes it, has the capacity to ‘tie ethnography down’ using linguistic tools for analysis. The linguistic tools applied in this study are derived from Pragmatics and from Rapport Management Theory (Spencer-Oatey 2000) in particular. Moreover, pragmatics is a well-established linguistic research tradition that, similarly to ethnography and in contrast with many other linguistic approaches, focuses on the function of language in context. In turn, ethnography can help to ‘open linguistics up’ by emphasising the link between language and context and by highlighting the importance of reflexive sensitivity in the process of making linguistic claims (Maybin and Tusting 2011). In sum, linguistic ethnography allows for a fine-grained linguistic analysis of data, embedded in an ethnographically explored context (Rampton 2007).

Blommaert (2007) describes three distinguishing characteristics that set an ethnographic approach apart from other research approaches in the social sciences. Firstly, it acknowledges the role of the researcher on both the observed interactions as well as the interpretive processes, as described in 3.2.1. Secondly, linguistic ethnographers aim to counterbalance the observer’s effect by aiming for a convergence between an etic (researcher’s) and emic (participants’) perspective, as discussed in 3.2.3. Thirdly, ethnography focuses on the inherently contextualised nature of communicative events, as discussed in 3.2.3. This is one of the reasons why linguistic ethnography proves a valuable approach to business discourse studies, since business discourse occurs in a complex and multi-layered setting in which intricate relations between various events and processes need to be explored (Bargiela-Chiappini *et al.* 2007).

3.2.1 Observer’s role and effect

The primary research instrument in linguistic ethnography is the researcher (Croker 2009), which affects the research in two significant ways. Firstly, the mere presence of the observer affects the behaviour of the participants and the natural flow of their interaction (Saville-Troike 2003). Ethnography considers the observer as an integral part of the research context. By being actively involved in the social activities the researcher becomes inevitably part of the communicative events that are shaped and

co-constructed with the participants (Scollon and Scollon 2007). Besides, Gobo (2008) argues, there is no such thing as ‘natural behaviour’; all behaviour is defined by its settings and the researcher should focus on the manner in which participants make use of their environment. It is important to be constantly aware of the impact that an observer has on the participants and setting and to systematically reflect on one's role as a researcher (Croker 2008). My role as observer in this research was that of a non-group member getting involved in daily activities to generate a deeper understanding of the participants, their communicative activities and their environment. As the fieldwork progressed, my insider's identity developed as participants became familiarised with my presence. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe this as the process of *legitimate peripheral participation*. Legitimate peripheral participation describes how new members in a community of practice move from the periphery to its core by initially participating in small tasks, as described in 2.3. These peripheral activities help to familiarise a new member with the normative behaviour, values, jargon and power relations within the community. The process of Legitimate Peripheral Participation helps the research to approximate the process of entrance and acceptance into a community of practice similar to that of a new member. Section 3.3.2.1 describes in further detail how I positioned myself in the field and how I fulfilled the role of participant observer in both workplaces.

Secondly, a researcher's identity and cultural and intellectual background significantly influences the analytical process (Lanza 2008). Factors such as age, ethnicity, education, gender and life experience all affect the manner in which the researcher perceives reality and derives meaning and salience from the observed events (Blommaert and Dong 2010; Croker 2009). Bourdieu argues that one must be subjective in order to be objective (1990 cited in Blommaert and Dong 2010). Epistemic reflexivity, Bourdieu explains, entails that something becomes ‘objective’ as the result of a process of subjectivity (Blommaert and Dong 2010). This subjectivity does not mean that a researcher's account is merely an opinion based on personal experience (Heller 2008). It is based on systematic and rigorous enquiry, conducted according to a set of principles and methods including self-reflexivity that are in this case derived from linguistic ethnography.

I believe that my identity is mainly shaped and influenced by my Dutch nationality, my liberal upbringing, and my curious and determined nature. I was also fortunate enough to receive a good education, which gave me the opportunity to learn additional languages. My first language is Dutch, I am fluent in English, which I learned at school from the age of ten, and I have an elementary proficiency in French, Spanish, German and Afrikaans. I view multilingual competence as a valuable resource. Being bilingual or multilingual not only offers practical benefits in contemporary globalised society, but in my eyes, it also opens up perspectives, creating a wider frame of reference. As Edwards (2003) perfectly describes it, acquiring another language is like acquiring another linguistic citizenship.

For the researcher, it is key to be constantly aware of one's own identity and subjectivity and systematically reflect how these affect the observed interactions as well as the interpretative process (Croker 2009). One way of achieving this is to aim for a convergence between participants' and researcher's perspective through triangulation, as discussed the following section.

3.2.2 Convergence between participants' and researchers' perspectives

Eliciting 'insiders' points of view is an integral part of linguistic ethnography (Maybin and Tusting 2011) and essential for the interpretive process (Codó 2008). The values and attitudes expressed by the participants help to construct a deeper understanding of the language use observed. Hammersley (2007) argues that the tension between etic (researchers') and emic (participants') perspectives forms the essence of an ethnographic analysis. Participants' accounts can uncover hidden meanings and clarify aspects of the conversational data that are not clear by observation alone (Gobo 2008). However, many of the linguistic choices made by participants, and the pre-existing structures and constraints that affect these choices, operate on a subconscious level (Gumperz 1972), which means that participants are generally unaware or unable to express the reasons behind them. There is also often a conceptual gap between participants' attitudes and their actual behaviour, between what they say they do and what actually happens (Gobo 2008). This is especially the case, argues Heller (2008), in multilingual research, since norms and values related to multilingualism greatly affect participants' attitudes.

Although they might not be strictly objective, these emic accounts do provide useful insights into the participants' beliefs and ideologies on multilingualism and code-switching in the workplace and how they make sense of and attribute meaning to multilingual practices, which may explain the reasons behind the choices they make (Heller 2008). However, in light of these characteristics Sealey (2007) rightfully warns against too great a reliance on participants' accounts. As Heritage (1984: 236) argues, participants' perspectives cannot be treated "as an appropriate substitute for the observation of actual behaviour" and they should therefore be juxtaposed with a researcher's perspective. Researchers observe things that participants take for granted and they bring the analytical expertise to the interpretive process (Sealey 2007). As with participants, a researcher's observation of actual behaviour is never truly objective or neutral, as the researcher's preconceived ideas will to some extent influence the interpretative process. Therefore, linguistic ethnographers aim to achieve a convergence between emic and etic perspectives (Maybin and Tusting 2011). In this research I aimed for a convergence through a sustained period of participant observation, as discussed in section 3.3.3, and through eliciting participants' perspectives through interviews, as discussed in 3.3.4. Participants' observations of events and processes were used to inform my understanding and observations of events. I then examined both the coherences and contradictions between the participants' perspectives and my own in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the communicative practices observed.

3.2.3 Contextualised nature of speech events

A third key characteristic of ethnography is that it fully acknowledges that communicative events are inherently contextualised. Rampton *et al.* (2004:2) describe the relationship between situated language use and its context as follows:

Linguistic ethnography generally holds that to a considerable degree, language and the social world are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity.

This is one of the reasons why I believe that combining linguistic ethnography and a sociolinguistics of globalisation can be so valuable in a study of language use. Linguistic ethnography aims to describe communicative events in relation to the multiple layers of context in which these event are embedded and a sociolinguistics of

globalisation provides the conceptual tools, such as the notion of sociolinguistic scales (see 2.4), that allow for a contextual analysis. Both approaches emphasise the interconnectedness between various contextual scales and the importance of thorough understanding of the contextualised nature of local communicative practices. In order to achieve this understanding it is essential to create a detailed and rich description of the various dimensions of multilingual business discourse through triangulation and thick description (Blommaert 2007). A thick description entails observing and collecting everything that might prove significant, constructing detailed pictures of events, participants and settings (Lillis 2008). One way to achieve this is through a triangulation of various types of data. Triangulation is a process that brings multiple perspectives and different lines of enquiry together, creating a rich and detailed data set (Monaghan 2007). Besides allowing the researcher to describe events in all their complexities, triangulation also validates a researcher's findings. The patterns that emerge from the fieldnotes might be contradicted or complicated by other types of data and this drives the researcher to explore the possible reasons for any discrepancies and to come to a convergence between the various perspectives. If an emic perspective is confirmed by other sources of data, then this strengthens the validity of the findings.

In this research, triangulation was achieved by the collection of three types of data: participant observation recorded through fieldnotes, audio recordings and interviews. Each of these data sets has its own set of properties that allow for a thick description. Participant observation results in a researcher's or etic account of the observed events, whereas an emic perspective emerges from the interviews. The audio recordings and collected documents and artefacts supplement these with verbatim records of the observed interactions. This section has discussed some of the theoretical underpinnings of this study. The following sections describe in further detail how these ideas and principles were applied during the data collection and analysis.

3.3 Data Collection

The data for this research was collected in two small businesses located in Amsterdam and Grahamstown. The fieldwork took place five days a week for four consecutive weeks in each business, resulting in a total of forty days of data collection. The

physical and organisational structure of the two research sites and the participants that took part in this study are characterised in 3.3.1. The sections thereafter each describe one of the sets of data collection tools I employed. Each set of tools yielded a different type of data and thus offered a different perspective on the linguistic dynamics in both businesses. Section 3.3.2 describes how I entered the field and how I fulfilled my role as a participant observer. Section 3.3.3 discusses the recordings I made and the documents that were collected and, lastly, section 3.3.4 describes the interviews I undertook.

3.3.1 Research sites and participants

This study examines the language practices in two research sites, which offered the opportunity to explore multilingual language practices in a comparative manner, bringing about meaning and understanding in a way that an examination of one research site could not have provided (see 1.3 for further justification for the decision to investigate two sites). The two research sites are McBicycle, a bicycle rental and repair shop in Amsterdam, and Warrick's, a car tyre and exhaust service station in Grahamstown. I selected the sites according to the following criteria:

- The presence and frequent use of various languages within the workplaces.
- The presence of customer interactions (as oppose to interactions solely between employees).
- Falling under the category of SMME (small, medium and micro-enterprises) (DTI 2008).
- The willingness to grant me access for four weeks.

The names of the businesses and the participants have all been replaced with pseudonyms and their information is treated with the utmost confidentiality. I obtained informed consent from all employees at the beginning of the fieldwork (see Appendix B for the consent form). It was not practical to get the customers to sign a consent form as this would have obstructed the flow of businesses and thus would not have been appreciated by the managers. Instead, I put up a notice at the counter stating that recordings were being made for a research project and added my contact details so that customers could address any further queries to me if they so desired. Section 3.3.1.1 and 3.3.1.2 characterise the two businesses by providing a general

profile and a description of the physical organisation of the sites. Section 3.3.1.3 then introduces the participants and their role in the organisational structure.

3.3.1.1 Warrick's, Grahamstown

Warrick's, established in 1971, is a family business run by a father (manager) and son (owner). In 2004 they bought out a similar business at their current location on the edge of Grahamstown's city centre and took over part of their staff. Their core business is repairing and selling tyres. Their additional services include a small battery centre, the repair of shock absorbers and exhausts and the general servicing of cars. They provide these services from 07:30 to 17:00 on weekdays and from 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays. There is no official language policy, but the owner informs me that the business language is English. On my first visit to Warrick's I spoke to Jenny, who works in the office and is the sister of the owner. She assured me that Warrick's would be a disappointing research site since English is the only language ever spoken. Yet, as soon as I left the office I overheard an employee greeting a customer in Xhosa and from the outside area came a loud discussion between two employees in Afrikaans (fieldnotes 26/07/2012). More details on the various languages spoken in Warrick's are provided in the description of the participants in 3.3.1.3. Jenny's misconception of the languages spoken in her workplace remains unchallenged as she hardly ever leaves the office. But it was also an early indicator of the anglocentric focus of Warrick's top management, which became more apparent during the analysis reported on in Chapter 4.

Section 2.4 discussed Goffman's (1959) notion of front- and backstage which is also a useful distinction to apply to the physical space of a particular business. Henceforth, when I mention the frontstage of either Warrick's or McBicycle in this thesis I refer to the main physical area in which customer-employee interactions take place and likewise the backstage of the shops refers to the areas characterised by colleague-to- colleague interactions. Figure 3.1 shows the physical structure of Warrick's. Customers enter the shop either on foot or by car in area (A), where they are welcomed by employees at the counter, indicated in Figure 3.1 as (B). This is the core of Warrick's frontstage.

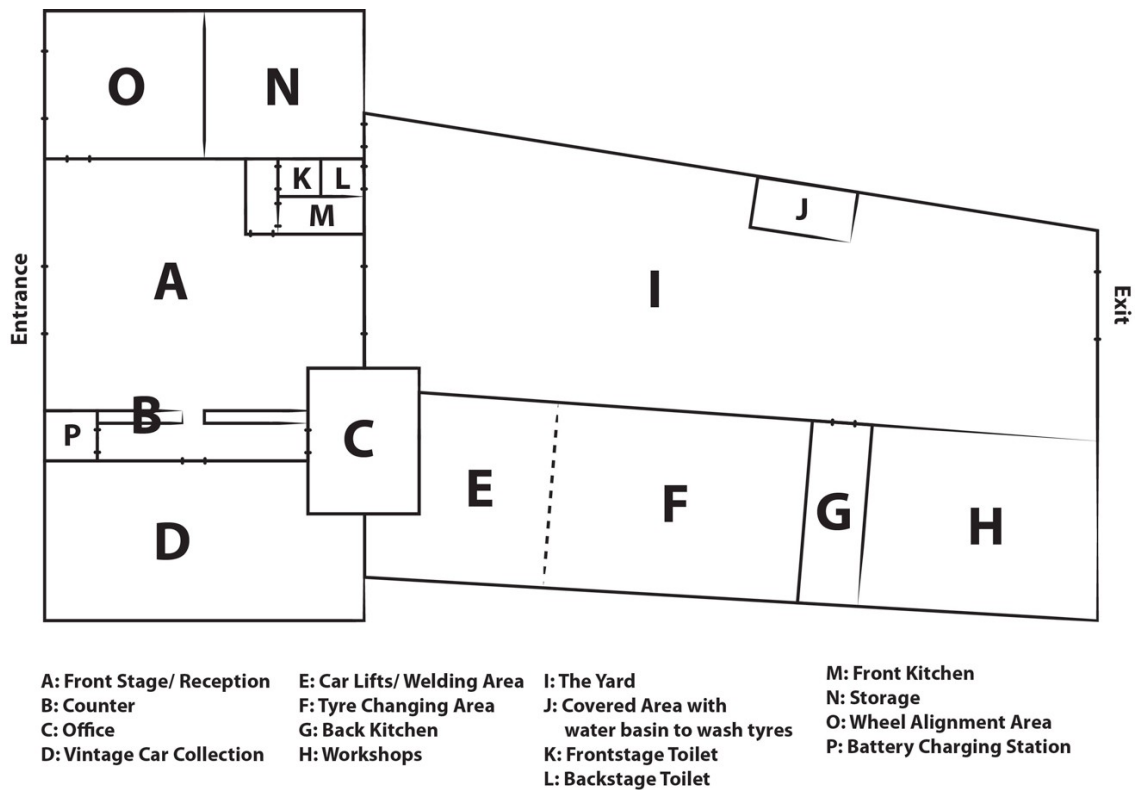


Figure 3.1: Layout of Warrick's

Area (I) is the outside yard (see Figure 3.2), which can function as both a front- and a backstage. There is a one-way flow of cars arriving in area (A) and exiting through the outside area (I), from entrance to exit is approximately 150 meters. When required, customers drive their car into the yard area (I) where the vehicle will be taken into the workshop (area H) or one of the seven so-called bases (area F). When customers enter area (I) and interact with employees they transform this space into a frontstage. The backstage of the business consists of the remaining areas, such as the workshop (H), the office (C), the wheel alignment area (O) and the kitchens (M and G).



Figure 3.2 Warrick's yard seen from the frontstage/reception area

Besides showing significant differences and similarities in the language use between the front- and backstage, the analysis in the following chapter also describes the interesting situations that arose when backstage talk was performed in the frontstage, e.g. when the owner reprimands a subordinate in front of a group of customers. The division between the frontstage and backstage in Warrick's is more clearly defined by physical boundaries than in McBicycle, where the two stages come together in one open space as described in the following section.

3.3.1.2 McBicycle, Amsterdam

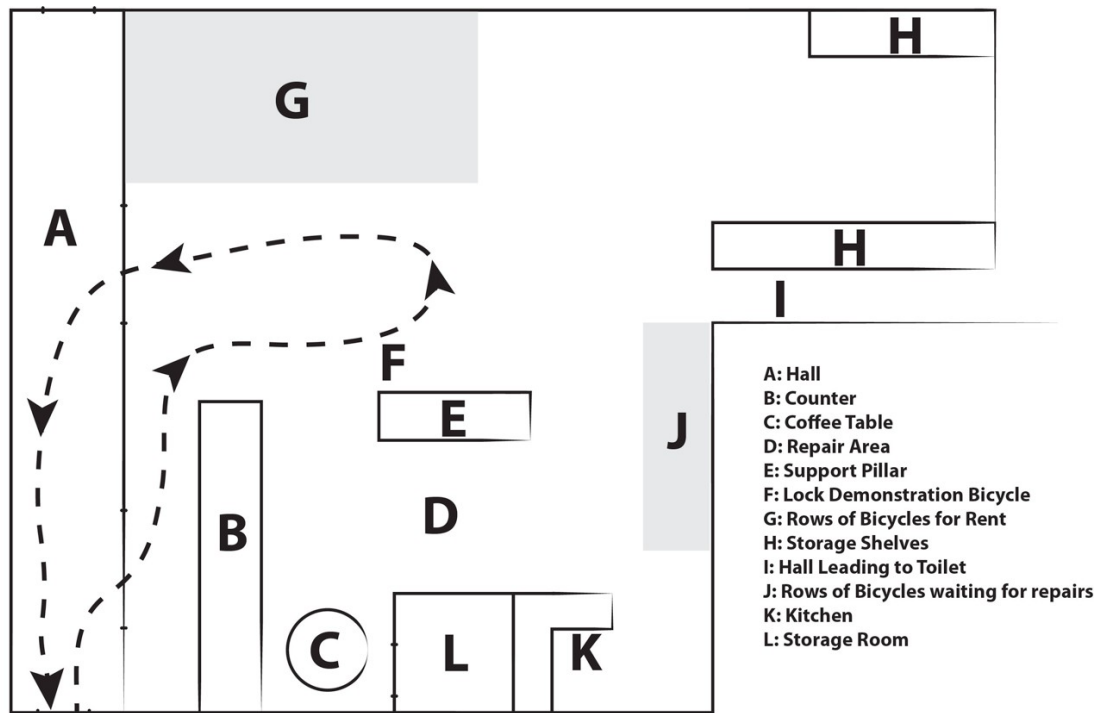
McBicycle was established in 1988 and has since expanded into four branches. They sell and rent out their own brand of bicycles and provide a repair service for any type of bicycle. The branch that forms the research site for this study is located in the centre of the city, next to Amsterdam Central Station. They are open seven days a week from 09:00 to 17:45.

The official business language is Dutch and the top management prefers employees to interact in Dutch. However, not all employees speak Dutch or speak Dutch well enough and so the lingua franca amongst employees is English. This linguistic duality is also reflected in the linguistic landscape. The linguistic landscape of a given area is formed by the language representations on shop windows, signs, posters and notices amongst others (Gorter 2006). In McBicycle both English and Dutch are used in signs, posters and labels, as illustrated in Figure 3.3 below.



Figure 3.3: Container for bicycle parts and other equipment. On the bottom middle container, amidst the English labels, is written in Dutch *haakje lamp* (English: *hook for light*).

One salient difference with the layout in McBicycle and the layout in Warrick's is that that all the main activities and interactions in McBicycle take place in one open space (approximately 20 by 25 metres in size). The division between the front- and backstage is thus fuzzy and not as clearly marked by physical boundaries as in Warrick's. Nonetheless, the space is still divided into two distinct regions as shown in Figure 3.4. The dotted line represents a customer's route through the shop.



Entrance/Exit

Figure 3.4: Layout of McBicycle

A customer who wants to rent a bicycle would first arrive at the counter (B). This counter forms the centre of the frontstage as most of the customer interactions take place in this area. After a rental contract is made and signed, the customer proceeds towards a small children's bicycle (F) where the employee demonstrates how the locks work. Then the customer receives his or her bicycle from area G and exits via the shop's hallway. Other customers would follow part of this trajectory, e.g. some customers make an enquiry at the counter and then leave and some might hand over their bicycle for a repair service to an employee at the end of the counter. Customer-employee interactions occur along this route and these areas therefore form the frontstage of the business. The backstage of the business, as indicated in Figure 3.5, consists of the area behind the counter, which is off-limits for customers. Colleague-to-colleague interactions take place around the coffee table (C), the repair area (D) (see Figure 3.6) and to a lesser extent the kitchen (K).

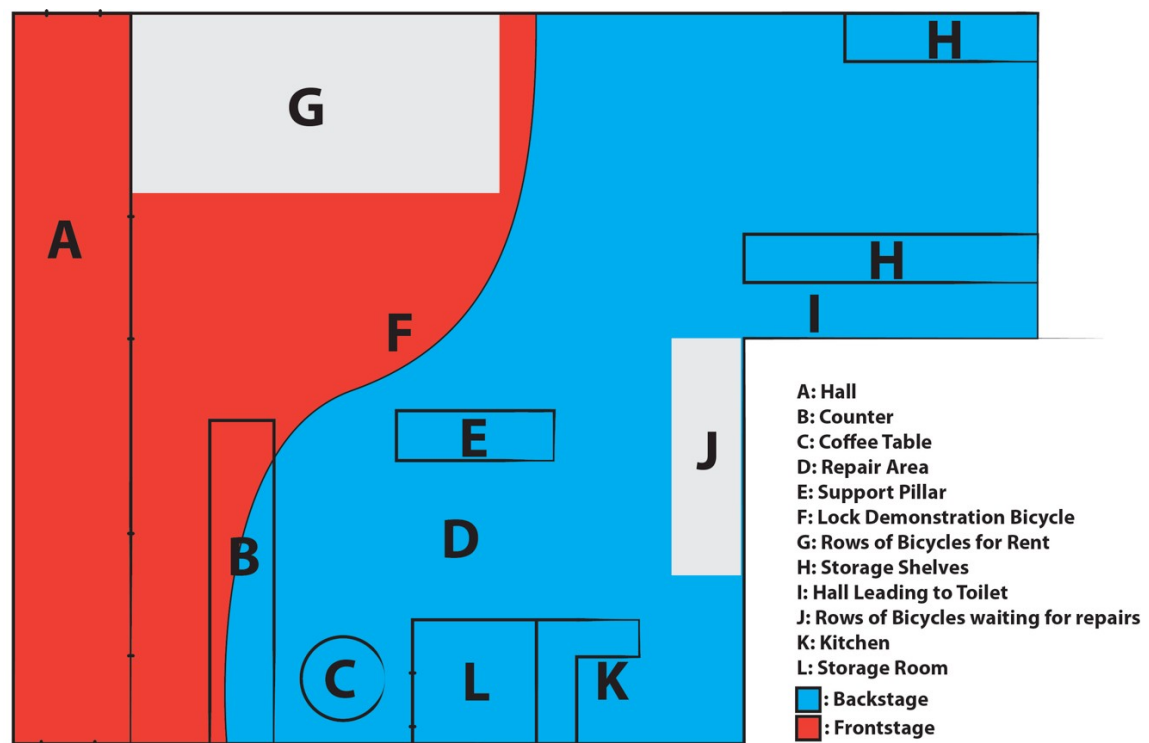


Figure 3.5: Front- and backstage in McBicycle

A consequence of the fuzzy boundary between the front- and backstage is that interactions in both regions occur in close proximity. This occasionally creates interesting situations when people in the frontstage overhear backstage talk, as illustrated in Extract (1).

Extract 1 McBicycle (fieldnotes 30 October 2012)

I am helping a customer at the counter (a Dutch woman in her mid-thirties), while Mikael is talking to two colleagues in the repair area (see Figure 3.6). Suddenly the customer and I overhear Mikael telling a gruesome story about some man who tried to commit suicide by swallowing his own testicles. The customer and I look at each other and start laughing awkwardly. That interaction was definitely not intended for the frontstage.



Figure 3.6 The repair area and the counter in McBicycle

The two businesses described above form the stage for the participants' interactions. The participants in this study are all the individuals that engage in interactions within the physical boundaries of McBicycle and Warrick's. This includes both the employees of McBicycle and Warrick's and their customers, as described in the following section.

3.3.1.3 Participants

The participants in this research are the individuals that interact within the physical boundaries of the research sites described above. This includes both the employees of the two businesses and their customers. The individual employees are introduced in participant profiles (see for example 4.2.1.1) that are inserted in the analysis preceding the data extract in which the employee participates. In this section I describe their role-relationships within the general structures of the two businesses and briefly describe their customer bases.

Both workplaces form distinct communities of practice, i.e. they fulfil the three criteria set out by Wenger (1998): in both there is regular mutual engagement and a joint enterprise and both workplaces have developed distinct ways of speaking that forms a shared repertoire, as the analysis in Chapter 4 demonstrates. One major difference between the two communities of practice is their conceptualisation of role-expectations and organisational power structures. McBicycle is characterised by a relatively flat power structure in which the manager, Marcel, works together with his nine employees. Their role-relationships are negotiable and although five employees are mainly involved in repairing and servicing bicycles and four employees mainly work with the customers, their role-expectations are dynamic and employees carry out different tasks when necessary. Their first languages are Dutch (5 employees), English and American English (3 employees), Swedish/Spanish (1 employee) and Italian (1 employee) and each work an average of four to five days a week.

By contrast, Warrick's is characterised by a rigid, hierarchical power structure with centralised power that resides with the owner, Gareth. Gareth fulfils the role of strong, paternalistic leader. Gareth's eighteen employees all have fixed role-expectations and their role-relationships are to a large extent pre-determined. They work in separate units, as shown in Figure 3.7, each with one employee as the head of the unit. Eight of the employees are first language Xhosa speakers, five speak English as a first language (including Gareth), two are first language Afrikaans speakers and one speaks Afrikaans and Tswana as his first languages. They all work an average of five to six days a week.

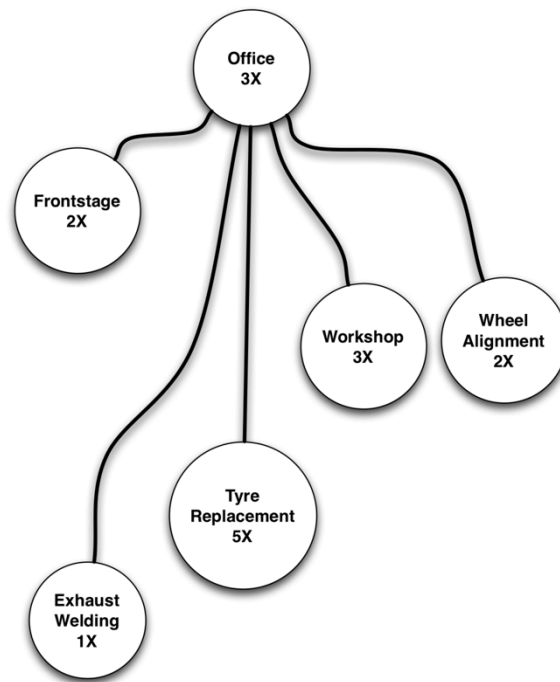


Figure 3.7 Warrick's organisational structure according to activities

During my fieldwork at Warrick's, I observed that various auxiliary communities of practice seemed to have established themselves within the general community of practice consisting of all Warrick's employees. I identified five auxiliary communities that developed in particular areas, as shown in Figure 3.8, and centre on particular activities. For instance, a large community of practice is formed by the members of the tyre-changing unit, whose activities surround the tyre-changing machine (area F in Figure 3.8), and to a lesser extent the tyre cleaning basin (area J) and the backstage kitchen (area G). They have developed their own norms and ways of speaking. For instance, in order to become a member one needs to possess a good competence in Xhosa. Their core members are the five members of the tyre-changing unit, with the head of this unit as their centre of authority. They also have three peripheral members who are also Xhosa first language speakers and share the same lunch places but are involved in different types of work. Two of them are also peripheral members of other, smaller, communities of practice. The wheel alignment crew, area O, consists of two members, one Afrikaans and one Xhosa speaker, who have developed and established a routine that is based on shared knowledge and therefore requires a minimum amount of interaction.

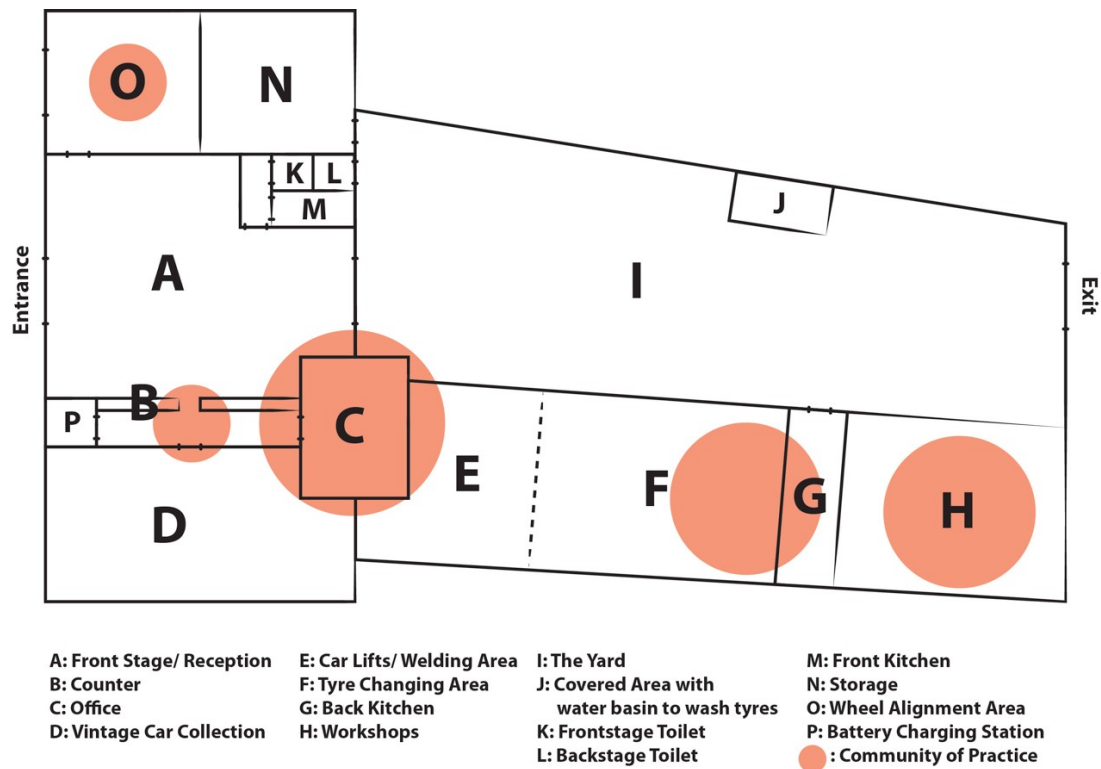


Figure 3.8: Various communities of practice within Warrick's

Another small community of practice has formed in the workshop (area H), with one Xhosa-speaking and one Afrikaans-speaking mechanic and the English-speaking head of the unit. A fourth small community has developed between the two frontstage employees in area B, who deal with customers and share a lot of experiences and inside jokes which each other. One of them is a white man whose first language is English and the other is a Coloured man who speaks Afrikaans and Tswana as his first languages.⁵ These auxiliary communities of practice all adhere to the norms that emanate from the office. The owner, his sister and their father, who are all first language English speakers, form a secluded community of practice in the office. This is where the power resides and their community forms the core of the general community of practice at Warrick's.

In the McBicycle community of practice there are no distinctive auxiliary communities of practice and this difference between the two groups is probably the

⁵ The term *Coloured* is a problematic apartheid-era term that denotes people of mixed descent (usually European, African, Malay and Khoisan). Unfortunately, it still recognised and used in the public domain and South African legislation. I use the term here because Denzel's race plays a role in a business were staff is divided among racial lines.

result of the differences in the organisational structure. The roles in McBicycle are less pre-determined and fixed than in Warrick's. For example, a McBicycle employee who usually repairs bicycles will attend to customers during busy times. By contrast, Warrick's employees will typically not divert from their assigned tasks, which initiates the development of auxiliary communities of practice centred on specific activities. This is also reinforced by the physical structure of the two businesses. Warrick's employees all have their assigned tasks, which they carry out in physically separated spaces. By contrast, employees in McBicycle work together in much closer proximity, which facilitates the development of one joint community of practice.

The focus of this research lies on the language use of the employees, yet a large amount of their interactional practices involve customers. I will therefore briefly describe the types of customers in Warrick's and McBicycle. Warrick's customers are predominantly first language English, Afrikaans or Xhosa speakers. Most of them are regular customers from all over Grahamstown (e.g. students, academics, municipality workers) or from nearby farms. The few new customers that come to Warrick's are often non-locals, for example people driving through Grahamstown or parents dropping their children off at one of the many boarding schools or Rhodes University in Grahamstown.

The customer base of McBicycle is very broad and diverse. Some of them are Amsterdam locals interested in repair services, others are Dutch people who come to visit the city for one day and are looking to rent a bicycle, but most of the customers are tourists from varied places. These are the customer nationalities that I encountered in McBicycle during four weeks of fieldwork:

American	French	Lebanese	Scottish
Argentinian	German	Mexican	South African
Australian	Greek	Norwegian	Spanish
Brazilian	Guadeloupian	New Zealander	Swedish
British	Israeli	Polish	Taiwanese
Canadian	Italian	Portuguese	Czech
Chinese	Japanese	Russian	

McBicycle's customers thus form a culturally and linguistically diverse group. They are also mostly first-time customers, which means that customer-employee relationships are different than at Warrick's where employees create a longer lasting relationship with their regular customers.

To summarise, the employees of the two businesses work within different power structures. Warrick's is characterised by a hierarchical structure led by a paternalistic owner, whereas McBicycle's power structure is more flat. The role-expectations and role-relationships in Warrick's are more pre-determined and fixed than in McBicycle where the roles are more loosely defined and negotiable. These fixed role-expectations have led to the development of auxiliary communities of practices within Warrick's, whereas these do not exist in McBicycle. Furthermore, the customers at Warrick's are mostly regulars who speak English, Afrikaans or Xhosa. McBicycle's customers are more linguistically diverse and most of them are first-time customers.

3.3.2 Participant observation

In this section I first describe the process of field entry in both research sites and how I fulfilled my role as legitimate peripheral participant in both communities of practice (3.3.2.1). I then describe how I recorded the observations I made in this role (3.3.2.2).

3.3.2.1 Field entry and legitimate peripheral participation

Since the researcher is the primary research instrument in ethnographic research it is important to understand the role and identities that I took on in both workplaces. In both cases, I started off as a peripheral participant. See 3.2.2 for a description of Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of legitimate peripheral participation. As I developed a greater understanding of the linguistic habits and norms in the workplaces, I was able to move closer to the core of their communities of practice. However, as a researcher who was only at the sites for a limited time I remained a peripheral member in both communities of practice. The extent to which I was able to move toward the centre also differed in both sites due to the differences in the two businesses' role-expectations. This section describes my field entry and how I conducted myself in the role of participant observer in both workplaces.

Gaining permission for my research from McBicycle was facilitated by personal contacts. My cousin, a McBicycle employee at that time, made the first enquiries and put me into contact with the owner of McBicycle and later with the manager of McBicycle Central Station. This personal contact was helpful with establishing initial contact with the business, but played no further role as my cousin worked at another location and the participants were unaware of the family connection. I arrived in Amsterdam a day before commencing with the fieldwork, so my first meeting in person with the manager was on my first day in the field. To ensure that everything went smoothly and to gain as much as I could from that initial contact, I had created a runsheet for that initial day (included in Appendix C) that detailed the activities I had planned (e.g. meeting the manager), the equipment I needed for that interaction (e.g. recorder and batteries) and the purpose or type of information I wanted to obtain (e.g. creating goodwill and obtaining permission to hand out consent forms). The manager introduced me to the first two employees that arrived that day and provided no further details except that I was a student who would join them for four weeks for a research project. I took it upon myself to introduce myself to the other participants. I told them I was studying in South Africa, that I was interested in languages and language use and that I would spend four weeks with them.

One thing that facilitated my field entry in McBicycle was that I have many things in common with many of the employees. For instance, we were more or less of the same age, shared a similar socio-cultural background and shared two of the main languages (Dutch and English) spoken in the workplace. See 3.3.1 for a detailed description of the participants. The potential difficulty of being close to the community one is observing is that the researcher may not perceive the significance of everyday activities within that community (Lanza 2008). Herein lies the value of the comparative approach undertaken in this study as the everyday things I would not directly have noted, stood out and became meaningful during the analytical process in comparison with the day-to-day activities and routines in Warrick's. However, having things in common with the participants also had its advantages as it allows me to tap into my own intuitions and knowledge about the socio-cultural norms within the community (Saville-Troike 2003). This introspection, combined with other source of data, can lead to a rich understanding and interpretation of the linguistic dynamics of the workplace.

The employees taught me the ropes from day one. They showed me how to help customers and create rental agreements and from the second day I worked side-by-side with them on occasions, creating rental contracts and finding the right size bicycles for customers. Becoming part of the day-to-day activities was thus a smooth process. Employees generally treated me as a new employee, although they also showed that they were aware that I was not in fact an employee. For example, they would thank me for helping out during a rush or point out that I really did not have to stay until closing time on a very quiet day since I was not even being paid for it. It was a very comfortable role in which employees quickly started sharing anecdotes with me that provided plenty of interesting details about the types of customer they deal with and the relationship they maintained with their superiors.

Warrick's employees were also very open and shared plenty of information with me but my role-relationship with them was very different. I had deliberately positioned myself as a foreign student in an attempt not to directly affiliate myself with a particular South African demographic group. I arrived as an outsider that came to observe and do research and that was the role I maintained in for the duration of my fieldwork. In my first couple of days at Warrick's, I tried to look for small activities that I could do, but as soon as I lifted a bucket, three employees would come running saying that I did not have to do that. I tried to explain that I would rather keep busy than stand around for four weeks and asked the head of the tyre unit for a job I could do, but he simply replied that there were no 'ladies' jobs' at Warrick's. On day three I decided to help by sweeping the workshop and since that day I swept the workshop a couple of times a day and helped collecting loose nuts and bolts to put them in their designated containers and feel less idle. The sweeping soon earned me the nickname *Nomtshayelo* (Xhosa for *the sweeper*). These peripheral activities did allow me to observe the employees' daily activities in close proximity and as a result it was easier to take part in daily routines such as teatime and lunch breaks. Yet, also in these activities I remained a distinctive outsider. During the breaks the participants from the tyre-changing unit would speak Xhosa to each other and only switched to English when they were addressing me directly. Some of the participants noticed my interest in languages and Xhosa in particular and started to teach me words, as illustrated in

Extract (2). The Xhosa words are put in italics, followed by the English translation in brackets. The last line also contains the Afrikaans affirmative *ja*, meaning *yes*.

Extract 2 Warrick's (fieldnotes 02 November 2012)

It is teatime and we are sitting with six men in the kitchen.

Melityala offers me a piece of bread and I say 'thank you'.

Melityala: 'No *sisi* (sister), no thank you'.

I reply: 'oh *enkosi*' (thank you).

Melityala: '*ja sisi*' (yes sister).

Everyone laughs.

This turned out to be a great conversation starter and also got me involved in other daily activities as participants would go about their jobs and point objects out to me and tell me the Xhosa word for that object. Some participants would test me and ask me the following day what the word for a certain object was. Because I had positioned myself as a foreigner some participants thought it helpful to tell me about South Africa and South African culture. This was very helpful because once participants started talking we moved from one topic to another and I learned a great deal about the organisation and the participants through these interactions. In the frontstage there were also not many things I could do. I was not allowed, for example, to perform any transactional processes. Thus, my frontstage activities were mostly limited to clearing up the counter and talking to customers.

To conclude, I gathered a great deal of useful data in both workplaces, but achieved this in different ways. In McBicycle I was much more of an insider, not only as a member of the McBicycle community, but also as an Amsterdam local. As such, I was more involved in core activities. By contrast, I remained a peripheral participant in Grahamstown, not only as a member of the Warrick's community of practice, but also as a member of the broader South African community. Here, my gender in all-male environment (except for the owner's sister who works in the office) played a big role, as well as my race and probably socio-economic class and linguistic repertoire. As a result, I kept myself involved through peripheral activities and gathered information in my role as curious outsider.

3.3.2.2 Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes served as a *material memory* (Blommaert and Dong 2010: 35) that documented my detailed observations of events, behaviours and physical settings. I observed interactions between colleagues as well as customer-employee interactions and made meticulous notes of the settings in which these interactions took place. I described the daily routines of the participants and compiled participant profiles in which I collected notes on behaviours and background information for each individual. Initially, my fieldnotes consisted of a very broad description of everything in my context. I described details that seemed insignificant at the time, but which had the potential to gain significance as the fieldwork continued and as more meaning became apparent. Goffman (1989) stresses the point that aspects of interactions and behaviours seem more peculiar on first encounter. As soon as the everyday rituals and actions become more familiar, it becomes more difficult to notice them. He observes

a freshness cycle when moving into the field. The first day you'll see more than you'll ever see again. And you'll see things that you won't see again. So the first day you should constantly take notes all the time (1989: 130).

When I became more familiar with the daily processes I was able to focus on patterns and situations that seemed most relevant to this research. To make my note taking more efficient I created a data entry table (attached as Appendix D) that allowed me to make quick notes on elementary information such as the time of an interaction, the participants involved, and the languages they spoke. This served as a supplement to the recordings I made and proved especially useful during busy times when lots of things happened at the same time. Beside the data entry table I made more meticulous notes about my observations and reflections. At the end of each day I typed out all my notes while the events of the day were still fresh in my memory and I could still make sense of my shorthand. There were also moments where I could reflect on some of the observations and write down some preliminary interpretations. Gobo (2008) notes that ethnographers often reformulate conversations and events in their own words, which does add useful dimensions to the description (Duranti 1997), but it does not provide an account of the exact terms and phrases used by participants, which is necessary when looking at participants' codes and repertoires. This is where recordings can play an important supplementary role.

3.3.3 Recordings

The second source of data used in this study includes audio recordings of naturally occurring interactions, photographs, documents and other artefacts collected during the eight weeks of fieldwork. This section briefly describes how I made these recordings and what was recorded during my fieldwork.

3.3.3.1 Audio recordings

Audio recordings were made because they can provide an accurate record of events and behaviours in the workplace (LeCompte and Schensul 1999). This is especially important when using linguistic ethnography since this entails using fine-grained linguistic tools of analysis that require an accurate recording of the interactions. Initially, I chose to make both audio and video recordings, but I abandoned the idea of video recordings for the following reasons. Firstly, the manager at McBicycle did not feel comfortable about it. Secondly, I had planned on putting the camera in one place to free up my hands to make notes and audio recordings. However, participants were very mobile and moving the camera would have been impractical. Thirdly, an often described problem with video recordings is that participants might find them intrusive (Blommaert and Dong 2010). Audio recorders are seen as less intrusive than video recorders, but I acknowledge that even audio recorders might be considered intrusive. However, recording devices have become rather familiar items in our contemporary society and participants in this study seemed quickly accustomed to the presence of my recorder. In the end, the audio recordings together with elaborate fieldnotes to contextualise the event provided a very adequate recording of the interactions. The types of interactions that I recorded included face-to-face interactions between employees and customers, and between employees.

The strength of audiovisual data is that they provide an accurate account of interactions and that they provide the evidence and examples to validate interpretations (Blommaert and Dong 2010). However, as Saville-Troike (2008) notes, audio recordings have a limited scope and focus and she therefore stresses that they should be considered in a more holistic context. This research triangulates the audio recordings with observational fieldnotes and data obtained through interviews.

These types of data add dimensions of description that cannot be captured on an audio recording, such as the location of the interaction, the physical distance between the participants and the hand gestures or facial expressions used by participants (Duranti 1997). In addition to audio recordings, I chose to record the setting through photographs and I collected documents to help create a thick description of the workplace environment and structure, as described in the following section.

3.3.3.2 Documents and artefacts

Photographs were made to capture interesting moments and to illustrate the spatial organization of the workplace, including instructional posters and notices. The photographs can help to recall features, details and participant behaviour at a later stage that might prove crucial for interpretation (Blommaert and Dong 2010). Besides audiovisual recordings, I have also collected some documents and other artefacts from the research sites. Most importantly, I collected any text or object that was referred to in the course of an interaction. If it was not possible to take the original text or object I made sure to either photocopy it or make a picture of it. The artefacts I collected include notes and announcements on notice boards, flyers, brochures, posters and the format of a bicycle rental agreement. I basically collected anything that provided contextual information, which allowed for a better understanding and a more detailed description of the business settings.

3.3.4 Interviews

Besides recordings, I undertook interviews to supplement the data obtained through participant observation. The interviews were used to gather factual information and elicit participants' perspectives on the observed linguistic practices. The factual information gathered from the interviews was used to create detailed profiles of the participants and the organizations. The values and attitudes expressed by the participants were used to inform and validate the researcher's interpretation of events and processes (Gobo 2008). As discussed in 3.2.1, these participants' perspectives need to be considered in relation to an informed understanding of the observed practices by the researcher. As Lillis (2008) argues, data from interviews can provide insights on participants' perspectives but should not be treated as completely transparent. They should also be seen as carrying indexical meaning (i.e. indexing

norms and values about, for example, themselves, the business, being Dutch or multilingual) and as a relational activity (i.e. what is shared depends on the setting and the relationship we have established).

To gather contextual information and elicit participants' perspectives, two types of interviews were undertaken. Throughout the fieldwork I engaged in informal and unplanned conversations with all participants and in the last week of fieldwork in each site I conducted semi-structured interviews with three participants from each business. The informal and unplanned conversations often took place immediately after an interaction. I would ask the participants what happened in the event and enquire after their motivations for certain linguistic choice they made. These types of conversations proved a valuable source of information as participants would not only offer me their perspective on the interactions I observed, which I used to inform my own observations, but they also gave me unexpected information on a range of topics. For example, I learned in one of these talks in McBicycle about the existence of information sheets in 32 languages that are kept in a drawer under the counter, some of which are shown in Figure 3.9 One employee, Saar, explained to me that these are meant for customers who do not speak English or Dutch, although I never saw one of the participants making use of them. They generally make use of the linguistic resources at hand in their repertoires or their customers' repertoires.

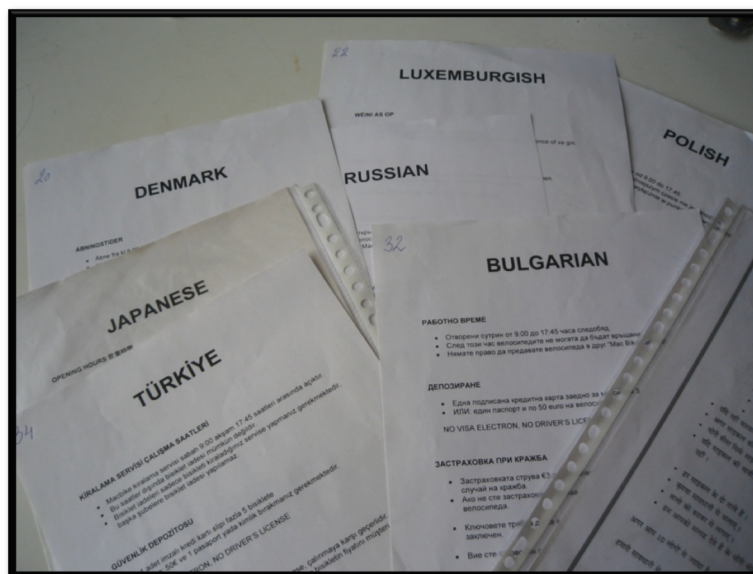


Figure 3.9: Some of the customer information sheets in 32 languages

Besides providing information, I found the informal talks very useful in building relationships with the participants. Especially in the initial stages of the fieldwork they proved to be useful ‘ice-breaking’ strategies (Gobo 2008).

Establishing a cooperative relationship was also essential for the second type of interview, since these semi-structured interviews can pose a formal and slightly threatening communicative event (Blommaert and Dong 2010). For this reason, I had planned the semi-structured interviews to occur in the last week of the fieldwork in each business. Each interview consisted of some general questions to elicit background information, for example:

- Which languages do you speak?
- Where did you learn them?
- How long have you been working here?
- What is your job description?
- Which languages do you encounter at work?
- Which language do you mostly use at work?
- Do you know which languages your colleagues speak?
- Who are your worst customers?

Then there was also a section with more personalised questions, which sought information about certain situations or habits that I observed. The following examples come from an interview with a (non-Dutch) McBicycle employee.

- I understand that top management prefers employees to speak Dutch in the workplace. Do you understand the reasons behind this and what is your opinion about it? Do you think it is important/valuable to speak Dutch in this workplace?
- Do you think you can speak of a specific language that is typical for McBicycle? Do you remember any difficulties learning or understanding these specific words? Do you have any examples?
- I noticed that Marcel (manager) addresses you in English but he speaks Dutch to Alexis. Do you have any idea why?

I recorded the interviews so that there was no need for me to take many notes in an attempt to make the interview more like a natural conversation as opposed to a more conventional question-answer interview. Yet despite the relationship I had built up with the participants during those four weeks and despite efforts to create a less formal setting, some participants still seemed to experience the interviews as slightly threatening communicative events. For example, one participant asked before we began whether I thought he would be able to answer my questions and the following day he asked me if I had listened to the recordings and if the interview was at all helpful. The participants in McBicycle seemed less threatened by the situation, but still I think it would have been more useful if I had proposed a (prolonged) informal conversation instead of labelling it as an interview.

Nevertheless, the interviews provided useful insights and especially combined with the informal conversations they provided factual information as well as participants' perspectives, which helped to clarify aspects of the observed language practices that might not have been clear by observation alone (Gobo 2008).

3.4 Data analysis

Eight weeks of data collection yielded a vast amount of observational notes, audiovisual recordings, interview transcripts and other types of data, which as Blommaert and Dong (2010) describe, not only reflect the chaos of fieldwork, but of reality itself. The aim of the analysis is to interpret this chaos in a systematic and rigorous way. Thus, the first step in my analysis was to organise the data and choose which sections were to be selected and prepared for further analysis.

The observed and recorded interactions can be subdivided into various kinds of *speech events*, which form the basic unit of analysis in this research. A speech event can consist of a single speech act, but often contains several (Hymes 1972). A speech event can be defined by a set of components (e.g. a communicative purpose, a set of participants, and a setting) that stays the same throughout the event (Saville-Troike 2003). A major change in one of these components indicates a change in speech event (Hymes 1972). The boundaries of customer interactions were easy to identify,

since formal and brief interactions often consisted of routine opening and closing sequences. For example, a customer being greeted as he or she enters the shop indicates the beginning of an event, and the end is signalled by the customer's exit. The speech event boundaries between colleagues were slightly fuzzier, but were marked by either a long silence or a change in participants or bodily positions.

The next step was to summarise each interaction or speech event by listening to the recordings and connecting them to my fieldnotes. Some of the recordings did not capture the entire event, as participants would sometimes walk away from the recorder or the surrounding noise would make them inaudible. In these cases the fieldnotes played an essential role in order to analyse the entire speech event. These summaries form part of the descriptive stage of the analysis and are described in more detail in section 3.4.1. I then used these summaries as a starting point for drawing links between events, as described in section 3.4.2. After uncovering some of the initial patterns in the data, I chose to transcribe the relevant recordings using the following transcription conventions:

CAPITAL	Loud voice
(.)	Brief pause
(0.5s)	Timed pause in seconds
((laughs))	Non-linguistic features
[unclear]	Researcher's best guess at unclear utterance
Colorado:	Colon indicates an extension of the preceding sound
?	Rising tone
... = ... = ...	Overlapping speech
<i>Italics</i>	English translation
<u>Underlined</u>	Code-switch

Transcribing these recordings had a dual purpose. Firstly, I subjected them to a fine-grained analysis, which either confirmed and enriched my initial understanding or led me to re-evaluate and adjust my original interpretation. Secondly, in a later stage of the analysis the transcriptions provided evidence to illustrate and support my arguments. After organising and preparing my data I analysed them in three stages as described in the following three sections.

The analysis itself is structured according to Fairclough's (2001) three stages of analysis: description, interpretation and explanation.⁶ The first stage involves the identification and description of the formal properties of the speech event under scrutiny. In the interpretation stage these formal properties are linked to the micro-context of the interaction, and in the stage of explanation, relationships are drawn between the situated language practices and the macro-context of small business discourse in South Africa and the Netherlands. During these three stages new patterns and perspectives emerge from analysis, which made it worthwhile to return to the data and go through the process again. The analysis is thus a cyclical and iterative process that continues until data saturation is achieved and new information no longer adds to the understanding of the speech events (Croker 2009). Fairclough's analytical stages coincide with the research questions that I introduced in section 1.2:

- (1) What repertoires do participants draw on in multilingual business interaction?
- (2) What rapport management strategies do they employ?
- (3) How does the interplay between repertoires and strategies affect the dynamics of the interaction?
- (4) How do these interactions reproduce and transform power relations in business discourse?

These research questions functioned as a guide through each step of the analysis. Questions (1) and (2) are descriptive questions, which are further discussed in 3.4.1. Question (3) is an interpretative question that connects the insights from (1) and (2) to the micro-context in which the interactions took place. The interpretative stage is discussed in 3.4.2. The final stage of explanation centres around question (4), which takes the insights gained from the former questions and aims to provide an explanatory account of how multilingual interactions in the workplace can affect power relations in business discourse. The approach to this stage is described in 3.4.3.

3.4.1 Description

The first step in describing a speech event is to give a general account of the

⁶ Fairclough's three stages of analysis are used as a methodological and not as an analytical approach in this study.

components that are likely to be most salient (Hymes 1967). The following components were included in my description (Saville-Troike 2003).

1. *Topic* of conversation.
2. *Purpose* or *function* (both the purpose of the event in general, e.g. negotiating a price, as well as the interactional goals of the participants, e.g. to establish a personal relationships).
3. *Setting* (the spatial organisation of the participants and the location of the event, e.g. front- or backstage, time of the day that it took place).
4. *Key* or *tone* (e.g. friendly, serious, aggressive, joking, exhortative, authoritative, rude).
5. *Participants* (includes individuals directly involved in the event, as well as overhearers, and describes observational aspects, e.g. spatial organisation of participants, as well as background information, e.g. sex, age, role-relationships).
6. *Message form* (the manner in which the message is communicated, e.g. which languages or varieties are used). This component is described in further detail in 3.4.1.1.
7. *Speech act sequence* (some sequences, such as greetings, are very rigid. Describing the act sequences can reveal meaningful recurring patterns).

Some of these components, such as *purpose* and *key*, are not always directly observable and are therefore best obtained through a combination of observations and participants' perspectives. Outlining these components provided a useful descriptive framework in which meaningful relations and patterns were later identified and interpreted (Saville-Troike 2003).

The next step of the description was to focus on the aspects that are central in this research: the linguistic repertoires of the participants and the rapport management strategies that they employed in their interactions. These correspond with the following research questions:

- (1) What repertoires do participants draw on in multilingual business interaction?
- (2) What rapport management strategies do they employ?

The participants' linguistic repertoires included the different languages that were spoken, the different regional and social varieties of one or more languages, and the different registers (Saville-Troike 2003). Distinguishing varieties and registers is not as straightforward as identifying various languages. Varieties (relating to who the speaker is in a regional and social sense) and registers (relating to the situational influence on language use) move and develop on a continuum (Coupland 2009). Individuals' speech can be characterised, for example, as very formal and technical or as more informal and less technical. Together, varieties and registers form the basis of a participant's speech style (Coupland 2009).

In order to describe these speech styles I identified various indicators of style in the speech events. An important stylistic dimension is the level of formality (Kotthoff 2007), which can be analysed in terms of the number of *modal verbs* (more modal verbs indicating a higher degree of formality), the degree of *slang* (slang indicating a more informal or casual style), the use of *personal pronouns* (absence of personal pronouns indicates a higher degree of formality) or the *mean length of utterance* (with longer utterances often indicating more formal speech). Other indicators of style are the level of directness (e.g. *passive* versus *active* constructions, the amount of *hedging*, the use of *implicatures*, which assume a certain degree of shared knowledge between the participants) and the level of complexity (e.g. the use of *technical vocabulary* which also assumes a certain degree of shared knowledge between the participants). In describing the participant's linguistic repertoires, special focus was given to shifts in code (e.g. from English to Xhosa) and style (e.g. from formal to informal) within the interaction. Describing these shifts, together with a close analysis of both the presence as well as the absence of linguistic features, contributes to the understanding of power and role relationships (Fairclough 2001), forming the foundation for the following stages of analysis.

Additionally, linguistic repertoires include a range of strategies that can be used to establish, maintain or challenge social relationships (Saville-Troike 2003). I employed Spencer-Oatey's (2010) Rapport Management Framework to describe the various strategies that participants use in negotiating interpersonal relationships. Saville-Troike (2003: 41-42) argues that the choice of a particular strategy provides a dynamic connection between a participant's linguistic code, their interactional goals

and the participant structure in a certain speech event. The process of identifying strategies in the interactions was guided by the examples found in the literature on rapport management in business discourse, as discussed in section 2.2.3.3.

Besides identifying the kind of rapport strategy, it was also important to identify the type of rapport orientation held by the speaker (e.g. rapport-enhancement, maintenance, neglect, or challenge, Spencer-Oatey 2000). To do this it was necessary to identify whether quality face, identity face, equity rights, or association rights were under threat in the interaction (see section 2.2.3 for a discussion of these notions). This provided a necessary preparatory step for the interpretation stage of the analysis, as it, for example, reveals instances in which participant's face or rights were threatened yet no strategy was employed to negotiate this possible threat.

3.4.2 Interpretation

The interpretative process already started during fieldwork where I took notes of any relations I observed between the communicative practices, as exemplified in the extract below.

Extract 3 McBicycle (fieldnotes 03 October 2012)

They constantly talk about language learning and languages. I initially thought that this might have been caused by my presence but it seems to be a salient and recurring theme. Probably because many of the employees moved to the Netherlands and they all share a similar experience of settling down in a foreign country, having to learn the language, the people etc. They continuously negotiate the preferred language, depending on who is working that day (which languages they have in common) and topics (fixing bicycles, anecdotes of customer interactions, social chitchat).

These initial reflections together with the notes from the descriptive stage formed the basis for the second stage of analysis. In this stage, drawing on insights from Politeness Theory and Rapport Management Framework, I explored how the formal features and the participants' choice of a certain code affected the dynamics of the interaction and the role-relationship between the participants. This stage ties together the repertoires, strategies and the situational context and relates to the following

research question:

- (3) How does the interplay between repertoires and strategies affect the dynamics of the interaction?

Saville-Troike (2003) shows how the choice of a certain code is influenced by the *setting* of the interaction and its *participants* (e.g. age, sex, status, goals of interaction). Besides these static categories, she argues that a choice is also influenced by the interactional developments and by the information that emerges during the interaction. The first step in this stage was thus to identify the structured relations between not only the formal features (Hymes 1967), but also between these features and the participants' choice of a certain code or strategy (Saville-Troike 2003). In other words, attention was paid to the relationships between various aspects of the interaction and to the patterns that emerged during this process. The next step was to unpack these patterns and to identify the significance of a code or style shift at a particular moment in the interaction, for example, by looking at the role a certain choice played in the participant's negotiation of face, identity, power and solidarity. As Saville-Troike (2003) notes, the aspects most directly visible are often not what is most relevant. It is therefore important to look at the interactions from different perspectives and to tie together the various types of data at this point, such as participants' perspectives and background information on the organisation and participants, in order to create a layered understanding of the significance of a particular choice. Patterns of language use also become meaningful when considering striking similarities and differences between the different sites and between different participants.

3.4.3 Explanation

Fairclough (2001) argues that established social structures shape and are shaped by transitory speech events. In the third stage of the analysis I attempt to explain this relationship between the situated discourse produced by the participants and the wider socio-cultural contexts of South Africa and the Netherlands. Central to the explanation stage is the following research question:

- (4) How do these interactions reproduce and transform power relations in business

discourse?

The objective of the explanatory stage, as Fairclough (2001) describes it, is to construct situated discourse as part of a social process. Drawing connections between the various levels of context allowed me to look at how power relationships function differently in the two societies. For example, the manner in which power relations are negotiated in interactions between employees seems to reinforce and adhere to the dominant power discourse within the context of the particular business structure as well their wider social contexts.

3.5 Conclusion

Bargiela-Chiappini *et al.* (2007) note that literature on multilingual business discourse has to a large extent relied on micro-analytical research focusing on single aspects. This study distinguishes itself from previous research in two distinctive ways. First, it offers a close linguistic analysis of naturally occurring talk as observed in two socioculturally distinct sites, offering a unique contrastive element to the study of multilingual and rapport management practices in small business discourse. Second, the complex and multi-layered nature of situated multilingual business discourse calls for a theoretically and methodologically eclectic approach (Harris and Bargiela-Chiappini 2003). This study draws together insightful elements of three emerging research traditions: linguistic ethnography, rapport management theory, and the sociolinguistics of globalisation and mobility. These three theoretical traditions all offer a unique perspective on the object of study and it is in conjunction that they provide a way to capture the dynamics of small business discourse shaped by contemporary processes of globalisation and mobility. In Chapter 4 I show how I take a critical perspective on these theoretical traditions and propose some improvements, warranted by my data, to strengthen their analytical use.

4. Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it discusses the use of multilingual repertoires and strategies in the management of interpersonal relations and power structures in the workplace. Secondly, it provides a critique of the Rapport Management Framework (Spencer-Oatey 2000b; 2008) and the notion of rapport orientations in particular as an approach to the study of small business discourse. To address problems identified during my analysis, I propose some theoretical developments to the framework.

Initially, I decided to structure my analysis according to the four rapport orientations described by Spencer-Oatey (2000b; 2008) and discussed in 2.2.3. Rapport strategies are a means for speakers to accomplish their personal and interactional goals and these goals are reflected in the speakers' rapport orientation. Therefore, the rapport orientations seemed a constructive way of approaching my analysis. However, a large subset of my data appeared to resist interpretation in terms of rapport orientations. This chapter argues that Spencer-Oatey's (2000b) Rapport Management Framework is too rigid to accommodate more complex rapport management practices in small business discourse and proposes changes that are warranted by the data from the two small businesses I study. The argument consists of three main parts. Part one discusses cases in which the Rapport Management Framework adequately describes what is happening in interaction (section 4.2). Part two turns to more complex interactions and identifies four main problems that emerged during the analysis (section 4.3). Part three addresses these problems by proposing developments that make the Rapport Management Framework more suitable for the analysis of complex and dynamic rapport management in small business discourse, resulting in an Enhanced Rapport Management Framework (section 4.4). Each argument in sections 4.3 and 4.4 is supported and illustrated by data from the two small businesses. Some events allow for more than one possible interpretation, but the interpretation is always argued for and supported by a triangulation of data. Lastly, the arguments are drawn together and concluded in section 4.5.

4.2 Rapport management orientations

Spencer-Oatey describes four types of rapport orientations that speakers may hold towards each other. A rapport-enhancement orientation expresses a “desire to strengthen or enhance harmonious relations” (2000b: 29). A rapport-maintenance orientation entails the wish to “maintain or protect a harmonious relation” (2000b: 29). A rapport-challenge orientation entails the intention to “challenge or impair harmonious relations” (2000b: 30). A rapport-neglect orientation signals a “lack of concern or interest in the quality of relations” (2000b: 29). This section explores the strategies that were employed by participants from both Grahamstown and Amsterdam to fulfil these four orientations. Each orientation is discussed separately, yet a particular strategy can serve various orientations. For instance, a strategy such as humour is not inherently intended to enhance rapport. Studies by Holmes (2000a) and Planken (2002) show that humour can be used to enhance rapport as well as to contest or challenge interpersonal relationships.

4.2.1 Rapport enhancement orientation

A rapport enhancement orientation is reflected in the use of rapport enhancing strategies in situations where there is no threat to face or rights and the strategies are solely intended to improve the relationship. Speakers can employ several different strategies in a combined effort to enhance a harmonious relationship. For instance, an enquiry after someone’s health (an example of small talk) may be followed by a joke or the sharing of an anecdote in a joint effort to build rapport. This section discusses three salient enhancement strategies that emerged in both data sets as prominent strategies: the use of humour, small talk and language accommodation.

4.2.1.1 Humour

Holmes and Marra’s (2002) study on humour in New Zealand workplaces shows that workplaces develop distinct styles of humour and that looking at these styles can provide insights into the distinct characteristics of those particular communities of practice. Becoming part of a community thus involves learning what humour is appropriate and in which contexts it is used. In Warrick’s and McBicycle, humour is a significant part of the shared repertoires in each business and it provides an important strategy for employees to use in managing rapport.

Two frequently observed types of humour in both Grahamstown and Amsterdam were teasing and humour at the expense of a third party. Both types appeared to fulfil various functions that correspond with the findings of other studies on humour in the workplace. I will briefly discuss these functions before turning to the data and illustrating how humour was employed as a rapport-enhancing tool in Warrick's and McBicycle. Holmes (2000a) and Planken (2002) found that one of the most prominent functions of humour is the ability to create and reinforce in- and out-group boundaries. Humour presupposes shared knowledge between the interlocutors and can thereby create a feeling of solidarity (Planken 2002). At the same time humour can function as a distancing device, creating an out-group by excluding people who do not possess the contextual information needed to understand the joke. Humour can thus function as a tool to influence rapport both positively and negatively rapport. A related function of workplace humour is the ability to challenge or reinforce power relations (Holmes 2000a; Rogerson-Revell 2007). Holmes suggests that humour can be used to reduce inequalities in status, but also to emphasise power imbalances or license challenges to existing power structures. A third function, mentioned by Holmes and Marra (2002) and Rogerson-Revell (2007), is that it provides a way to express frustration and tension.

Teasing is described by Alberts (1992) as a potentially insulting or aggressive utterance that provides or relies on cues that the comment is not to be taken seriously and is intended to be playful. Teasing can be used to generate a sense of solidarity by creating an in-group and a sense of belonging amongst the interlocutors. Any form of teasing is potentially rapport threatening if the hearer interprets the teasing as being serious. Therefore, a speaker needs to be confident in the relationship with the hearer and that confidence signals a degree of control and power over the interaction by the speaker (Schnurr and Chan 2011).

Participant profile 4.1 – Gareth (Warrick’s)

Gareth is the white, English (L1)-speaking, middle-aged owner of Warrick’s. He speaks some Afrikaans, which he learned at school, and some Xhosa, which he picked up at work and from his father. Gareth is a busy man who often speaks in a forceful and direct manner.

Participant profile 4.2 – Richard (Warrick’s)

Richard works in the frontstage of the shop for 5-6 days a week. He is a 39-year-old white, English (L1)-speaking man. Besides English he speaks a little Afrikaans and a few words of Xhosa. He worked for the previous owners and, since 2004, for the current owners. He sees himself as middle management, but in practice his influence does not reach beyond the frontstage of the business (fieldnotes 15/11/2012).

The following extract illustrates how teasing can be used to maintain rapport by encoding a potentially threatening act in an ambiguous message, as well as to enhance rapport by creating a feeling of belonging and solidarity. A middle-aged, white woman walks in to buy a new battery for her car. Richard greets her by her first name, which shows a level of informality and familiarity that may be intended to enhance the customer’s association rights (i.e. one’s entitlement to association that is in accordance with the type of relationship between the interlocutors). Gareth steps out of his office and greets her. He then makes his way to her car and starts teasing the customer about the state of the car’s shock absorbers.

Extract 4 Warrick’s (06 November 2012)

- | | | |
|---|-----------|---|
| 1 | Gareth: | ((Laughs)) When are we going to do your shocks? |
| 2 | | ((pushes on the front of the car)) |
| 3 | | Look Rich, look at this ((laughs)) |
| 4 | Richard: | ((Laughs)) |
| 5 | Customer: | ((Smiles)) |
| 6 | Gareth: | But when are we going to do your shocks? |
| 7 | Customer: | When I’ve paid my last invoice ((smiles)) |

The customer and her car are known to Gareth and Richard and the state of her shock absorbers has clearly been previously established. Gareth's *we* in line (1) can either be seen as an exclusive *we* that refers to Gareth and Richard as service providers or it could be an inclusive *we* that includes the customer. In the latter case it functions as an in-group marker, which has the potential of enhancing the social identity face (i.e. the value one claims for oneself in terms of group or social roles) of both the customer and Richard. In line (3), Richard is more explicitly included in the interaction and he supports the humour with a laugh. Gareth then stops laughing, which indicates a style-shift that is supported by the use of *but* to begin his next, more matter-of-fact utterance: *But when are we going to do your shocks?* This illustrates how rapport management can indirectly serve a transactional goal. The teasing serves an interpersonal purpose but also functions as a means to market Warrick's' services. Gareth is not explicitly ordering her to have her shock absorbers fixed, since this would potentially threaten her equity rights. Instead he formulates a question that suggests that it is about time she elicits their services. The use of *when* implies Gareth's presumption that Warrick's is going to repair her shock absorbers and that it is only a matter of time before the customer engages their services to do this.

The customer responds in line 7 with a polite, indirect refusal of Gareth's suggestion to have her shock absorbers fixed. Her reply is not a direct answer to Gareth's suggestion and therefore flouts Grice's maxim of relevance, leaving the listeners to infer that they will need money as an exchange for the service and she does not have the money as is evident by the unpaid invoice. This is a form of self-deprecating humour with which she is taking back some control over the event. Gareth is telling her to do something and she lets him know that she will be the one paying for it and that the decisions will therefore be in her hands. The event comes to an end when Gareth is called away and Richard and the customer return to a more formal, business-related style, discussing a new battery. To summarise, Gareth attempts to enhance rapport levels with his customer by teasing her, while simultaneously marketing his services. The customer's response strategy to Gareth's request is to decline his suggestion in a joking matter. The level of indirectness in her response signals a rapport maintenance orientation, but it also asserts a certain degree of control over the interaction.

Participant profile 4.3 – Marcel (McBicycle)

Marcel started at McBicycle as a manager two years ago. He is in his forties and his repertoire includes Dutch (L1), English, German, a bit of French and Spanish and, he tells me proudly, Leids (a Dutch dialect with a working class association). He was born in Leiden and has been living in Amsterdam for the past twenty years.

Participant profile 4.4 – Mikael (McBicycle)

Mikael (41) has been working at McBicycle for two years. He does repair work as well as customer interactions. He was born in Sweden but moved to Malaga, Spain, when he was two years old. Spanish is his first language, which he speaks with a Castilian (primary), Andalusian or Chilean (secondary) accent. He only fully acquired Swedish at age 12, when he moved back to Sweden. His other languages are English, a bit of German (learned from a German girlfriend), and a few words of Dutch. (At the time of my fieldwork he had just started a new Dutch course).

Participant profile 4.5 – Jan (McBicycle)

Jan is a 25-year-old Dutch student who has been working on and off for five years at McBicycle as a part-timer. He only works Saturdays during high season and mostly helps out in the frontstage with customers. He speaks Dutch (L1), English (learned at school), has receptive proficiency in French and German (also learned at school) and knows specific bicycle-related words in Spanish.

The following extract shows how teasing is used as a solidarity strategy between co-workers. In this event, manager Marcel and employee Jan are teasing their colleague Mikael. It is late in the afternoon and Marcel and Jan are sitting at the coffee table, listening to Mikael who is busy repairing a bicycle. Mikael is complaining about the behaviour of a colleague. The colleague, not present at the time of the interaction, had left that morning during a busy time. Mikael's annoyance about this has been a recurring topic of conversation throughout the day. Marcel and Jan have been listening patiently to Mikael's rant, which ends with Mikael's reassurance that he will now drop the issue. The speech in the following extract occurs in English.

Extract 5 McBicycle (22 September 2012)

- 1 Mikael: Glad I'm forty-one and I grew up
2 Marcel: FINALLY ((laughs))
3 Jan: Yes finally = ((laughs)) =
4 Mikael: = FINALLY? = ((grins)) Assholes
((Laughter))

The interaction ends when customers walk in and Mikael, still chuckling, attends to them. In line (1) Mikael expresses that he is grateful that he is old enough to deal with this situation in a mature way. Marcel has been listening to Mikael's frustration and replies to Mikael's statement with a teasing *finally*, suggesting that it is about time that Mikael grows up. Alternatively, Marcel's *finally* can also be interpreted as a contradiction to line (1) in which Mikael intended to say that the growing up occurred before he turned 41, whereas Marcel's seems to suggest that it took at least 41 years for Mikael to grow up. Jan, in his turn, supports Marcel's humour by echoing Marcel's words in line (3). Marcel's teasing in line (2) is perhaps also a covert suggestion that Mikael should stop complaining. According to Schnurr and Chan (2011) teasing can be used to express a potentially rapport threatening act in an ambiguous way that leaves the listener with the challenge of figuring out how seriously the teasing was intended. The ambiguity of the message and the fact that it comes from his superior form a considerable threat to Mikael's quality face (i.e. the desire to be positively evaluated in terms of one's personal qualities) and possibly his social identity face since the joke is made in front of his colleague Jan. This potential threat makes teasing a risky endeavour and the speaker, Marcel, must be confident enough that Mikael will not take offence. The teasing therefore displays a certain degree of control by Marcel over the situation. Showing that one has enough confidence in the strength of one's relationship with another to tease that person can also minimise the distance between participants. Although there is no way of knowing for certain whether Mikael interpreted Marcel's comment as serious or not, Mikael's laughter seems to support the teasing and suggests that he has not construed it as a serious threat. Similarly, Marcel does not appear to be offended by Mikael's *assholes* in line (4). Mikael is teasing his superior, which poses a considerable threat to Marcel's quality face. This event illustrates that teasing is a rather accepted form of

humour in McBicycle, which is not considered face or rights threatening by the participants, but in fact is used as a solidarity strategy to enhance their harmonious relationships. The extract also illustrates a type of humour that appeared characteristic of Marcel's management style. Marcel often used rapport enhancement strategies such as humour and small talk to minimise the power distance between him and his subordinates, creating a more horizontal power structure in McBicycle. For more examples of this, see 4.2.1.2.

Besides teasing, solidarity can also be strengthened by making fun of a third party and this was something frequently observed in Warrick's. Humour at the expense of another creates an in-group of those who share the joke, while excluding and creating distance from the third party. Teasing also involves making fun of someone, but whereas teasing is usually intended to enhance rapport with the subject of the joke, humour at the expense of a third party is not intended to enhance rapport with the third party but instead aims to enhance the relationship with the interlocutor sharing the joke.

Participant profile 4.6 – Neil (Warrick's)

Neil (referred to by the staff as Mr Bloch) is the manager and previous owner of Warrick's. Nowadays he deals mainly with the *call-outs* (i.e. servicing trucks that breakdown on the road) and is therefore often on the road. Neil is fluent in three languages. English is his first language, Afrikaans he learned at school and Xhosa he learned while growing up on a farm. One employee made an interesting remark when I asked him if he ever speaks Xhosa with Neil. He corrected me by saying that Neil does not speak *real* Xhosa, i.e. the variety that he and the other L1 Xhosa employees speak, but *farm* Xhosa.

Participant profile 4.7 – Denzel (Warrick's)

Denzel is a 38-year-old man, who works six days a week in the frontstage and is an energetic and hard-working employee. He speaks fluent Afrikaans (L1), Tswana (L1), Xhosa and English. His multilingual repertoire was the main reason he was hired for service encounters in the frontstage of the shop. Jenny, the owner's sister, wrongly assumes that customers only ever speak English in the shop and that Denzel's multilingual competence is therefore no real asset to the business.

The following extract shows how Richard (see participant profile 4.2) expresses his frustration about Warrick's manager Neil, while bonding and creating a sense of solidarity with his colleague Denzel. The interaction took place at the end of the day in the frontstage at the counter. Next to the entrance is a stack of tyres that have been brought in earlier that day.

Extract 6 Warrick's (fieldnotes 13 November 2012)

Neil asks Richard why the tyres came with a different courier than normal. Richard replies that they come from Continental. Neil wants to know why. Gareth ordered them because they were the last of that size. When Neil leaves, Richard turns to Denzel and me and points first at the phone. "Why is this phone black?" Then pointing at the counter: "why does it have a cord? Why is this made of wood?" Denzel laughs.

Denzel and Richard carry the joke on through the remainder of the afternoon, taking turns asking each other irrelevant questions, such as "Why is that pen lying there?" Although Neil passed the shop on to his son, he still likes to know what is going on, perhaps as a way of trying to retain control, and this results in him asking many questions. This seems to have threatened rapport with Richard, damaging Richard's interactional dissociation rights by overwhelming him with questions, and perhaps Richard's autonomy rights as well by exercising too much control. Richard chooses to express or relieve this tension by joking about it with his colleague. This, in turn, may threaten Neil's social identity face by not upholding Neil's role as manager, though Neil is not present to take offence. Simultaneously, Richard is enhancing a sense of

solidarity and collegiality with Denzel by sharing the joke and his feelings of frustration with him, thus attending to Denzel's affective interactional rights.

Thus, humour was employed in both businesses as a rapport-enhancing strategy that emphasises solidarity between the interlocutors. In addition, extract (4) illustrates how a rapport management strategy can also indirectly serve a transactional goal. Humour is a versatile strategy that serves both enhancement and challenging orientations. This section focuses on the rapport enhancing abilities of this tool, whereas 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 explore the rapport challenging side of humour. The following section discusses the use of another prominent enhancement strategy: small talk.

4.2.1.2 Small talk

This section shows how small talk is discursively achieved between customer and employees as well as between colleagues. In this study small talk is understood as any talk that is not directly related to core business interactions. This is broader than the general definition of small talk as safe topics in everyday communication (e.g. Brown and Levinson 1978; Lave 1975) and includes, similar to Planken's (2002) definition, genre-specific, business-related topics. These include, for example, workplace anecdotes, but exclude any talk related to selling, renting, scheduling and repairing. Observed small talk topics in both businesses include conventional topics such as the weather, greetings, current affairs, recent shared activities and enquiries after someone's well-being. There are also more site-specific topics. For instance, Mr Bloch's vintage car collection, adjacent to the shop, is a regular conversation starter in Warrick's (fieldnotes 01/11/2012).

In McBicycle, the recurring small talk topics in both customer and colleague interactions were languages, accents and language learning. This is not surprising in such a highly multilingual environment. Language plays a central role in the life of most participants both inside and outside of work. Many McBicycle employees come from abroad and share the same experience in learning a new language and culture. At the time of my fieldwork, one participant had just started a Dutch course and his colleagues often enquired about his progress, which then evolved into a discussion of funny Dutch words or strange and difficult grammatical rules. For example, Mikael

and Alexis talked about a superior's choice only to address the English-speaking employees in Dutch and Mikael and Saar spoke about the semantic differences between the Swedish *läckert* and the Dutch *lekker* (English: *nice*) (recordings 29/09/2012).

Within a business setting, small talk can fulfil two main functions (see Figure 4.1). It can be used as a transitional device to change smoothly from interpersonal to task-related talk and it can be used to manage interpersonal relationships (Coupland 2000; Holmes 2000b). As a transitional device, small talk marks the boundaries between different types of talk and different work activities (Holmes 2000b). Greetings and closings demarcate the beginning and ending of an interaction and are thus clear manifestations of small talk (Collier 2010). Holmes (2000b) observes that social talk and core business talk are not distinct categories and that they can best be conceptualised in terms of a continuum with phatic communication on one end and task-related talk on the other.

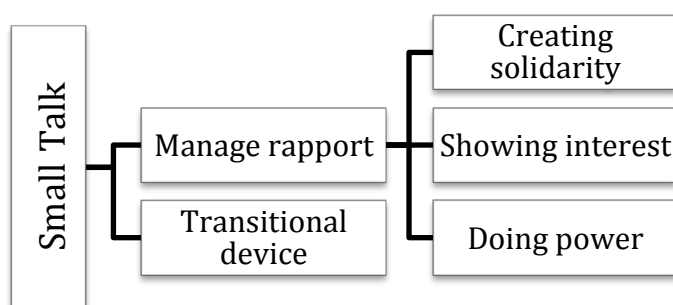


Figure 4.1: Functions of small talk within business discourse

Small talk is also an important rapport management tool in business discourse. The overarching aim of small talk is to attend to people's interactional association rights (i.e. their entitlement to an appropriate amount of social conversational interaction). In a business context, this relational work can indirectly serve transactional goals by creating cooperation with customers and by creating a pleasant working environment (Coupland 2009). More specifically, small talk can help to enhance rapport by creating solidarity between the speaker and the hearer. This can be achieved by emphasising common ground and seeking agreement (Planken 2002) and by sharing experiences and interests, which potentially enhances social cohesion (Collier 2010).

Besides emphasising solidarity, people can also show interest in the interlocutor through small talk, which enhances the hearer's quality face by creating a feeling of appreciation. Lastly, small talk can be used to manage power relationships in the workplace by delaying or withholding such talk (Coupland 2000; Holmes and Stubbe 2003). In this case, small talk or the lack of small talk serves as a rapport challenging strategy and the manner in which this is achieved in both Warrick's and McBicycle is further discussed in 4.2.3. The following extracts are divided into interactions between employees and customers, which are discussed first, and interactions amongst colleagues.

In both businesses small talk was mainly used in between activities, for example when orders are processed, copies are made or contracts are printed. Small talk functioned in these instances as a time-filler to prevent awkward silences but these moments also presented ideal opportunities to manage rapport with customers. The nature of the small talk differed between the two shops. Since many of the Warrick's customers are regulars their small talk was much more personal than in McBicycle where there is often no pre-established relationship with the customer and small talk is therefore more formulaic. The following extract shows how Marcel (see participant profile 4.3, p.65) engages in some small talk with two young American women who have been travelling around Europe. It is a quiet day so there is time to engage in small talk at some length. The extract shows the beginning and ending of the small talk exchange. The interaction takes place at the counter. The customers have chosen which type of bicycle they want to rent and Marcel is making a copy of one of their ID cards.

Extract 7 McBicycle (09 September 2012)

- | | | |
|---|------------|--|
| 1 | Marcel: | ((looks at ID card)) From Colorado:? |
| 2 | Customer1: | Yes |
| 3 | Marcel: | First time in Holland? |
| 4 | Customer1: | Yes |
| 5 | Marcel: | Yes? <u>Okee</u> (0.5s) Are you excited? |
| 6 | Customer1: | Yes it's gonna be very fun |
| 7 | Marcel: | ((Laughs)) <u>Ja goed zo</u> (<i>Yes good</i>)
How long have you been here? |
| 8 | Customer1: | Ehm just a day we came in (0.5s) = yesterday = morning |

- 9 Marcel: = oh okee =
 ((Marcel asks them how long they are staying. They explain that they are on a tour and tell him where they have been and where they are going))
- 10 Marcel: Oh okee Paris?
- 11 Customer1: No: it's well we know that we should but
- 12 Marcel: Of course you should go to Paris
- 13 Customer1: ((Laughs))
- 14 Customer2: Next time
- 15 Customer1: Ya now we just have to come back
- 16 Marcel: Ja ja okee (*yes yes okay*) (0.5s) then take Paris and Madrid
- 17 Customer1: = yes = ya
- 18 Customer2: = ya =
- 19 Marcel: Those are my favourite cities. London is fantastic as well but eh even kijken hoor (*let's see*) ((looks at ID card)) you are Campbell eh even zien (*let's see*) Campbell and you want handbrakes hé (*hey*)?
- 20 Customer2: Yes ((inaudible)) pedal brakes
- 21 Marcel: Okay do you know how it works? There is nothing for your hands hey?

The interaction is organised in a simple and formulaic pattern that consists of simple *initiate-satisfy pairs* (Edmondson and House 1981). Marcel exemplifies various strategies here. First, he initiates these small talk pairs with questions, such as in line (3), where the subject-drop in the question *First time in Holland?* signals an informal and colloquial tone. In line (5) he seems to encourage the customers to give more elaborate responses than their *yes* in line (4) and Customer 1 responds to this with a full sentence in line (6), which almost seems to be appraised by Marcel's *yes good* in line (7). Other examples of Marcel asking questions can be found in lines (7) and (10). These questions show an interest in the interlocutor and are intended to enhance the customer's quality face. Secondly, the use of personal pronouns such as *you* in lines (5) and (7) also signals interest in the interlocutor and thus also attends to her quality face. Thirdly, Marcel seeks agreement with the customer by repeating her words, as shown in lines (5) and (12). The deontic modal *should* indicates a directive, which has the potential to impose on someone and thus threaten their equity rights. Yet, in this case it reinforces the customer's position expressed in line (11) and thus is

a sign of agreement and solidarity. By reinforcing her position and agreeing with her, Marcel attends to her affective association rights (i.e. the right to share an appropriate amount of opinions and interests). Lastly, Marcel provides many backchannel cues, such as *okee* (5), *ja goed zo* (7), *oh okee* (9 and 10), *ja ja okee* (16), which shows an active listenership and supports and motivates the interlocutor's turns. By listening and being cooperative and supportive, Marcel attends to the customers' interactional association rights (i.e. the right to receive an appropriate amount of interaction and not to be ignored). Interestingly, all of these listener's cues are in Dutch and especially *ja goed zo* in line (7) is a marked discourse marker as the customers do not speak Dutch. This may either signal Marcel's very dynamic use of his multilingual repertoire (see also the following section) or it may be a display of his Dutch identity, which is something that was observed more often. For instance, he greeted an English speaking couple with: "Hallo! Fietsje huren?" (English: *Want to rent a bike?*). The customers remained silent and Marcel continued: "Ja (English: *yes*) come on we're in Holland. Fietsje huren?" (Recording 09/10/2012).

To summarise, Marcel displays various strategies that attend to the customers' quality face by showing interest and listening as well as their interactional association rights by showing agreement and building solidarity. In addition, the interaction shows how a participant can use small talk both as a rapport-enhancement strategy and as a transitional device that helps to steer the conversation from a transactional to social mode and back. While Marcel is making copies he takes the opportunity to initiate small talk, thus switching to a social mode of talking, and towards the end of the interaction he smoothly directs the conversation back towards himself. His last question is in line (10) and then he uses the deontic modal *should* in line (12), indicating a directive. In line (19) he expresses his opinion and thereby smoothly transitions from an *other-orientedness*, indicated by the use of the personal pronoun *you* in line (5) and (7) and the questions, to a *self-orientedness* (Planken 2002), signalled by the possessive determiner *my* in line (19). So he first steers the conversation from the customer towards himself to draw attention to the upcoming change in topic and then by using another marked instance of Dutch, in line (19), he switches from the small talk back to the transactional task at hand. The code-switching in this sentence functions as a topic marker and the discourse particle *hoor* (English: *well*) is used to draw attention to this switch. He seeks confirmation for the

customer's request. He mistakenly assumes they want handbrakes and the customer corrects this in line (20). The last line could be interpreted as reflecting a rapport maintenance orientation. Marcel wants to confirm that they know how to use pedal brakes⁷. This questions their ability and thus forms a potential threat to the customers' quality face. Marcel mitigates this potential threat by opting for questions instead of directly asserting that they might not know how to use pedal brakes.

In contrast with McBicycle, employees at Warrick's know many of their customers and their small talk is often more personalised, as illustrated in the following extract. The recording begins when Denzel (see participant profile 4.7) and a middle-aged white customer arrive at the counter. While Denzel is making a quote, the customer initiates small talk, which is picked up and carried on by Gareth (see participant profile 4.1), who has been standing behind the counter. The interaction is largely in Afrikaans with some switches to English.

Extract 8 Warrick's (27 November 2012)

- | | | |
|----|-----------|---|
| 1 | Denzel: | ((Cites customer's licence plate and writes it down)) |
| 2 | Customer: | ((Inaudible)) |
| 3 | Denzel: | ((Chuckles)) |
| 4 | Customer: | So altesaam is dit?
<i>How much is that all together?</i> |
| 5 | Denzel: | [OK ek] kyk vir jou
<i>OK I'll check for you</i>
(1.5s) |
| 6 | Customer: | Sarie het Sondag 'n baba gehad
<i>Sarie had a baby on Sunday</i> |
| 7 | Denzel: | Nè izzit? <u>Boytjie</u> , meisie?
<i>Is that so? Boy, girl?</i> |
| 8 | Customer: | Mannetjie
<i>Little man</i> |
| 9 | Denzel: | Oh = ((inaudible)) = |
| 10 | Gareth: | = Nou nou is hy = baie grys |

⁷ Many bicycles in the Netherlands have pedal brakes. Many customers opt for pedal brakes because it is the cheaper option. However, not all tourists are familiar with this type of brake, which can cause dangerous traffic situations and McBicycle employees thus make a habit of enquiring about the customers' familiarity with this system.

Now he is very grey

- 11 Customer: ((Laughs))
- 12 Gareth: Nou gaan hy meer grys word ((inaudible)) kaalkop [maak]
Now he will get more grey ((inaudible)) make him bald
- 13 Customer: ((Laughs)) Dis reg (.) dis nie die moeite werd
That's right, it's not worth it
- 14 Gareth: Sê jy, ja dit [sê jy] nou ja (1s) wag tot hy sestien is (0.5s)
Say you, yes that's what you say now, wait till he's sixteen
dan ((inaudible))
then ((inaudible))
- 15 Customer: Maar as hy sestien is dan bring hy vriendinne huis toe
But when he's sixteen then he will bring girlfriends home
- 16 Gareth: Ja izzit? Maar dan is maar dan is jy veels te oud
Yes is it? But then but then you'll be way too old
- 17 Customer: Ja dis reg ((laughs))
Yes that's right

The conversation ends when Gareth walks over to another customer who just walked in. Denzel is in the meantime busy cashing up with another customer. Once he finishes that, he turns back to the first customer and they continue talking about the quote in Afrikaans.

The conversation starts with Denzel turning to the quote and in line (6) the customer grabs that opportunity to announce that Sarie had her baby. The use of her first name indicates familiarity between the interlocutors. Denzel replies in line (7) with the colloquial South African *nè*, which functions as a tag question, and *izzit* (“is it?”, i.e. “really?”). Both words function as (South African) in-group markers and thus attend the customer’s social identity face. Denzel also shows interest and attends to the customer’s quality face by asking if it is a boy or a girl. His use of *boytjie* also includes two codes: the English *boy* and the Afrikaans diminutive *-tjie* and signals an informal code. In line (10) Gareth, who has been standing behind the counter, joins the conversation in Afrikaans by teasing the customer. He is referring to the customer in the third person as he is also addressing the bystanders. Teasing, as discussed in 4.2.1.1, signals solidarity by emphasising a shared sense of humour. The customer supports Gareth’s contribution with laughter. Gareth employs several other strategies

in this extract that all reinforce the established harmonious relationship between him and the customer (i.e. attending to the customer's social identity face). He engages in the small talk, he teases the customer, he does this all in the customer's (and Denzel's) first language and, lastly, he uses the South African discourse, and thus in-group, marker *izzit*. He then leaves without formally rounding off the interaction, but this too seems to reiterate that their relationship is good enough and does not require a high level of formality. This enhancing of harmonious relationships with customers plays a central role in the rapport management efforts in Warrick's. This emphasis on customer relations becomes more apparent in sections 4.3.3 and 4.3.4. It is also interesting to see that Denzel withdraws from the small talk when Gareth joins in. He turns to the quote he was making and eventually turns to another customer, leaving the rapport management to his boss. Thus, this extract exemplifies the personalised nature of customer small talk in Warrick's. It shows how the familiarity between customers and employees leads to other resources, such as in-group markers and shared knowledge, which can be used in small talk to maintain and reinforce good relationships. This level of familiarity is typically also found in small talk between colleagues.

Similar to customer interactions, small talk functioned as a time-filling device in interactions amongst colleagues. Small talk was most frequently observed during tea, lunch and smoke breaks and whilst doing repair work together. Holmes (2000b: 38) mentions that the extent to which small talk is encouraged or obligatory is a "distinguishing feature of different organisational cultures". She notes that the first encounter of the day is often considered "an obligatory site of small talk" (2000b: 43). In Warrick's, however, top management typically do not greet their subordinates when they arrive at work or at least I noticed a salient lack of interaction upon their arrival. This can be seen as a distinguishing feature of Warrick's workplace culture in which role-relationships are clearly defined in a hierarchical power structure. All the more marked is the following extract that shows one of the few observed interactions between Ruth and any employee that is not her direct family member.

The event takes place behind the counter near the entrance to the office. Ruth steps out of the office and enquires after Denzel's (see participant profile 4.7) time off. The short remainder of the exchange is inaudible due to the arrival of a customer who asks

me if I could fix the strange rattle in her car.

Participant profile 4.8 – Ruth (Warrick’s)

Ruth is the talkative, English-speaking mother of the owner, Gareth. Although not an official employee, Ruth comes in almost daily to have a cup of tea or to fuss around in the office. The office is her domain.

Extract 9 Warrick’s (05 November 2012)

- 1 Ruth: Did you have a nice holiday?
- 2 Denzel: Well I was painting
- 3 Ruth: Oh that’s a shit holiday

Ruth’s enquiry is based on their shared knowledge that Denzel took some days off. Ruth is showing an interest and attends to Denzel’s quality face by acknowledging him and his interactional association rights by providing conversational small talk. The discourse marker *well*, in line (2), introduces a reason why Denzel did not have a nice holiday. The statement is not a direct answer to Ruth’s question and therefore flouts Grice’s maxim of relation. It leaves Ruth to reconstruct the following logical argument: Denzel was painting a house (and not creating art) and painting does not meet the requirements for a nice holiday; therefore Denzel did not have a nice holiday. In line (3), Ruth confirms that painting does not make for a nice holiday and emphasises her agreement with an expletive. Agreeing with Denzel once again attends to his quality face (i.e. his desire to be right). The expletive signals an informal and familiar tone and possibly serves as a solidarity strategy. Daly *et al.* (2004) argue that the use of expletives displays the speaker’s confidence that the relationship is strong enough to use potentially rude words. As the only non-white employee working in the frontstage of the business, Denzel holds an interesting position in the business organisation, which allows him to move with relative ease between the white-collar employees and the blue-collar communities of practice. His ties with the white-collar community seem slightly stronger than with the blue-collar employees, for example he eats his lunch in the frontstage and never comes into the backstage kitchen. In extract (9), Ruth acknowledges his membership in the administrative and managerial

community to a certain degree. She would not initiate small talk with or even greet blue-collar employees. This is also confirmed by Velile (see participant profile 4.13), who told me in his interview that she has always ignored him and never greets him when she passes by (interview 19/11/2012).

At McBicycle, small talk forms a substantial part of the daily interactions between co-workers. The following extract shows an interaction between Marcel (see participant profile 4.3), who is on his coffee break, and Mikael (see participant profile 4.4), who is busy servicing a bicycle. Marcel has not been feeling very well and they are chatting about being sick. Besides engaging in small talk they both draw on a range of other strategies to reinforce their harmonious relationship. Mikael is sharing that he recently went through a similar experience. By emphasising this common experience he is attending to Marcel's social identity face. At this point the recorder starts running.

Extract 10 McBicycle (10 October 2012)

- 1 Mikael: But it didn't break out
- 2 Marcel: Nee nee (*no no*)
- 3 Mikael: Cos I eat these = ((inaudible)) =
- 4 Marcel: = ja ja (*yes yes*) =
Ja (*yes*) I have it once in the four years [that I'm in bed] and then I'm completely gone ((inaudible)) four years ((inaudible)) so three times a year
- 5 Mikael: When I'm sick I'm really fucking sick
- 6 Marcel: Ja ja precies (*yes yes exactly*) me too but that is once in the four years. It was when I started here after a = week = my first no my second week I think
- 7 Mikael: = ah: =
- 8 Marcel: I just fainted here
- 9 Mikael: New bacteria
- 10 Marcel: I just fainted here
- 11 Mikael: That's the thing, when you change work
- 12 Marcel: Nee nee (*no no*) new bacteria I don't think (0.5s) nee: (*no*)
- 13 Mikael: When I worked with old people, in the beginning I was sick always. After a while I was like immune

- 14 Marcel: Ja (*yes*) here was ((inaudible)) = ((laughs)) ((coughs)) =
- 15 Mikael: = Cos you go to different =
houses all the time
- 16 Marcel: Maybe (0.5s) but I didn't want to eh to to become ill cos it
was my second week and then the third week I just was here
and I felt like I'm going down ponk ((laughs)) and then I
went down ((coughs))

The interaction comes to end when somebody interrupts to ask Marcel a question. Together they discursively construct a small talk interaction that expresses solidarity and support. Marcel is sharing his discontent about not feeling well. In their study of New Zealand workplace interactions, Daly *et al.* (2004) found that whinges or indirect complaining are not necessarily face-threatening. They can provide a way of creating solidarity by sharing frustration. Moreover, whinges are often endorsed and mirrored by the interlocutor, which is exactly what is occurring in extract (10). Marcel states in line (4) that he gets really sick and Mikael mirrors and reinforces this in line (5) and uses an expletive to intensify his statement. Mikael's turn is then again reinforced by Marcel's reply in line (6). Both speakers are thus creating a sense of solidarity and they emphasise the experiences that they have in common. Marcel also expresses support through his minimal responses (e.g. in lines 2, 4, 6, 12 and 14). This signals interest in the interlocutor and thus attends to Mikael's quality face. Marcel is simultaneously asserting his Dutch identity, as most of the minimal responses are Dutch. In line (12) Marcel shows disagreement with Mikael, which potentially threatens Mikael's quality face, but after Mikael's further expansion in lines (13) and (15) Marcel shows more agreement again in lines (14) and (16).

Besides strengthening solidarity, Marcel is also attending to his own quality face by seeking acknowledgement from Mikael. This is evident in line (4) and (6) where he repeats himself. Mikael does not provide a direct response in line (5), so Marcel reiterates that he only gets really sick once in four years. Mikael replies in line (7) with a minimal *ah* expressing his sympathy. Marcel continues in line (8) that he just fainted. Mikael replies (9) by giving a reason why Marcel became sick in his first week, but this was apparently not the desired response as Marcel repeats himself again in line (10). So, in this interaction Marcel is seeking acknowledgement from

Mikael, but both are reinforcing their relationships by showing interest in each other (attending to their quality face), by sharing experiences and by seeking agreement (intended to enhance their social identity face). In addition, Marcel is displaying a weaker side of himself, which also breaks down the barrier between him and the staff. He often engages in small talk, shares anecdotes or jokes around with his employees, as he does in extract (5). As a manager he uses these types of strategies to minimise overt status differences and to create solidarity with and compliance from his staff, which is consistent with the flat power structure at McBicycle.

4.2.1.3 Accommodation

Accommodating to an interlocutor's linguistic code is a solidarity strategy that attends to the hearer's social identity face (i.e. relating to one's identity as a group member). The observed accommodation strategies in both workplaces included convergence to an interlocutor's language as well as accent and speech style (e.g. using simple and clear English sentences to address people with a poor competence in English). Accommodation strategies were observed in customer interactions as well as among colleagues where the use of jargon and other in-group markers signal an accommodation to the shared repertoire of the community of practice.

In both businesses, the initial phase of a customer interaction typically entails some exploratory code-switching to determine the preferred language choice, as exemplified in extract (11).

Extract 11 Warrick's (fieldnotes 15 November 2012)

Denzel typically picks up the phone with "Morning, goeiemôre".

Richard, being monolingual, uses "Warrick's, good morning".

Denzel uses both English and Afrikaans when he answers the phone and allows the listener to choose from the available codes. Switching to customers' first language attends to their social identity face, but at the same time, Denzel also attends to the listeners' autonomy rights by offering them an option. In an interview Denzel tells me he always tries to switch to the customers' language of choice, "so they feel more comfortable around you" (interview 30/11/2012). In Warrick's the range of potential languages spoken by customers is limited to the three main languages spoken in the

Eastern Cape: Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. Denzel noted that most customers speak English and that he has never heard another language than English, Xhosa or Afrikaans in the shop (interview 30/11/2012). He addresses new customers in English, but tells me he will either recognise an Afrikaans or Xhosa accent and switch to their language or ask them if they want to continue in Afrikaans, English or Xhosa. However, most of the customers are regulars, which means that the language choice is often predetermined. Richard tells me that he knows about 90% of the customers walking in. Another 5% have familiar faces that he has either seen before in the shop or somewhere else in Grahamstown and the last 5% are new customers (fieldnotes 15/11.2012). Denzel similarly tells me he knows about 80% of the customers walking in. Richard is by and large monolingual, so he addresses everyone in English, but Denzel speaks multiple languages and it seems almost obligatory for him to switch to the customer's language. He tells me that it would be very strange for him to address Xhosa-speaking customers in English and as he says this, two customers who are likely Xhosa-speakers walk in and Denzel decides to demonstrate this to me.

Extract 12 Warrick's (fieldnotes 15 November 2012)

Two men walk in and Denzel tells me: "Watch this. I'll speak in English to them". He greets them in English and the customers reply in English but halfway the conversation one of them says: "You like speaking English *nè* (*don't you*)?" Denzel and I laugh and the conversation continues in Xhosa.

After a few lines the customer points out Denzel's marked choice of code. The customer's use of the tag *nè* (which is Afrikaans in origin, but has been borrowed into Xhosa and South African English) signals the preference for Xhosa and problematises Denzel's choice of English. The event shows that language choices in Warrick's are largely predetermined and that addressing Xhosa-speaking customers in English is a marked choice. The range of customer languages that Warrick's employees can accommodate to is also not too extensive, which is one of the main differences from McBicycle where both employees' and customers' repertoires present a wide variety of languages.

Most customers are new and unknown in McBicycle and customer interactions typically begin with an initial exploratory phase in which the preferred language

choice is established. This often happens in the form of a negotiation, as in the following extract in which a woman walks through the door and is greeted by Sjoerd in German.

Participant profile 4.9 – Sjoerd (McBicycle)

Sjoerd was born in Amsterdam, is a 26-year-old and works 3-4 days a week in the frontstage of the shop. His repertoire consists of Dutch (L1), English (learned at school, from friends and video games), Spanish (acquired while living in Spain for three years), German (school), French (truncated and just enough to hire out a bicycle), and Amsterdam dialect (which he displays by singing Amsterdam folk music in the workplace). He is energetic and can be very sociable, but is a bit mercurial especially in the mornings and is not very punctual.

Extract 13 McBicycle (21 September 2012)

- 1 Sjoerd: Gutentag (*Good day*)
- 2 Customer: Hello (1s) English
- 3 Sjoerd: Okay

The customer turns out to be French (suspected by her accent and confirmed by her French passport) and while Sjoerd, who has an extensive multilingual repertoire (see participant profile 4.9), speaks a moderate amount of French the customer makes a clear and concise choice for English and the conversation is carried on in English as the lingua franca. Sjoerd's choice for German seems unfounded in this event, but at other times participants take more educated guesses based on the customer's accent and experience.

In the following extract, Sjoerd appears to hold a rapport enhancement orientation but with a slightly harsh tone. At other moments, the event also shows a rapport challenging and a rapport maintenance orientation held by Sjoerd. The interaction takes place at the counter and Sjoerd is talking to a man and woman from Greece.

Extract 14 McBicycle (8 October 2012)

- 1 Sjoerd: Hi
- 2 Customer (F): Hi

- 3 Customer (F): We want bike
- 4 Sjoerd: How are you?
Do you want to do this in your language or my language?
((Customers look confused))
((Starts speaking Castilian Spanish to them))
- 5 Customer (M): Oh no eh Greece
- 6 Customer (F): GREECE
- 7 Sjoerd: Greece? Ah sorry my bad
- 8 Customer (F): One bike for eh three hours
- 9 Sjoerd: ((Addressing the male customer)) And you already have a bike?

The conversation continues in English. After a short greeting the customer states the purpose of their visit in line (3). *We want bike* is a very short and simple utterance and the lack of an article signals a poor proficiency in English. In line (4), Sjoerd does not acknowledge their requests and instead initiates some small talk. This is an interesting place for small talk and it could signal a challenging strategy. Sjoerd seems to show what he perceives as normative interactional behaviour. The customer might have threatened Sjoerd's interactional association rights by not fulfilling Sjoerd's expectations of an appropriate amount of small talk before turning to the transactional goal of the interaction. Sjoerd, in turn, poses a possible threat to the customer's quality face (i.e. the desire to be positively evaluated in terms of personal qualities) by emphasising this lack of small talk. Next, Sjoerd does not wait for a response to his enquiry after their well-being and instead continues with a question to find out their preferred choice of language. Although the tone of his utterance is friendly, the level of directness in his question *Do you want to do this in your language or mine?* makes the utterance sound rude, especially after emphasising the customer's lack of small talk. I will continue here to treat the accommodation as a solidarity strategy, but Sjoerd's behaviour seems to signal that there is more going on in this interaction and I return to this in section 4.3.2.

Sjoerd then repeats the question in Spanish, which is a display of his competence in the language. The attempt to accommodate to the customers' language is in itself a rapport enhancement strategy, which potentially enhances the customers' social identity face by positively evaluating their nationality or linguistic background. At the

same time Sjoerd potentially damages their social identity face by mistaking them for Spaniards. The customer corrects Sjoerd's mistake with a minimal *Greece*. Sjoerd apologises for his misjudgement in an informal manner in line (7), thereby signalling a rapport maintenance orientation by mitigating the potential effect of his mistake. The customer chooses to ignore the apology and shifts back into a transactional mode, telling Sjoerd what she and her partner need with a short and simple directive.

Sjoerd draws on two languages in this event to find out which language the customers speak. Hearing their accent leads him to the mistaken assumption that they are Spaniards. Thus, his accommodating strategy does not have the desired effect. Moreover, Sjoerd displays initial control over the event by drawing attention to the customer's lack of small talk in the initial phase of the interaction. This could be seen as a simple enhancement strategy that shows an interest in the interlocutor, but since his enquiry ignores the customer's request for a bicycle it can be seen as reflecting a challenging orientation. After Sjoerd's misjudgement, the customer switches to transactional mode, which indicates that he is taking back control. Afterwards Sjoerd tells me that he often tries to guess the customers' nationalities as they walk through the door. He says that he often confuses Israelis and Greeks and points to some new customers telling me they must be Greek too. They were Spanish (fieldnotes 08/10/2012).

Other employees also appear to have picked up on the most common accents and often switch to the customer's language if that code is available in their repertoire. For example, Saar (see participant profile 4.18) on one occasion recognised that a customer spoke English with a French accent and switched to her basic French (recording 23/09/2013). On another occasion, Marcel heard two customers speaking Spanish to each other and used the few Spanish words he knows (mostly related to bicycles and opening times) (fieldnotes 21/09/2012). Another moment where code-switches occur is when employees see the ID card of the customers. For example, when Saar saw the ID card of a Spanish customer she switched to Spanish (recording 23/09/2012).

Participant profile 4.10 – Alexis (McBicycle)

Alexis is a 26-year-old American who moved to the Netherlands four and a half years ago. English is her first language and she speaks a decent amount of Dutch. She tried to take a Dutch course, but says she learns more from her Dutch husband and by reading Dutch children books. She also tries to interact with Dutch people, but says they tend to switch to English as soon as they hear her accent. Besides working about 3 days a week in the frontstage of the shop, she also spends 1-2 days a week doing public relations work for McBicycle.

Participants did not only accommodate to a customers' languages, but also to their speech styles or levels of competence in a language. For example, Alexis was addressing a group of nine Italians whose English was very poor. Alexis does not speak Italian but she did opt for clear and simple sentences and kept asking questions to confirm that they had understood her. Coupland *et al.* (1988) call this strategy of modifying the comprehensibility and complexity of one's speech an interpretability strategy and it serves not only as a solidarity strategy but it also fulfils the practical purpose of ensuring communication. Alexis explained afterwards that she often does this with large groups, no matter their competence in English.

A different kind of convergence occurs when speakers draw on the shared community repertoire. Participants use in-group identity markers such as specific jargon, accents, slang and ellipsis, which are ways of positioning oneself as a member of the community of practice. For instance, in McBicycle most of the bicycle parts are only referred to in Dutch. The following short interaction involves Peter (see participant profile 4.11), who is a senior employee and a core member of the community of practice, and Mikael (see participant profile 4.4), who has been working at McBicycle for two years.

Participant profile 4.11 – Peter (McBicycle)

Peter is 36 years old and comes from Sussex. With his six years at McBicycle he is an established core member of the community. His first language is English and is also fluent in Dutch (he has a Dutch wife), although he only uses it when addressing Dutch customers. He works about four days a week and he mainly focuses on repair work but helps out with customer encounters whenever it becomes busy. He prefers to stay out of any discussions or conflicts but can become quite fierce when he does get involved (or when he is talking about his worst customer experiences).

The interaction takes place in the repair area where Mikael and Peter are working side by side. Mikael asks if he should replace the cover of the bicycle chain.

Extract 15 McBicycle (09 October 2012)

- 1 Mikael: I'm changing this kettingkast, no?
- 2 Peter: Yes, change it

Mikael uses the appropriate jargon and thereby asserts his group membership. By drawing on the shared repertoire he also reinforces his relationship with Peter and the rest of the community. Another example is given by Peter, who tells me about one of the first Dutch words that new employees learn: *beneden* (English: *downstairs*) (interview 12 October 2012). Downstairs is the *stalling* (another example of a McBicycle-specific word) or bicycle garage of the train station. The train station offers special train memberships that include a rental bicycle. Many people become confused and walk into McBicycle instead of down the stairs. Hence, one of the very first Dutch words learned by new employees is *beneden* (*downstairs*). The acquisition of this community-specific vocabulary is part of the transition from the periphery to the core of the community of practice that new members undergo.

To summarise, the three main rapport enhancement strategies used by participants from both sites were humour, accommodation and small talk. Humour proves a very versatile tool that is used to enhance rapport as well as to fulfil transactional goals. In addition, humour is also employed to challenge rapport, which is further discussed in section 4.3.2 and 4.3.3. The core difference in the use of accommodation strategies in

the two businesses is that McBicycle employees are confronted with a wide range of varieties spoken by customers, whereas Warrick's customers typically speak one of the Eastern Cape's three languages. Moreover, participants also accommodate to the shared group repertoire by using jargon and accents. In other words, they adhere to the indexical order of the workplace and thereby assert themselves as group members. Lastly, participants from both businesses used small talk, but they directed their effort in different directions. Although small talk was both used with colleagues and customers, the emphasis in Warrick's lies on customer small talk, whereas small talk in McBicycle is mainly used to build rapport between colleagues. This difference can be explained by the context in both businesses. Firstly, Warrick's places a much greater emphasis on quality customer relationships than McBicycle. Secondly, employees in Warrick's are divided in various sub communities of practices, which are not only socially divided but are also separated due to the geographical layout of the place. McBicycle, on the other hand, consist of one joint community of practice that operates in one open space, allowing for more contact between colleagues. This interesting connection between the interactional patterns and their context is further explored in section 4.3 and 4.4.

4.2.2 Rapport maintenance orientation

A speaker holding a rapport maintenance orientation aims to maintain or preserve a harmonious relationship (Spencer-Oatey 2000b). This orientation is reflected in the use of appropriate terms of address and politeness markers. Not adhering to the normative use of politeness markers and honorifics would be considered rude and potentially threatens the interlocutor's equity rights (i.e. their entitlement to considerate treatment). Extract (16) exemplifies a participant's use of a politeness marker to prevent a potential threat to rapport with customers. The interaction takes place at the counter between employee Sjoerd (see participant profile 4.9) and a French female customer. The recording starts after the customer's request for a bicycle and the exchange of personal details for the purpose of the rental contract. Sjoerd needs a credit card copy for the deposit.

Extract 16 McBicycle (21 September 2012)

1 Sjoerd: A credit card copy

- 2 Customer: Okay
- 3 Sjoerd: (1s) Please
- 4 Customer: Erh could I erh return the car some other place or:
- 5 Sjoerd: You need to return the bicycle where you have left your deposit
- 6 Customer: Okay ((hands over her credit card to Sjoerd))
- 7 Sjoerd: I make a copy only a copy. When you come back with the bike
[we leave] the copy uncharged and afterwards we do the payment
by card or cash.

Sjoerd continues to make a copy of her credit card, she signs the contract and they walk off to get her a bicycle. In this extract, Sjoerd needs to make a copy of her credit card for the deposit. He does not explain this to the customer and orders in a short and direct manner *a credit card copy*. The imposition of the demand, aggravated by his direct tone, poses a threat to the customer's autonomy rights (i.e. one's right not to be unduly imposed upon). Sjoerd seems to realise that this is rather rude of him and he attempts to mitigate the effect by adding the politeness marker *please* in line (3), thus signalling a rapport maintenance orientation.

In Warrick's, Denzel (see participant profile 4.7) provides plenty of examples of appropriate terms of address being used in customer interactions, as illustrated in extract (17). The customer in this event is an older white woman and she came in with her car to check if her tyres should be replaced. The interaction takes place in the frontstage of the business. Denzel walks with the customer around her car and explains that the front tyres generally wear out quicker than the back tyres and suggests switching them around. They then make their way to the counter and this is where the recording starts.

Extract 17 Warrick's (05 November 2012)

- 1 Customer: How much will that cost me?
- 2 Denzel: That will be a hundred rand (1s) we we take the front
ones to the back and the back ones to the front and
balance those tyres
- 3 Customer: How long does it take?
- 4 Denzel: It will take probably half hour to an hour
- 5 Customer: And can I bring it tomorrow morning?

- 6 Denzel: Hundred percent ma'am. You're welcome
 7 Customer: Okay. Thank you. Bye
 8 Denzel: Okay ma'am

This interaction is a conventional businesses transaction that is organised in various request-satisfy pairs. In line (2) Denzel satisfies the customer's request for information and then elaborates on the service she will be paying for. Since he has already fulfilled the customer's minimal request, this additional information reflects a rapport enhancement orientation. In line (6) and (8) Denzel uses *ma'am*, which is an appropriate term of address to use when addressing an older woman. It reflects normatively polite behaviour and therefore signals that the speaker is holding a rapport maintenance orientation.

Maintaining rapport is also achieved through the appropriate handling of face- and rights-threatening acts (Spencer-Oatey 2000b). Threats may be preceded, for example, by an appropriate amount of small talk (Planken 2002; Coupland 2003). The threat can also be mitigated through hedging, as exemplified in extract (18), or by switching to the first language of an irritated customer in an attempt to calm him down and re-establish harmonious rapport, as shown in extract (19). Extract (18) takes place at the counter, where Mikael (see participant profile 4.4) is helping a young English-speaking couple. The customers have made their decisions on the type of bicycles they want and Mikael is busy setting up the rental contract. The extract shows the end of the interaction and one of the customers has just asked if the locks are included in the price (this is inaudible in the recording, but noted in my fieldnotes).

Extract 18 McBicycle (21 September 2012)

- 1 Mikael: Ya it's gonna be with the bike. I'm gonna show you how to
 how the locks work (0.5s) only thing I need from you is ID
 and credit card
 ((Mikael scans the ID and credit card))
 ((Customer takes money out of his wallet))
 2 Mikael: No no no this is enough it's enough (1s) you pay later on
 3 Customer(M): ((mumbles)) Alright
 4 Mikael: But remember now we close quarter to six hey
 5 Customer(M): ((Inaudible))

Mikael fulfils the customer's request for information and continues to provide additional information by telling the customer that he will demonstrate how the locks work. He then turns back to the task at hand with a request for the customer's ID and credit card and this utterance signals a rapport maintenance orientation. A scan of a customer's ID is used for the contract and a copy of a credit card is required for the deposit. This poses a potential threat to customers' equity rights if they feel that they are being unduly imposed upon. Experience shows that the deposit can easily lead to situations of conflict. For example, Marcel told me an anecdote of a woman who called the police and told them that a McBicycle employee was forcing her to hand over her passport for the deposit. She had other options, such as a copy of her credit card, but chose to make a big scene (fieldnotes 21 September 2012). Mikael is probably anticipating a possible threat to the customers' equity rights and counters this by hedging his request with *only thing I need* in an attempt to minimise the imposition. Line (4) is another sign of Mikael's maintenance orientation. Management expects him to inform the customers about the closing times. Instead of straightforwardly telling them, which could pose a threat to the customers' quality face if they were already aware of the closing times, Mikael begins with the phrase *but remember now*. With this form of hedging he signals that he is telling them something they already know. Therefore, he does not threaten their quality face but is simply reiterating this information.

Participant profile 4.12 – Alec (Warrick's)

Alec is an English first-language mechanic in his 50s. He is also fluent in Afrikaans, which he learned at school and from his father's side of the family. He has been working at Warrick's for six years and he runs the workshop, which includes two other mechanics.

In the following extract, certain strategies are employed after rapport with a customer has been damaged in an attempt to restore a harmonious relationship. The interaction takes place in the frontstage of Warrick's and involves four participants: a customer who arrived to pick up his car; Alec (see participant profile 4.12) who tries to explain

that the car is beyond repair; and Gareth (see participant profile 4.1) who is initially a silent bystander but then involves Denzel (see participant profile 4.7) in the event.

Extract 19 Warrick's (22 November 2012)

Alec is talking to a customer (middle-aged Xhosa speaker) in English. The customer's car cannot be fixed but he still needs to pay the bill (R8000). The customer is upset. Gareth calls Denzel and tells him to explain to the customer in Xhosa that they had to strip the motor and order new parts but that the motor will never run again. The customer will have to pay for those parts but he will get most of the labour for free. Denzel starts addressing the customer in Xhosa but the man interrupts him and replies in English. The customer seems reluctant. Same arguments are thrown back and forth. The customer walks away and the conflict remains unresolved.

Alec is the bearer of bad news when he tells the customer his car is beyond repair but that there is still a bill to pay. This message seems to threaten the customer's equity rights (i.e. the right not to be unfairly exploited or disadvantaged). Gareth then opts for two strategies in an attempt to mitigate and repair the damage. First, he involves his Xhosa-speaking employee, Denzel. Gareth asks Denzel to explain the situation in the customer's first language. Opting for the listener's L1 is an attempt to evoke a sense of solidarity with the intention to appeal to the customer's social identity face. The second strategy that Gareth employs is to offer a compromise. He tells Denzel to tell the customer that he will not have to pay for most of the labour costs. It is an attempt to seek some kind of agreement, perhaps to compensate for the potential damage to the customer's equity rights and to try and balance out the cost-benefit scale. Both moves are intended to restore the pre-existing relationship with the customer and thus signal a rapport maintenance orientation. Of course, the act of communicating through a third party while the customer is capable of speaking English poses a threat to the customer's quality face since it calls his linguistic competence into question. The customer signals this by rejecting the choice for Xhosa, implicitly rejecting the compromise, and continuing the interaction in English. So, despite Gareth's intention to restore the harmonious relationship, the conflict remains unresolved. This shows that a speaker's rapport orientation does not necessarily result in the intended effect.

To conclude, participants in this study maintained rapport by using normative and appropriate honorifics as well as politeness markers to mitigate the effect of potentially face- and rights-threatening acts. In addition, extract (19) illustrated the use of a customer's first language in an attempt to repair damage done to the customer's autonomy rights. The following section explores the intentional attempts to damage a relationship.

4.2.3 Rapport challenge orientation

A person holding a rapport challenge orientation aims to threaten or “impair the harmony of the relationship” (Spencer-Oatey 2000b: 30). Many of the strategies used to enhance rapport can also be employed to challenge rapport. For example, humour has the ability to create solidarity and in-groups, but the same features can be used to negotiate out-groups and increase distance from the interlocutor (Rogerson-Revell 2007). Similarly, small talk can enhance rapport by attending to a person's association rights, but it can also serve a rapport challenge orientation. For instance, when a subordinate initiates small talk with their superior this can signal a challenge since initiating small talk is often associated with the superior in a superior-subordinate relationship (Coupland 2000).

Participant profile 4.13 – Velile (Warrick's)

Velile is 59 years old and head of the tyre-changing unit. He is what Gareth calls ‘a second-generation employee’. His father used to work in the same shop and Velile started when he was very young, long before the current owners bought the business in 2004. Velile's first language is Xhosa and he is fluent in English and Afrikaans. He is an open and sociable man, but can also be very serious and at times quite cynical. In a conversation with him on my first day he started smiling and said he could not imagine what they must think in the office of me spending so much time with them (in the backstage). He said they must find it very strange. They will not mind, he reassured me, but they will find it strange.

Participant profile 4.14 – Sandile (Warrick’s)

Sandile works six days a week for the tyre-changing unit. He is 58 years old and speaks Xhosa (L1), English and a little Afrikaans. He smiles a lot, is quiet and works hard. He has been working in the shop for 30 years, long before the current owners bought the business.

The following extract exemplifies how small talk can be used to challenge an existing power structure. It is a short interaction of only three turns, which needs to be contextualised in order to be fully understood. The interaction involves two main participants. Gareth is the owner of the business (see participant profile 4.1) and Velile is head of the tyre-changing unit. There are also two bystanders: Sandile and me. As head of the tyre-changing unit, Velile fulfils a more powerful position than Sandile. However, the distance between Sandile and Velile is significantly smaller than the distance between Velile and Gareth.

In extract (20), Velile displays a challenge orientation towards a superior, which is not common in Warrick’s. Warrick’s is characterised by a static power hierarchy. Role expectations are fixed and non-negotiable. Power is centralised and resides with Gareth who makes unilateral decisions and is forceful and direct in his interactional style towards his employees. Moreover, employees are dissatisfied about their working conditions. For example, one participant told me his pay is much less than what he used to earn under the previous owners. He is close to pension but has not been able to save enough money for his retirement. He does not understand why he is paid so little or why it is so much less than what he previously made (fieldnotes 08/11/2012). Yet workers are reluctant to challenge the relationship with their superiors because they fear they will lose their jobs if they do so. When I asked another employee if they worked full shifts (from 7.30am to 5pm) he replied: “We have no choice my dear”. He also told me that they are not paid for overtime; they are paid until 4pm (fieldnotes 01/11/2012). Various participants explained that they have accepted the conditions because they are dependent on their jobs. So there is an interesting tension in the workplace between personal dignity and job security. Extract (20) exemplifies how a participant employs his individual agency to negotiate this tension.

The interaction takes place in the backstage (see Figure 4.2). Velile, Sandile and I are standing near the wheel-balancing machine and Gareth is driving by on his way to the exit.

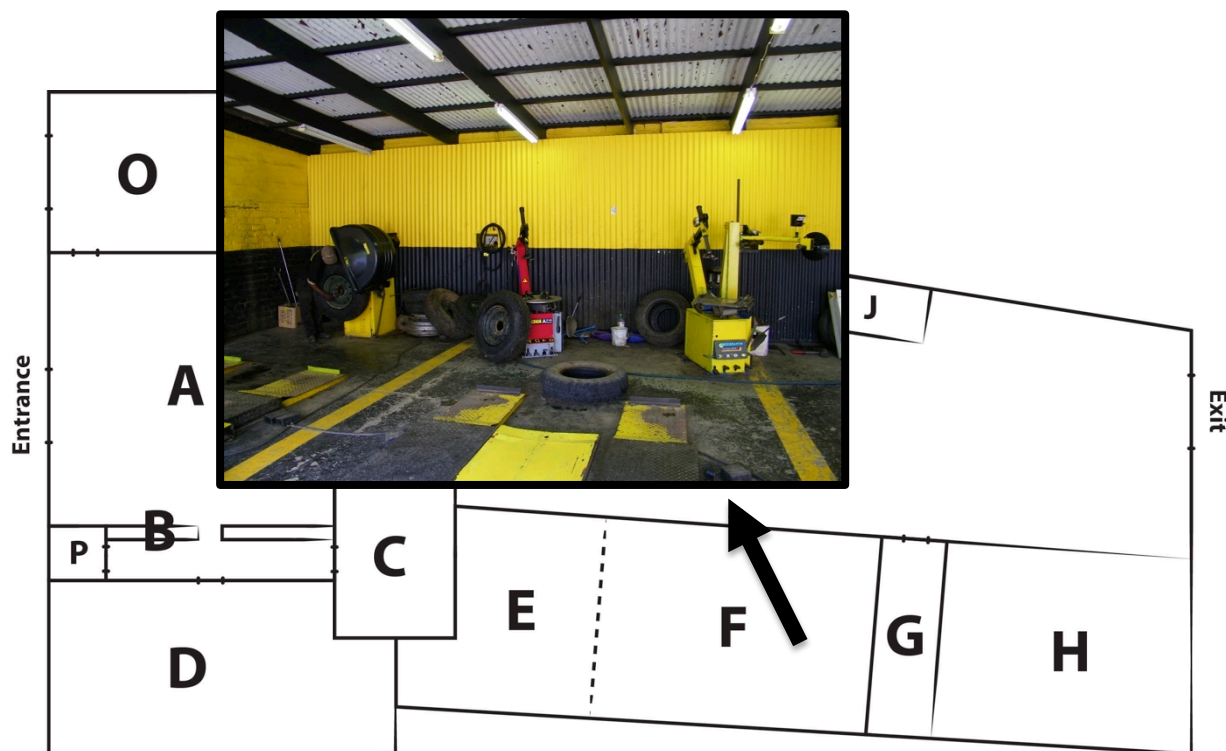


Figure 4.2: Tyre-changing area in Warrick's backstage

It is a Saturday morning and Gareth is supposed to have the day off, but he and his father drive by several times a day to check up on their staff. Gareth is driving away without saying goodbye to anyone.

Extract 20 Warrick's (fieldnotes 24 November 2012)

- 1 Velile: BYE
- 2 Gareth: BYE KWEDINI (*little boy*)
- 3 Velile: Bye kwedini my gat (*little boy my arse*) ((Only audible to me and Sandile))

This shows an interesting interactional pattern in which each utterance includes the previous and then adds new information in a new language, as displayed in table 4.1.

	<i>English</i>	<i>Xhosa</i>	<i>Afrikaans</i>
1	Bye		
2	Bye	kwedini	
3	Bye	kwedini	my gat

Table 4.1: Interactional pattern in Extract 20

It seems acceptable for Gareth, in the powerful position of owner, to drive away without greeting anyone. He is in fact adhering to the power distance between him and his employees. Yet, intentionally or not, Gareth has threatened Velile's interactional association rights (i.e. his sense of entitlement to an appropriate amount of interaction). This becomes apparent in Velile's response in line (1) where he chooses to initiate a small talk sequence. Since small talk is generally initiated by the more powerful speaker (Coupland 2000), this is signalling a rapport challenge orientation towards his boss. With his *bye*, Velile is showing what he perceives to be normative interactional behaviour. This is a potential threat to Gareth's social identity face because it challenges Gareth's position as a superior, who should be at liberty to drive away without saying goodbye.

In line (2) Gareth replies in English, followed by an interesting choice of the listener's first language. The word *kwedini* means 'little boy' in Xhosa and it is used to address young boys. Xhosa culture has an elaborate and highly valued initiation ritual in which boys are introduced to manhood, and this demonstrates the extremely high value placed on manhood in this society. Thus, to call a Xhosa man a boy is a very serious insult. However, a possible interpretation is that *kwedini* is meant as a term of endearment by Gareth. Both the choice of Xhosa and the term of endearment could be used as quality face-enhancing strategies. An alternative reading of this interaction is that Gareth does not accept the challenge posed by Velile's *bye* and is using the denigrating *kwedini* to impose the existing power structure on their relationship. It is an interesting use of Velile's first language to put him back into place. In terms of rapport management, this is a threat to Velile's honour and sense of self-esteem (i.e. quality face). Furthermore, the insult is made in front of Sandile (Velile's subordinate) and me and therefore also threatens Velile's social identity or role as group leader (i.e. social identity face). The question is whether Gareth was aware of the cultural

meaning of the word *kwedini* and the inappropriateness of its use in this context. He might not have been fully aware of the perlocutionary force of this utterance, but I believe that Gareth was well aware that it is an insult. This interpretation is supported by Gareth's observed attitude and interactional style towards some of his subordinates. His direct and forceful interactional style becomes more apparent throughout the extracts in the following sections.

In line (3), Velile's rejection of Gareth's insult draws on three different languages. He uses his third language, Afrikaans, to reject the positioning in line (2). The Afrikaans *my gat* (English: *my arse*) is an expression and code-switching is likely used for emphasis. Velile does not voice his rejection loud enough for Gareth to hear. This signals that Velile chooses to reject the insult in line (2) but he also accepts that his challenge is constrained by the power relationship between the two. Voicing his rejection is thus aimed at saving his own face in front of Sandile and me.

Velile's challenge is small but significant within the context of a business characterised by a rigid hierarchical power structure. It exemplifies how individual agency is used to challenge structural power relationships. There are two influential factors that seem to have licensed this particular challenge. Firstly, this interaction took place three weeks into my fieldwork and during this time Velile and I had multiple conversations about the working conditions at Warrick's and Velile's dissatisfaction with the situation. This possibly led to his decision to express some of his frustrations and take a stance, even though it is a minor challenge conveyed within relatively safe boundaries. Apart from the role of my presence, the choice to challenge a superior and the linguistic choices made by both participants also seem influenced by the geographical space in which the interaction took place. The tyre-changing area (see Figure 4.2) is Velile's territory where he as head of the unit is an established figure of authority. It is this combination of participant's position of authority and the specific setting that creates a relatively safe space for him to challenge his superior. It is unlikely that Sandile would ever display a challenge orientation towards Gareth or that Velile would challenge Gareth in the frontstage of the business. In addition, Gareth also adheres to the space by choosing Xhosa to reposition his subordinate. Generally, a participant may switch to English, as the language of upper management, to upscale his or her message to a more authoritative level, but Gareth realises that

Xhosa is the local authoritative code and uses this to give his insult extra force. This is also evidence that Gareth's behaviour is not simply crude and forceful, but that he instead shows a (tacit) understanding of the subtlety involved in his linguistic choices, which suggests that he is actually a strategic manager of rapport. Gareth's rapport management skills are further explored in sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.

Challenging strategies were a salient characteristic of both businesses and the data shows many more examples of this orientation. Situations of conflict provide interesting details about language use and in this case they showed how complex rapport management can be. Not all of these interactions could be adequately explained in terms of rapport orientations and they are thus explored elsewhere in this chapter, see for example 4.3.3 and 4.3.4.

4.2.4 Rapport neglect orientation

Both a rapport challenging and a rapport neglect orientation have a potential negative impact on the level of rapport between interlocutors. The difference is in the intention of the speakers. A speaker holding a challenging orientation intends to harm the level of rapport, whereas a speaker holding a neglect orientation simply signals a lack of concern for the quality of the relationship. Rapport neglect is reflected in the use of face- or rights-threatening acts without any redressive strategies. The reason for such neglect is either a speaker's task-focused approach, as exemplified in extract (21), or a speaker's genuine lack of interest in the relationship.

Sometimes a speaker's attention to the speech act takes precedence over attention to the interpersonal relationship. For example, in a very busy workplace it becomes a necessity to communicate clearly and accurately and rapport maintenance is in these situations neglected in favour of clarity and accuracy. Extract (21) shows an example of Gareth's task-focused management style. The event took place on a busy Thursday afternoon.

Participant profile 4.15 – Fezile (Warrick’s)

Fezile started working at Warrick’s two days before I began my fieldwork. He is in his early thirties and his tasks involve welding and repairing of shock absorbers and exhausts. He speaks fluent Xhosa (L1), Zulu, Afrikaans and English. He grew up with a family who spoke Zulu. Afrikaans he learned by growing up in a residential area where it was the predominant language and English he learned at school and at his previous job. He is shy and keeps to himself, probably because he is new.

Extract 21 Warrick’s (fieldnotes 01/11/2012)

Gareth stands in the yard and shouts instructions to Fezile, who stands ten metres away in the welding area of the backstage. Gareth’s instructions are clear and concise. He uses many commands without any mitigating strategies. Interestingly, Gareth starts in English and then switches to Xhosa. I ask Sandile what Gareth is saying and he tells me that Gareth is repeating the instructions he gave in English and that he does this often.

The utterance of orders and commands without any mitigating strategies can easily threaten the listener’s equity rights (i.e. one’s right not to be unfairly imposed upon or ordered about). Gareth’s primary focus seems to be on the act itself rather than his relationship with Fezile. This indicates a rapport neglect orientation, which seems, in this case, to be motivated by a need for clear and accurate communication due to time constraints. The extract also exemplifies Gareth’s code-switching from English to Xhosa. The purpose of the code-switching seems to confirm or emphasise the instructions, but it also shows that Gareth adheres to Xhosa, the dominant language spoken in this backstage area.

There are not many examples of a neglect orientation to be found in the data set and it proved the most difficult orientation to identify and analyse. This is mainly because there is no certain way of knowing what the speaker’s intentions are. A researcher may infer these intentions from the perlocutionary force of the speaker’s utterances and other ethnographic data, but it remains difficult to establish whether a lack of rapport strategies indicates a genuine lack of interest or whether the speaker has

alternative motives for the lack of rapport management strategies, such as a motive to challenge the relationship. This fuzzy boundary between challenging and neglecting rapport is one of the main problems with the concept of rapport orientations and is further discussed in 4.3.

4.2.5 Conclusion

Three prominent rapport enhancement strategies employed in both businesses were the use of humour, small talk and accommodation strategies. The participants used humour primarily to create an in-group and emphasise solidarity with the interlocutors. This also provided a way of minimising power distance and inequality for the manager of McBicycle. The data further showed how humour can be used to express potentially face- and rights-threatening acts in a mitigating way to maintain rapport and indirectly serve transactional goals at the same time. A second prominent enhancement strategy was the use of small talk, which was employed in both businesses as a time-filling device in between activities. The difference between the two workplaces was the nature of the small talk. Small talk with customers in McBicycle was mostly formulaic and impersonal, whereas employees in Warrick's know most of their customers and their small talk was therefore more personalised. Lastly, employees in both workplaces employed accommodation strategies to enhance customers' social identity face as well as to converge to the shared repertoire of the community of practice.

Rapport maintenance strategies included the use of appropriate honorifics and politeness markers and the use of the interlocutor's first language to mitigate an autonomy rights-threatening act. Many of the rapport challenging and neglecting acts in both businesses show more interesting aspects of rapport management than a categorisation as either *challenging* or *neglecting* would suggest. These are therefore analysed and discussed in the following sections. The two interactions that were discussed in this current section show that rapport can be challenged by initiating small talk with a superior. This is especially interesting because it occurred in the highly hierarchical setting of Warrick's, where the power distance between the superiors and subordinates is substantial and challenges not very common. The rapport neglect example in this section showed that task-orientation, such as Gareth's in Warrick's, can overrule any rapport managing attempts.

Thus, the concept of rapport orientations proves a valuable tool in the analysis of rapport enhancement orientations, but turns out to be more problematic for other types of rapport orientation. The next step in my analysis was to find out why these interactions proved problematic. This led to the identification of four main problems, which are discussed in the following section.

4.3 Problems with the orientations

This section illustrates the difficulties that emerged during the analysis. Some of the interactions were difficult to identify as belonging to one of the four rapport orientations. Other interactions seemed to be limited in their interpretation by the categorisation into the orientations. An analysis of the problematic data resulted in the identification of four main reasons why the Rapport Management Framework seems unable to provide an adequate analysis of all the small business discourse data in this study. The first problem surrounds Spencer-Oatey's (2000a) definition of rapport. The second problem is epistemological in nature, namely that a researcher cannot determine speakers' intentions. The third difficulty is the assumption that orientations are managed in a sequential order and a last reason is the dyadic focus of the model. The problems identified and illustrated in this section are subsequently addressed in section 4.4 in which I propose developments that will improve the analytic strength of the Rapport Management Framework.

4.3.1 Rapport

A first problem concerns the working definition of *rapport*. Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) definition of politeness emphasises the harmonious aspect of social relations. Spencer-Oatey (2000a: 3) criticizes this and argues that speakers "sometimes attack rather than support their interlocutors". She includes this aspect in her definition of rapport management: "the use of language to promote, maintain or threaten harmonious social relations" (2000a: 3). This definition takes a necessary step away from traditional politeness theory by including challenging behaviour, but it still suggests that only *harmonious* relationships can be promoted, maintained or threatened. Yet, my data show how some participants manage a discordant relationship, suggesting that one can promote, maintain or threaten both harmonious

and *disharmonious* relationships. This section aims to show that it is problematic to see rapport as the equivalent of a harmonious relationship and that rapport should rather be seen as the *quality* of a relationship.

For example, Spencer-Oatey (2003) defines a rapport maintenance orientation as the wish to preserve the current state of the relationship. This may entail using a strategy to mitigate a rapport-threatening act in order to maintain harmonious relationship, but in my opinion a strategy can also be used to maintain an existing discordant relationship between interlocutors. For example, Gareth (see participant profile 4.1) seems to maintain discordant relationships with many of his employees. The following extract is an example of the direct manner in which Gareth talks to his employees.

Participant profile 4.16 – Melityala (Warrick’s)

Melityala is in his 60s and works in the wheel alignment area for six days a week. He has a rich repertoire consisting of nine languages (all of which he learned growing up on a farm in the northern part of South Africa): Xhosa (L1), English, Sotho, Tswana, Pedi, Tsonga, Zulu and Fanakalo. Melityala is an outgoing and very sociable man. Ruth, the mother of the owner, claims that some customers find him too forward.

Extract 22 Warrick’s (20 November 2012)

Melityala and Sisonke are driving a car towards wheel alignment when the alarm goes off. They are both trying to turn the alarm off when Gareth comes out of his office, shaking his head and shouting that there “is only a button right in the middle that you guys will never find” and that it is only the same in every car of that make. They find the button and drive away.

In terms of the rapport management framework and regardless of Gareth’s rapport orientation, his utterance poses a threat to the employees’ quality face (i.e. the desire to be positively evaluated in terms of one’s competence and abilities). The audience of customers further intensifies this potential damage to their quality face. If we

define rapport as a harmonious relationship, Gareth's behaviour can either be interpreted as challenging or neglect. It would be hard to distinguish whether he simply does not care about the relationship with his employees (indicating a rapport neglect orientation) or whether he deliberately chooses to harm a harmonious relationship (a rapport challenge orientation). This issue is further discussed in 4.3.2. Ethnographic data can help to infer the speaker's intentions, and in this case they reveal that the event in (22) does not stand on its own, as illustrated by the following two extracts. From the data emerges a pattern of forceful and discordant interaction styles by Gareth towards some of his employees.

Participant profile 4.17 – Thembani (Warrick's)

Thembani is 63 years old and works in the tyre-changing unit. He speaks Xhosa (L1), English and Afrikaans. He started working here before the current owners took over in 2004. He is a quiet man who both mutters and laughs a lot.

Extract 23 Warrick's (20 November 2012)

Thembani is standing in the frontstage and has just brought down four tyres. Gareth asks Thembani in a sarcastic tone how he expects to fit four tyres on five rims.

Extract 24 Warrick's (interview 19 November 2012)

An employee from the backstage told me that the former owners were very approachable. If you had a problem with your house or anything they would help you out in any way they could. Now, if you need to get something fixed in your house Gareth will tell you that he's not a bank.

What these examples show is that Gareth's relationship with some of his employees, including Melityala and Sisonke, is typically discordant. Thus, in extract (22) Gareth is not neglecting or challenging a *harmonious* relationship, because there was no harmonious relationship to start with. Instead, his style can be seen as a deliberate strategy to uphold and reinforce a discordant relationship with some of his employees. He even identified this strategy himself when we first met. After I had briefly explained that I wanted to look at relationships within the business, he started laughing and said: "Ha! Relationships? I only shout at them!" (fieldnotes 26/07/2012).

From this perspective, extracts (20), (22), (23) and (24) all demonstrate Gareth's maintenance of discordant relations with some of his employees.

Thus, Spencer-Oatey (2000a; 2007) defines rapport management as promoting, maintaining or threatening of harmonious social relations, while my data suggests that speakers can also actively promote, maintain or threaten *discordant* relationships. When co-workers are in a discordant relationship, they may choose to uphold this discordant relation, thus holding a rapport maintenance orientation. Accordingly, rapport should not be understood as a harmonious relationship but rather as the quality of a relationship. Section 4.4.1 explores and illustrates this in further detail. An important consequence of this reconceptualization of rapport is that any analysis of a rapport management act should begin by establishing the existing relationship between the participants. Ethnographically obtained information plays a valuable role in this regard. A second obstacle that makes the boundaries between the four orientations seem fuzzy is of epistemological nature.

4.3.2 Epistemological concerns

A second reason why the boundaries between the four rapport orientations appear fuzzy is because the notion relies on speakers' intentions. The only distinction between a rapport challenging and a rapport neglect orientation is the intention of the speaker. Both orientations impact the quality of rapport negatively, but a challenging orientation entails the desire to harm the quality of rapport, while a neglect orientation is a mere lack of interest in rapport. The problem here is that such intentions cannot be determined with any certainty. Spencer-Oatey alludes to this issue in her introduction to the orientations (2000b: 31):

Needless to say, people's rapport orientations are not available for open inspection. Unless people talk about them explicitly, they can only be inferred from their choice of rapport-management strategies. Even so, it may still be difficult to distinguish clearly one orientation from another. Nevertheless, the notion of interpersonal intent is an important issue in real-life interaction, and for that reason, I believe it needs to be included in any description of relational management.

The following extract illustrates this problem of identifying speakers' intentions. It describes an interaction between a customer and Richard (see participant profile 4.2), whose direct and short interactional behaviour can signal various rapport orientations.

Extract 25 Warrick's (fieldnotes 20 November 2012)

A customer (young black man) drives in. Denzel is on the phone and Richard is doing something on the computer. Richard takes his time before asking the customer how he can help him. The customer points out a strange noise coming from his car. Richard, still standing behind the counter, tells him in a short, direct manner to drive his car to the back. The customer does so, but Richard does not follow him and so the customer gets out of his car, walks back in and asks Richard where he should go. All Richard says is "first one on the right" and then continues to stare at his computer.

Regardless of his intentions, Richard's actions pose a considerable threat to the customer's quality face (by not acknowledging him) and equity rights (by making him wait and thus imposing on the customer's time). Richard's utterance *first one on the right* conveys a minimal amount of information and is very informal due to its shortness and the omission of a subject or verb.

If the customer was a regular and all the information that he required was conveyed in that short utterance, then the level of indirectness and informality might have signalled a solidarity strategy, as Richard would have relied on some shared knowledge with the customer. However, the customer does not appear to be a regular and seems uncertain about what is expected of him, so it is hard to interpret this as an attempt to enhance harmonious rapport levels. It is more difficult to determine whether Richard holds a rapport challenging or a rapport neglect orientation towards the customer. One possible interpretation is that Richard purposefully refrains from any mitigating strategies and opts for a bald on-record strategy to challenge his rapport with the customer. Another possibility is that Richard has little time to help the customer because he is busy with something and that he chooses to focus on the task rather than the relationship without having the intention to damage the rapport.

The bottom line is that there is no certain way of knowing what Richard's intentions are. Rapport orientations are an essential factor of rapport management, but even explicitly asking participants about their intentions may not provide a true answer. However, we can attempt to infer intentions by obtaining and analysing ethnographic data. Section 4.4.2 goes into further detail regarding this.

4.3.3 Simultaneous versus sequential orientations

A third reason why it was sometimes difficult to assign a single rapport orientation to a speaker is that the boundaries between enhancement, maintenance, challenge and neglect seem fuzzy. Moreover, the data suggests that participants are able to manage multiple orientations at once. Spencer-Oatey (2000b; 2005) does not elaborate how speakers hold rapport orientations or how these orientations might change during the course of an interaction, although she does allude to the dynamic nature of rapport orientations:

People's motives for these various orientations can be various, and of course, their orientations can change dynamically during the course of an interaction or series of interactions (Spencer-Oatey 2005: 96).

This description leads to the assumption that the orientations are different viewpoints that can change in sequential order. For instance, a speaker may begin a conversation holding a rapport enhancement orientation and switch to a challenge orientation after being insulted by the interlocutor. What Spencer-Oatey does not mention or take into account in her model is that orientations can be held simultaneously. This section aims to show that viewing orientations as being organised in a sequential manner will limit our understanding of the strategic and dynamic nature of rapport management. In support of this claim I provide examples of participants who skilfully manage multiple orientations on various levels at once.

To begin with, I want to argue that there is always interplay between enhancing and challenging rapport. If we consider the discussion in the previous section (that rapport can either entail a harmonious or a discordant relationship), challenging and enhancing are actually two sides of the same coin. In order to establish a new type of relationship one must first challenge the existing one. In other words, if one uses a rapport management strategy that challenges an existing relationship it is simultaneously building a new relationship. If we take another look at extract (14) from 4.2.1 (repeated below), Sjoerd's (see participant profile 4.9) apology for potentially threatening the customers' social identity face by mistaking their nationality is not a simple reflection of a rapport maintenance orientation.

Extract 14 McBicycle (8 October 2012)

1 Sjoerd: Hi

- 2 Customer (F): Hi
- 3 Customer (F): We want bike
- 4 Sjoerd: How are you?
Do you want to do this in your language or my language?
((Customers look confused))
((Starts speaking Castilian to them))
- 5 Customer (M): Oh no eh Greece
- 6 Customer (F): GREECE
- 7 Sjoerd: Greece? Ah sorry my bad
- 8 Customer (F): One bike for eh three hours
- 9 Sjoerd: ((Addressing the male customer)) And you already have a bike?

Sjoerd made a wrong guess and his mistake might have damaged their recently established rapport, creating a discordant relationship between them. Thus, the apology that tries to mitigate the effects of the mistake is challenging the recently created discordant relationship, while simultaneously building a harmonious relationship.

Interestingly, participants used this same principle on a larger scale as an efficient rapport management strategy. The following extract shows how Warrick's owner, Gareth (see participant profile 4.1), uses humour at the cost of a third party to achieve two things: he is reprimanding a subordinate (a courier who delivers tyres weekly), whilst trying to enhance rapport with three white, male customers. The interaction takes place in the frontstage of the shop. It starts with a short interaction between Gareth and the driver that is inaudible to the bystanders, but then Gareth raises his voice.

Extract 26 Warrick's (20 November 2012)

Gareth addresses the young, black man first in English: "No wonder you're a driver, you have no brains!" and then makes an utterance in Xhosa. Now Gareth turns to the customers and says: "Even in his own language he doesn't know what I'm talking about". He starts laughing and so do the customers.

The driver is silent throughout the event. He had clearly made a mistake or did

something that was not to Gareth's liking. Gareth's first statement (*No wonder you're a driver, you have no brains*) is a conversational implicature (Grice 1975) that can be derived as an insult. The utterance is an assertive and assertives commit the speaker to the truth. However, Gareth's assertion clearly breaks Grice's Maxim of quality, since it cannot be true that the courier does not have a brain and there is no reason to believe that the speaker no longer observes the Cooperative Principle. The assertive act can thus be derived as an insult that is posing a threat to the courier's quality face as it infringes his personal self-esteem. The perlocutionary force of the insult is increased by the presence of the bystanders.

Gareth then switches to the driver's first language, Xhosa, which is a display of his linguistic competence and also shows his control over the situation. With his third utterance, Gareth involves the bystanders and by making fun of a third party and attending to the customers' association rights, Gareth is trying to establish an in-group consisting of him and the customers. It can be argued that he is challenging his rapport with the driver and reinforcing the power hierarchy between a boss and his subordinate, but it is likely that Gareth is more concerned about the customers and that this overrides any concern for the face and rights of the driver. The customers hold a more powerful position than the courier in this participant structure and Gareth adheres to this hierarchy by involving them in his public humiliation of the driver. Thus, Gareth is strategically managing two orientations at the same time. He uses humour and insults as devices to exert control and hierarchical power, whilst trying to enhance rapport with his customers through solidarity.

So, although Spencer-Oatey (2000b) alludes to the dynamic nature of rapport management orientations, she writes that orientations can *change* in the course of an interaction, suggesting that this change is sequential. Yet, extracts (14) and (26) show that speakers manage various rapport orientations simultaneously. Extract (26) also demonstrates how rapport management efforts can be directed to different parties and this signals a fourth problem, as this dynamic aspect seems to be overlooked in the theorising of rapport orientations and the Rapport Management Framework remains too focused on dyadic interactions, as argued in the following section.

4.3.4 Dyadic versus group focus

The previous section has shown that speakers dynamically manage multiple orientations and that these orientations are not necessarily directed at the speaker's direct interlocutors. This section explores this multidirectional aspect of rapport management further and discusses the implications this has on business discourse in Warrick's and McBicycle.

The following extract shows a McBicycle employee displaying rude behaviour towards customers. With this extract I aim to show that the concept of speakers strategically managing multiple orientations at once can explain the seemingly inappropriate behaviour displayed by some participants. Before turning to the interaction and its analysis, I need to explain a bit more about the McBicycle community. McBicycle has developed a young and intimate in-group that exists foremost out of employees, but also a certain group of customers existing of young and enthusiastic tourists who fit McBicycle's image and vision of 'ideal customer'. However, not all customers are potential in-group members and there is one type in particular that McBicycle employees disapprove of. Alexis and Peter tell me that she is commonly known as *Mevrouw Belachelijk* (*Mrs Ridiculous*). *Mevrouw Belachelijk* is a middle-aged, wealthy woman who is used to getting what she wants. She earns her name by complaining about all of McBicycle's services and procedures. She is always able to find something, such as opening times or deposits, that she finds utterly *belachelijk* (English: *ridiculous*).

In extract (27) employee Sjoerd (see participant profile 4.9) might be drawing on this stereotype of *Mevrouw Belachelijk* in his approach towards two middle-aged, Flemish-speaking women. The event takes place at the counter in the frontstage of the shop. It is a Sunday morning and Sjoerd is having a rough time. He had a late night, is slightly grumpy and his colleague Saar just told him he stinks of booze. The two customers have been staring for a while at the information board above their heads (see Figure 4.3), when Sjoerd asks them which type of bicycle they would like (the choice is between handbrakes and pedal brakes).



Figure 4.3 Information board above the counter in McBicycle

The customers look at him confused and raise their eyes back to the information board. Sjoerd takes this as a cue to attend to some other customers. Upon his return, he repeats his question and this is again met with incomprehension from the customers.

Extract 27 McBicycle (23 September 2012)

- 1 Customer1: Bij ons is een fiets een fiets
Where we are from, a bicycle is a bicycle
- 2 Customer2: ((Laughs softly))
- 3 Sjoerd: Ja dit zijn ook gewoon fietsen hoor (3s)
Yes these are also simply bicycles, mind you
Nou zeg het es wat wil je eh wat wilt u hebben? (2s)
Well tell me what do you eh what do you want?
Anders krijgt u geen fiets mee
Otherwise you won't get a bicycle
((Turns to other customers and points to the information screen on the counter that explains the choice between bicycles))
(7s)
- 4 Customer1: Nou ((inaudible)) [maar een vreemde] ((inaudible))
Well what a strange
- 5 Customer2: ((Laughs))
(5s)

- 6 Sjoerd: Nou dames vertel wat wilt u hebben?
Well ladies tell me what can I get you?
- 7 Customer1: Een fiets
A bicycle
- 8 Sjoerd: Ja okee = dan krijgt u van mij = handremmen
Yeah okay then I will get you handbrakes
- 9 Customer1: = ((inaudible)) = ja (.) ja
yes yes
((Customers walk out))
- 10 Sjoerd: GOEIENDAG ((turns to me)) dan niet hoor (1s) blijft maar
Good day never mind then keeps
treuzelen over wat ze willen
dawdling about what they want

I begin with a turn-by-turn analysis of this event. Then, I discuss how the interplay of code and strategy choices in this extract reflects business discourse in McBicycle and subsequently how this links back to the general argument that multiple orientations can be managed simultaneously.

In line (1), the customer's statement *where we are from, a bicycle is a bicycle* is showing her confusion about the options she has been given. She uses an exclusive *we* that creates a distance between her and Sjoerd, while simultaneously showing herself and Customer 2 to be part of an in-group. Perhaps it is also a cultural *we*, creating some cultural 'otherness' between the Dutch and the Flemish.

In line (2), Sjoerd replies in an agitated tone that McBicycle's bicycles are also simply bicycles. The Dutch pragmatic particle *hoor* literally means *hear* and roughly translates into *mind you*. Using *hoor* in an utterance-final position emphasises the assertion. It also signals that the speaker has no desire for any acknowledgement or acceptance from the hearer about the assertion (Kirsner and Van Heuven 1990). The assertion thus expresses Sjoerd's lack of interest in the customers' confusion. By not addressing the customers' need for additional information, Sjoerd is threatening the customers' interactional association rights. As customers they expect and require more involvement from Sjoerd, which he is not giving them.

Sjoerd continues with a command, *now tell me*, which introduces a request for information, *what can I get you?* There are three interesting things happening in this utterance. Firstly, Sjoerd is becoming impatient, which is shown by the direct manner in which he reiterates his initial question and the Dutch particle *nou* meaning *now* or *well*. The particle *nou* expresses the attitude of the speaker and in combination with an imperative it expresses impatience (ANS 1997). Secondly, the command *nou zeg het es* (*now tell me*) poses a possible threat to the customer's equity rights (i.e. entitlement to be treated fairly and not be unfairly ordered about). However, the threat seems to be mitigated by the pragmatic particle *es*. *Es* is an informal shortened form of *eens*, which literally means *once*, and according to Kirsner (2003) it is conventionally used to soften face and rights threats. Thirdly, there is an interesting style-shift from the informal *je* to the more formal *u* (*you*). The politeness marker *u* is a feature of Flemish politeness norms and its use here seems to signal an accommodation strategy. The choice of the customer's code would normally be seen as a quality face enhancing strategy and a sign of solidarity. Yet, with Sjoerd's rude and impatient tone this hypercorrection seems almost ironic, especially since it is followed by an ultimatum that they will not receive a bicycle at all if they do not choose. This again threatens the customers' equity rights by ordering them about.

Lines (4) and (5) show that the customers are slightly taken aback by Sjoerd's confrontation. Their indignation is expressed by the particle *nou* as well as the nervous laughter of Customer 2 in line (5). Sjoerd continues his confrontational style in line (6). Again he uses a combination of *nou* and an imperative (*well ladies, tell me*) to express his impatience and the reiteration of his questions (*what can I get you?*) is pressing the customers for an answer and again threatening their equity rights (i.e. their right to not be unfairly imposed upon and their entitlement to considerate treatment). Tensions have now risen and Sjoerd has asked the customers what they wanted and is now expecting a decision for either handbrakes or pedal brakes. Instead, Customer 1, in all her bewilderment, answers with the one thing she is still certain of: she wants a bicycle. Sjoerd's patience has now run out and instead of giving the customer the much-needed additional information he takes the decision from their hands and says in an agitated tone that he will get them some handbrakes. The customers then mumble that they will take their business somewhere else (this is

not audible in the recordings but noted in my fieldnotes) and exercise their last attempt at regaining some power by leaving the shop.

Sjoerd sends them off with a loud *good day*, which reinforces their discordant relationship. He might be challenging their behaviour, but since he has already established a discordant relationship with them there is likely another purpose. The loud tone in which Sjoerd speaks suggests that he is drawing the attention of his colleagues to show them that this excluding exercise reinforces their in-group relations and is thus in their interest. He then turns his attention to me and says *never mind then*. What follows seems a justification for his rapport challenging behaviour, which might be an attempt to repair possible damage done to his own quality face (i.e. his desire to be evaluated positively). The sentence *blijft maar treuzelen* (*keeps dawdling*) shows a subject drop, which suggests a style-shift from the hyper-polite use of *u* towards the customers to a more informal register directed at me.

In terms of rapport management Sjoerd's choices of a direct style and an impatient and agitated tone threaten the customers' equity rights (i.e. the right to be treated fairly and not be unduly imposed upon). His lack of patience and assistance threaten the customers' interactional rights (i.e. the right to an appropriate amount of interaction). Together these threats to equity and association rights and the lack of any redressive strategies form a general threat to the customers' social identity face, since they are not being acknowledged as valued customers. This extract forms part of a larger pattern observed in McBicycle in which employees, at times, displayed inconsiderate and rude behaviour towards customers. Further examples of this behaviour can be found in (28) and (29) discussed further below.

In extract (27), Sjoerd displays his challenging behaviour almost immediately from the start, which seems to suggest that he positions the customers as soon as they walk in, just as he did with the Greek couple in extract (14). A couple of days later he tells me that he often tries to guess where customers are from as soon as they walk through the door, so he can greet them in their own language (fieldnotes 08/10/2012). He seems to do the same here, except he is drawing on the stereotype of *Mevrouw Belachelijk* (*Mrs Ridiculous*). This also seems to be supported by the lack of agreement in line (10) between the singular *blijft* (English: *keeps*) and the plural

subject, which could indicate that Sjoerd sees them as group representatives of an undesirable type of customers rather than as individuals. The subject drop in that line also allows him to generalise. Suddenly, the challenging orientation towards the customer emerges as a strategy to enhance or maintain rapport in the McBicycle community. Sjoerd fulfils the role of gatekeeper in which his rapport challenging orientation is effectively excluding the customers from the desired in-group, which thereby creates and reinforces the McBicycle identity. This interaction can thus be interpreted on an individual level in which Sjoerd challenges rapport with customers, as well as on a group level in which the participants become group representatives and Sjoerd is actively negotiating the identity of the McBicycle community by excluding an undesirable type of customer. There is, to a certain extent, room for employees to do such boundary work because McBicycle's success does not rely on the satisfaction of a single customer since they have a diverse customer base and contact with a single customer is often a once-off event.

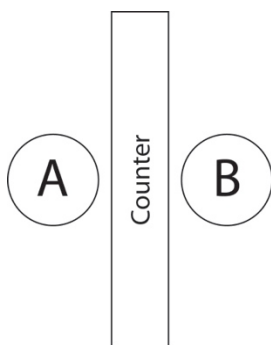


Figure 4.4: Rapport management on an individual level

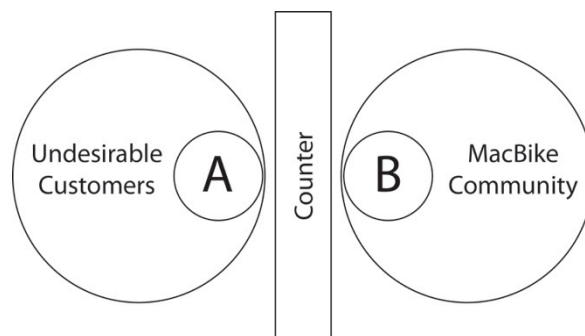


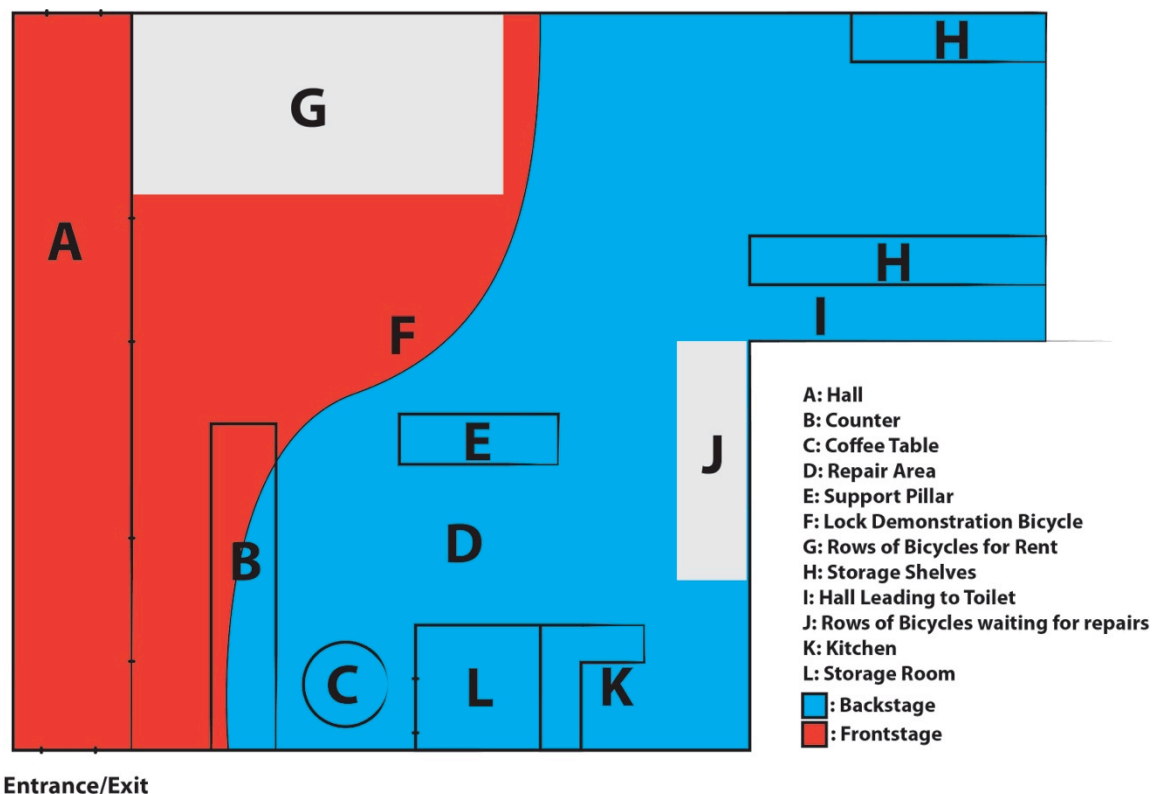
Figure 4.5: Rapport management on a group level

Figures 4.4 and 4.5 present the possible levels of interpretation. On an individual level employee B is challenging rapport with customer A for seemingly no apparent reason. However, Sjoerd is not only managing rapport on an individual level. Instead, he is also managing rapport on behalf of the larger McBicycle community (see Figure 4.5) and as a group representative he is reinforcing the in-group by excluding a group of undesired customers, collectively known as *Mevrouw Belachelijk*.

Another way of describing the event is that the interlocutors are oriented towards different *centres of authority* (Blommaert 2010). Sjoerd is adhering to the norms that

emanate from the McBicycle community, whereas the customers are oriented to the abstract idea of appropriate customer service and the norms and appropriate behaviour of a sales interaction and they are not receiving the service they expected.

Figures 4.4 and 4.5 further illustrate that the counter acts as a barrier between the two groups, signalling that the geographical space of the interaction might support the boundary work by the participants. Figure 3.5 from section 3.3.1.1 (repeated below) shows how the backstage centres around the repair area behind the counter, and the frontstage is found before the counter and towards the area at the end of the counter, where the bicycles are parked.



The employees stand behind the counter on the border between the two stages. That space is their domain in which they can assert their expert power and fulfil their role as gatekeepers. The further a customer walks beyond the counter and towards the centre of the backstage, the closer they get to the core members of the community. The following extracts further illustrate the role of space in the boundary work of the

employees.

Participant profile 4.18 – Saar (McBicycle)

Saar is a 20-year-old student at the Fashion Institute in Amsterdam. She is an energetic, self-assured part-timer who works for one or two days a week in the frontstage of the shop. Her first language is Dutch and she is fluent in English, has some competence in Spanish and a truncated competence in French (she knows just enough words to rent out a bicycle but would not be able to hold a conversation in French).

The next two extracts show more support for the claim that McBicycle employees sometimes challenge customer relationships in order to create and reinforce the boundaries of their McBicycle in-group. They also show the role that humour plays as a device to create and reinforce in- and out-groups. The participants in extract (28) are Saar, and an English man in his early thirties, who has been living in the Netherlands for four years. The conversation is in English and takes place at the counter, where Saar is making a copy of the customer's passport and the customer initiates some small talk.

Extract 28 McBicycle (27 September 2012)

- | | | |
|---|-----------|--|
| 1 | Customer: | Who do you think you get here the most? Spanish? |
| 2 | Saar: | Yeah I think so. |
| 3 | Customer: | Cos they are the most dangerous drivers. I already |
| 4 | | crashed into four. |
| 5 | Saar: | So maybe it's you who can't drive. |

The customer attempts to create some common ground between him and Saar. He sets this up in line (1), where he asks Saar a question (and provides a possible answer). With this he attends to Saar's interactional association rights, showing interest and providing small talk. Saar goes along with it, uttering an informal and tentative *yeah, I think so*. The customer then makes an assertion, based on the assumption that tourists are generally seen as notoriously dangerous cyclists. He reinforces his statement with a personal experience. With this, he is again attending to Saar's association rights by sharing an experience he assumes they share. So, the customer attempts to create

some common ground and hints at a sense of solidarity between citizens of Amsterdam who share the same experience dealing with inexperienced tourists on bicycles.

It is interesting to see how the customer attempts to minimise the distance between himself and Saar, as if to bridge the physical boundary of the counter that stands between them. He tries to look for the common denominator across this counter that divides the customers from the McBicycle employees and the outsiders from the insiders. With her reply in line (5), Saar re-establishes this physical and imagined boundary between them by turning the joke on the customer. With her joke that instead of the Spaniards, the customer might be the cause of the crashes, she rejects his attempt to position himself as an in-group member. Living in Amsterdam for four years does not make you 'one of us' in Saar's eyes. She uses humour not only to reject his rapport building attempt, but also to position him as an outsider of both the McBicycle community as well as the Amsterdam community. This poses a threat to the customer's quality face (i.e. the desire to be evaluated positively) as well as his social identity face by denying the existence of a relationship through shared experience between them. Similarly to Sjoerd in the previous extract, Saar is performing a gatekeeping role and manages two rapport orientations simultaneously. She is challenging her rapport with the customer and positions him as an out-group member, which is reinforcing the McBicycle community boundary and aimed at enhancing Saar's rapport with her fellow group members. In this event, Saar's colleagues are standing beside her and can overhear her conversation. At other times, boundary work is still done even if there is only an 'imagined presence' of the broader McBicycle community.

Extract (29) is another example of how humour is employed to negotiate and reinforce in- and out-group boundaries and thereby enhances group relationships while challenging rapport with a customer. The interaction takes place at McBicycle's counter. The participants are Sjoerd (see participant profile 4.9) and two Italian customers (a man and woman) who just walked in.

Extract 29 McBicycle (8 October 2012)

1 Customer: Do you have all kinds of eh...

- 2 Sjoerd: Hi bro, how are you?
- 3 Customer: How are you? Do you have all kinds of eh... the one that fits her?
- 4 Me: The kind that fits her ((laughs))
- 5 ((Sjoerd does not laugh and pulls a very serious face))
- 6 Customer: Small people ya (2s) he's not laughing (2s)
- 7 Sjoerd: No. You're not gonna fit on a big bike either ((roaring laugh))
- 8 Customer: Ehm: now now I'm being ehm: so ehm (4s)
- 9 Sjoerd: What do you wanna know?
- 10 Customer: We want to rent two bikes

The first utterance of the customer is marked by the lack of conventional small talk in the form of a greeting. Instead the customer opens with a request for information, which is not acknowledged by Sjoerd. Sjoerd greets the customer with an informal *hi bro* and some small talk enquiring after the customer's well-being. If this were the opening line of the interaction, the small talk would be regarded as rapport maintenance or enhancement. However, it is not the opening line and Sjoerd ignores the customer's request, which poses a threat to the customer's social identity face by not acknowledging his turn. Moreover, by pointing out the lack of conventionalised small talk in the opening phase of the conversation, Sjoerd poses a threat to the customer's quality face (i.e. the desire to be positively evaluated in terms of one's abilities). Sjoerd uses small talk in the same challenging manner in extract (14) and thus it seems that he is using this to put customers in their place and exert his power and control over the interaction.

In line (3), the customer acknowledges Sjoerd's initiative and he returns the small talk before restating his question. With this move, the customer attempts to challenge the emerged discordant relationship and, thus, to create a more harmonious relationship. The word *bicycle* remains implicit in line (1) and (3). Perhaps it is omitted because it seems to be common knowledge, but it is also possible that the customer's knowledge of English is failing him at that time. In line (4), I express that I find the customer's enquiry humorous (especially since the man is not much taller than his partner), by

echoing the customer's words and laughing. In line (6), the customer points out that Sjoerd has maintained a serious face through all of this and implies that this response is marked or not what the customer expected. Sjoerd replies with a joke, recognised and supported by loud, roaring laughter. He uses the customer's own remark to put him into place. Sjoerd's rapport-challenging act rejects the customer's attempt to be humorous and the customer's hesitant response in line (8) may show that his quality face has indeed been damaged. The damage is intensified by the presence of bystanders. Line (9) shows another power display by Sjoerd when he takes control of the topic and changes to a business, transactional-orientated frame. Steering the conversation to a safer topic is a discourse domain strategy of topic management. It can be construed as a repair strategy aimed at challenging the recently created discordant relationship to make it more harmonious. Topic management also displays a degree of authority and control over the interaction (Saville-Troike 2003).

Again in this extract, the customer tries to create an in-group by making fun of a third party, but is stopped by an employee and repositioned as an out-group member. Sjoerd seems to establish that this type of humour is not accepted behaviour in the McBicycle community (although established core members, like himself, are allowed to use this type of humour). Sjoerd's rapport challenging behaviour exemplifies how McBicycle employees draw on rapport management strategies to actively negotiate and reinforce a McBicycle community. This boundary work indicates that group cohesion may take precedence over customer relations. Employees can afford to deviate from a customer-is-king-approach, because McBicycle's success does not rely on the satisfaction of a single customer. In other words, there is space for McBicycle employees to create and reinforce a McBicycle community identity and to take up a role as gatekeepers. In extract (27) to (29), both Saar and Sjoerd take up the role of gatekeepers, negotiating group boundaries by challenging rapport with customers who they have judged undesirable as in-group members. For new employees, this would entail that they need to acquire the normative rules and behaviour to become full-fledged members of the community of practice. The quicker they do this, the sooner they can establish themselves as core members and thus as gatekeepers of the community.

Extracts (27) to (29) illustrate how employees negotiated a McBicycle identity through customer interactions. Spencer-Oatey (2002) discusses how face and right concerns can be personally orientated (regarding interlocutors as individuals), group-orientated (regarding interlocutors as group representatives), or a mixture of both. In their study of rapport management amongst British and Chinese business people, Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2000) found that corporate identity played a major role and this also emerged from the Amsterdam data in my study. This shows that rapport management efforts are not restricted to the direct interlocutors (the employee and customer) but can involve larger group concerns. This is an interesting discussion that is, unfortunately, never mentioned by Spencer-Oatey (2000b) in relation to the rapport management orientations. In this section I argue that a dyadic focus restrains the interpretation of more complex situations of rapport management in small business discourse. Instead, speakers should be regarded as possible group representatives since this can reveal a potential covert function of the speakers' discordant behaviour.

The observed patterns in Grahamstown and Amsterdam warrant an emphasis on the tension between interpersonal and intergroup orientations. In both workplaces, group concerns often overrule individual rights and concerns. The direction at which this group focus is aimed differs between the businesses. In Warrick's, group cohesion efforts are primarily directed externally, creating an in-group between management and customers. By contrast, McBicycle's group cohesion efforts are mostly directed internally, creating an in-group of employees. In addition, Warrick's emphasis on customer rapport is sometimes at the expense of employee relationships. This is shown, for example, in extract (26) from the previous section.

Extract 26 Warrick's (fieldnotes 20 November 2012)

Gareth addresses the young, black man first in English: "no wonder you're a driver, you have no brains!" and then an utterance in Xhosa. Now Gareth turns to the customers and says: "Even in his own language he doesn't know what I'm talking about". He starts laughing and so do the customers.

Gareth opts here for a public shaming of his subordinate in order to create an in-group between him and the customer. By involving them in the event Gareth attends to the customers' affective interactional rights (i.e. sharing of humour, experiences and

concerns). Similarly, McBicycle employees sometimes use customer interactions to negotiate and reinforce their McBicycle identity. Employees constructed a vertical hierarchy and displayed their power by positioning the customers as outside members and thereby reinforcing their relationship with the in-group members (see previous section 4.3.3 for a full discussion). Figure 4.6 gives a representation of the primary relational focus in Warrick's and McBicycle. The horizontal axis represents the continuum of customer relationships, which can either be harmonious (+) or discordant (-), and on the vertical axis are the employee relationships. McBicycle and Warrick's are on two ends of the spectrum, but businesses can find themselves anywhere in this field. For example, some businesses may emphasis harmonious rapport with both staff and customers (positioning themselves in the upper right corner of Figure 4.6), whereas other businesses might neglect harmonious relationships altogether (and find themselves in the bottom left corner of Figure 4.6). Discord is not unique to unequal societies or societies with a rigid hierarchical structure. Discord is everywhere, but it is expressed and dealt with differently in different societies.

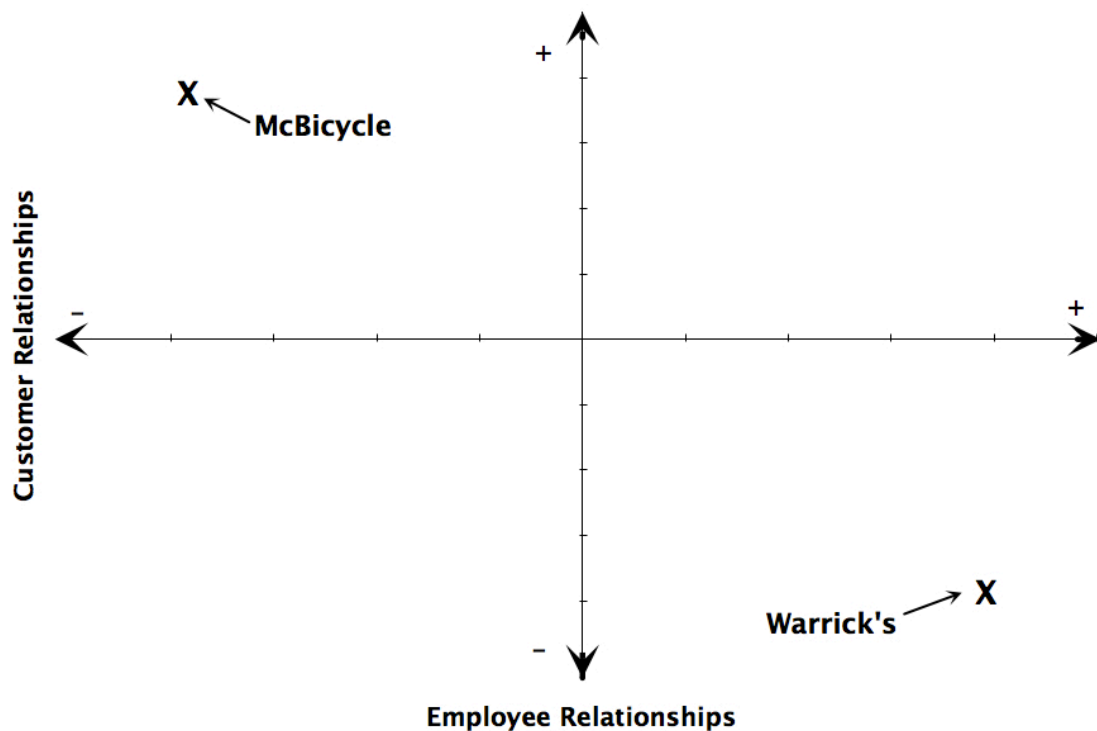


Figure 4.6: The different relational focus in Warrick's and McBicycle

The different rapport directions in Warrick's and McBicycle correspond with the different types of customers. Lancaster (2012: 67) examined entrepreneurship and family businesses in Grahamstown and found that "all of the businesses, to some degree, attribute their survival to the loyal customers within the local economy of Grahamstown." That is certainly true for Warrick's. Employee Denzel estimates he knows eight out of ten people that walk into the business in a day (interview 30/11/2012). Since most small businesses rely heavily on their loyal customers it is important to maintain and build a strong relationship with them, especially in a small community like Grahamstown. On the contrary, Amsterdam is a larger and thus more anonymous city and McBicycle sees many new customers in a day. A substantial amount of their customers are tourists (employees' estimates ranged from 40 to 60% of all customers), who are not likely to become regulars. Customer interactions are thus fleeting and likely to be a once-off event. McBicycle also has a larger customer base than Warrick's and so their success does not rely as much on the satisfaction level of a single customer. Instead, McBicycle's rapport management efforts are much more focused on creating and reinforcing a close employee community. Creating a sense of collegiality and maintaining a pleasant work environment suits the larger socioeconomic context in which power structures are typically flat, role-relationships are negotiable and other job opportunities are available to employees. In addition, McBicycle needs to attract the right kind of employees that will suit its brand image of being young, cosmopolitan and multilingual, and then needs to help this type of employee keep to the values and attitude of the business by maintaining a sense of collegiality within the business.

Figure 4.6 shows the main but not exclusive directions of rapport management in both shops. Of course, Warrick's employees also manage rapport internally. For instance, Richard and Denzel joke a lot with each other behind the counter (see extract 6 in 4.2.1.1). Another example is when four participants, from the frontstage and the workshop, on a quiet afternoon started to share concerns and frustrations about the working conditions and top management (such as unpaid sick leave) (fieldnotes 16/11/2012). By sharing their frustrations they created a sense of solidarity, which enhanced their affective association rights. Similarly, McBicycle employees not only manage rapport amongst each other but also direct this to customers. This was shown, for instance, in extract (7) in which an employee engages in small talk to enhance the

customers' quality face. Yet, rapport management efforts in both workplaces distinctly have either an external (Warrick's) or an internal (McBicycle) perspective.

To return to the theoretical argument of this chapter, relationships are dynamic and complex and the extracts above show that people manage rapport in an efficient and economical way. Seeing rapport orientations as inherently dynamic and multidirectional strengthens the explanatory power of the concept of rapport management orientations. Considering that speakers may position themselves and others as group representatives adds another level of interpretation that sheds new light on the seemingly discordant and deviant behaviour of some participants.

4.3.5 Conclusion

In this section I have argued that the Rapport Management Framework is not responsive enough to incorporate more complex situations of rapport management. Many of the interactions that proved problematic during the analysis involved behaviour that would be classified as rapport challenging according to the original Rapport Management Framework. Spencer-Oatey's (2000b) framework moves away from Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) Politeness Theory by including challenging behaviour as an aspect of rapport management. Yet, studies that apply the Rapport Management Framework have tended not to take this further and rapport management research typically overemphasises the harmonious side of rapport management. The aspects of the model dealing with discordant relationships and orientations have therefore not sufficiently been developed or expanded on. The extracts discussed in this section show that the model is not yet responsive enough to incorporate the more challenging side of interpersonal relationship management.

Four main problems emerged during the analysis:

- **Rapport has a limited scope.** Spencer-Oatey (2000a; 2005) defines rapport as a harmonious relationship, but my data suggest that speakers can also maintain a discordant relationship.
- **One cannot access a speaker's rapport intentions.** A researcher cannot know the intentions of a speaker with any certainty. This weakens the analytical use of the notion of a rapport neglect orientation.

- **It is assumed that orientations are managed in a sequential manner.** The data shows that speakers are effective and economical rapport managers who can hold multiple orientations simultaneously.
- **The framework focuses too strongly on dyadic interactions.** Focusing on two parties in an interaction obscures an interpretation that involves three or more parties, which are types of interactions observed in both workplaces.

Some of these problems have been referred to by Spencer-Oatey (2000b; 2002; 2005) in passing in her discussion of other aspects of rapport management. Yet, they are not properly theorised in her description of the rapport orientations. Thus, a simple way of strengthening the analytical use of this concept is to integrate discussions such as the existence of interpersonal versus intergroup rapport management (Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2000) into a description of rapport orientations. This and other developments that address the problems discussed above are explored in the following section.

4.4 Strengthening the Rapport Management Framework

This section addresses the problems described in the previous section and explores ways in which certain concepts of the current Rapport Management Framework can be adapted and developed to create an Enhanced Rapport Management Framework, a model that is better equipped to deal with the complex nature of small business discourse. Each argument is supported and illustrated by extracts from the data set.

4.4.1 Definition of rapport

In 4.3.1 I argued that Spencer-Oatey's (2000a; 2005) narrow definition of rapport has a limited scope. Data revealed that speakers not only maintain, enhance or threaten *harmonious* relationships (as Spencer-Oatey describes), but also maintain, enhance or threaten *discordant* relationships. Therefore, I suggest the following redefinition of rapport:

- (1) **Rapport** is the quality of a relationship and this includes both harmonious and discordant relationships.

Understanding rapport as the quality of a relationship, rather than a harmonious relationship entails a reconceptualization of both rapport and rapport management. Figure 4.7 shows how interactants can either manage a harmonious or a discordant relationship and how this affects the quality of the relationship.

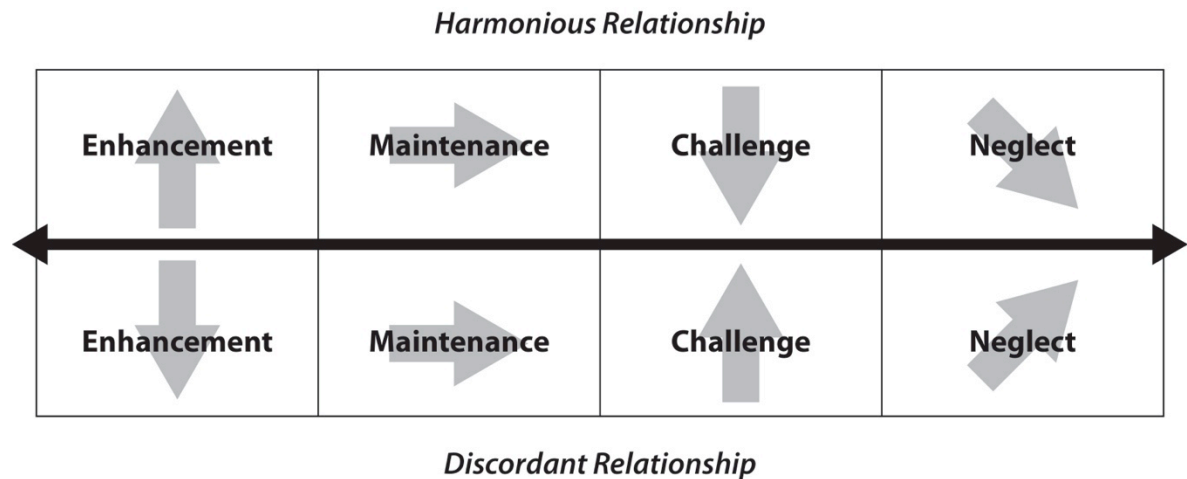


Figure 4.7 Reconceptualisation of rapport orientations

For example, a speaker can enhance a harmonious relationship and improve it, but a speaker can also enhance a discordant relationship, thereby making it more discordant. Similarly, a speaker can either maintain a harmonious or a discordant relationship, though this does not affect the quality of the relationship. When a speaker challenges a harmonious relationship it results in a more discordant relationship and, vice versa, when a discordant relationship is challenged the relationship becomes more harmonious. Lastly, neglecting a harmonious relationship will initially make it less harmonious and neglecting a discordant relationship can make it less discordant, but if a speaker neglects a relationship long, the quality of the relationship will converge on zero, i.e. it will be as though no relationship exists.

To illustrate this reconceptualization of rapport, we return once more to Sjoerd and his Greek customers (extract 14 in 4.2.2 and 4.3.3). Sjoerd’s apology for mistaking the customers’ nationality and possibly threatening their quality face is not simply maintaining rapport. The mistake may have threatened their recently established harmonious rapport, making it a discordant relationship. In this sense, the apology that tries to mitigate the results of the mistake is challenging their discordant relationship. As a consequence of this reconceptualization, it becomes essential for

any interpretation of rapport management acts to uncover the pre-existing rapport between the participants. Section 4.3.1 examined Gareth's rapport management style, which at first seemed neglectful or challenging. However, ethnographic data reveals that his behaviour is not confined to a single event but rather is a reinforced and sustained pattern of maintaining discordant relationships. Triangulation with ethnographic data, especially participants' perspectives, proves very valuable in establishing the quality of a relationship. Of course, as Campbell, White and Johnson (2003) note, participants might not always agree on the quality of their relationship. In these instances it is up to the researcher to strike a balance between contrasting perspectives as well as to arrive at a convergence between analysts' and participants' perspectives by incorporating data gathered through observations and recording of communicative events.

4.4.1.1 Rapport management as power negotiation

In addition to redefining rapport as the quality of a relationship, I want to draw attention to the strong connection between the management of rapport and the management of power role-relationships in both businesses. Power plays a role in most rapport management research, but it is not often foregrounded (e.g. Campbell and Davis 2006; Paramasivam 2011; García 2009), with the exception of Campbell, White and Johnson (2003) and Schnurr and Chan (2011), who specifically looked at rapport management in asymmetrical relationships. Spencer-Oatey (2011) even describes a general shift from traditional pragmatics that identifies two key dimensions in participant relations, power and distance, to more recent scholars who take a more dynamic approach, using different continua. Yet, from my specific data set a strong connection emerges between the management of rapport and power negotiations and positioning. The following four examples illustrate how power emerges as a central feature of rapport management in both workplaces.

The first example is the use of Xhosa in the tyre changing area in Warrick's backstage. Xhosa is the first language of the members of the tyre-changing unit and forms the dominant language of that specific area. In my presence, the employees only switched to English when they addressed me directly. The rest of the time they spoke in Xhosa, which effectively positioned me as an outsider. Interestingly, when the boss or the manager entered this space, they would start talking in English to the

employees and then switch to Xhosa to repeat their instructions (fieldnotes 01/11/2012). Typically, the use of the interlocutor's first language signals an accommodation strategy, which has the potential to reduce power distance and enhance a harmonious relationship. However, this does not explain why they would start off in English. Instead, Gareth and Neil's choice of English in this area establishes a sense of authority and by repeating their instructions in Xhosa they seem to imply that the hearer might not have understood them in English. The switch is thus patronising and the use of Xhosa in this situation can be seen as not only a display of their multilingual repertoire but also as a sign of control. Extract (26) showed how Gareth used Xhosa in a patronising and denigrating way to reprimand a courier. Other examples, such as (22) and (23), have shown that Gareth holds a discordant relationship with many of his employees, which suggests that he does not use Xhosa as an accommodation strategy in this case, but that he interprets the use of Xhosa as a sign of linguistic power or linguistic superiority. So, the use of Xhosa for Gareth provides a way to establish and reinforce the power positions at play.

Interestingly, frontstage employee Denzel (see participant profile 4.7) switches from Xhosa to English in the same area. Extract (30) shows Denzel giving instructions to Thembani (see participant profile 4.17) in Xhosa and then switching to English to confirm that the instructions are understood.

Extract 30 Warrick's (fieldnotes 05 November 2012)

Denzel is giving Thembani instructions in Xhosa about a customer's car. He finishes off in English: "understand?". Denzel checks if the information is received and understood in English, while Gareth and Neil often give instructions in English and then seek confirmation in Xhosa.

By giving his colleague instructions, Denzel is already positioning himself in a higher power position than Thembani and this is reinforced by the use of English. English is the language of the frontstage of the business and the language spoken by those in power (i.e. the owner and top management). Denzel's switch to English can thus be seen as an upscaling of his message to a higher, more authoritative scale. This is, similar to the code-switching by Gareth, an example of how language choice is used

to negotiate power relationships and to reinforce the hierarchy in the tyre-changing area.

A second example of how rapport management entails power negotiations in Warrick's is extract (20) from 4.2.3, which is repeated below.

Extract 20 Warrick's (24 November 2012)

- 1 Velile: BYE
- 2 Gareth: BYE KWEDINI (*little boy*)
- 3 Velile: Bye kwedini my gat (*little boy my arse*) ((only audible to me and Sandile))

This short interaction is a prime example of the (limited) individual agency to negotiate power role-relationships in an otherwise rigid hierarchical structure. Velile challenges the existing power relation between him and his superior. Gareth rejects this challenge and reinforces the power hierarchy of the business by positioning Velile as a *kwedini*. Velile in turn refuses this positioning, but his refusal is merely an attempt to save his own face in front of the bystanders. He does seem to accept that his challenge is constrained by the power relationship between him and his superior by not voicing his rejection loudly enough for Gareth to hear.

The third example is Marcel's management style in McBicycle, which sharply contrasts with Gareth's top-down and hierarchical management style in Warrick's. Marcel uses strategies such as small talk (e.g. extract 7), teasing (e.g. extract 5) and anecdotes to enhance his colleagues' social identity face by emphasising solidarity and positioning them as in-group members of the McBicycle community. This minimises the overt power differences between them and creates a more horizontal power structure.

A fourth and last example of power negotiations through rapport management comes from Sjoerd (see participant profile 4.9) who wanted to change his temporary contract with McBicycle into a permanent one. To achieve this, Sjoerd opted for a rapport enhancement campaign aimed at his manager Marcel (see participant profile 4.3). His efforts were mainly aimed at the things they had in common, such as parties they had

both attended or plainly being Dutch (only two other employees are of Dutch nationality). By reiterating the things they have in common, Sjoerd attempts to minimise the distance between them. Thus, his rapport management entailed the negotiation of a more equal relationship between him and his superior. Extract (31) shows an interaction between Marcel and three English-speaking customers, one woman and two men. Sjoerd passes by and strategically uses Dutch to position himself and Marcel as in-group members.

Extract 31 McBicycle (21 September 2012)

Marcel is standing at the demonstration bike and shows three customers how the locks work.

- 1 Marcel: Always make sure you (0.5s) lock with two hands. Put it back. Pinnetje (*pin*) back. Turn it back and then you come back over this and then this way and then you can go. Ja? (*yes?*) All clear? (0.5s) Goed (*good*)
- 2 Sjoerd: Dikke tetten (*big breasts*)
- 3 Marcel: Erh tetten? (*breasts?*) Okay here is some bikes. A tall one [0.5s] and you try this one.

Line (1) shows Marcel explaining how to close the lock and then wrap it around the seat. The word *pinnetje* also shows an interesting characteristic of Marcel's repertoire. He mentioned to me that he is fluent in Double Dutch, i.e. gibberish (interview 17/09/2012), which mostly entailed a high level of code-switching. The intra-word code-switch *pinnetje* is a hybrid form of the English *pin* with the Dutch diminutive morpheme *-tje*. Then Sjoerd passes by and says *dikke tetten*, which is slang for big breasts. Sjoerd is making this rude utterance in the frontstage of the shop, in front of customer, yet it remains backstage talk since the English-speaking customers are not likely to understand it. Sjoerd uses Dutch to emphasise the similarities between himself and Marcel and increases the effect by effectively creating an out-group consisting of the customers. Marcel is briefly distracted and smiles, but quickly continues his interaction with the customer. He does not explicitly respond to Sjoerd's contribution but instead keeps it their little secret by pretending that nothing unusual has just occurred.

To conclude, I have redefined *rapport* to mean the quality of a relationship rather than Spencer-Oatey's (2000a) definition of a harmonious relationship. In addition, I found that rapport management appeared to be the equivalent of the management of power positions and role-relationships in my specific data set. This does not necessarily entail that the same is true for other small business, but it does imply that the influence of power and distance should not be underestimated in a theory of rapport management.

4.4.2 The Rapport Management Principle

Rapport orientations presume knowledge of the intentions of the speaker. As discussed in 4.3.2, there is no direct access to speakers' intentions and this is problematic when applying the concept of rapport orientations as an analytical tool. One way of dealing with this issue is to consider this in line with Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, which states that speakers' contributions are always conversationally cooperative. The Cooperative Principle thus helps to explain indirect speech acts. Indirect speech acts may seem uncooperative, but they become meaningful if one assumes that the speaker intends to be cooperative and if one turns to the context of the act to look for an explanation for the seemingly discordant behaviour. On similar lines, I propose the following principle:

- (2) **Rapport Management Principle:** a speaker always has the intention to manage rapport in some way in every interaction.

This implies that even when linguistic behaviour seems insensitive to rapport, this insensitivity is meaningful. And although we do not have direct access to speakers' intentions, this principle asserts speakers' intentions *a priori* and thus allows for a greater focus on the particular context and perlocutionary force of rapport management acts.

The deeper our understanding of the context, the more closely and accurately we can approximate the orientation of participants. This focus on the context of the interaction also places more emphasis on the effect of interaction on a particular situation. Although the intentions, or the illocutionary act, of a speaker's rapport

management is interesting, the effect, or perlocutionary force, is more readily available to the observer. The rapport effect does not always coincide with the rapport orientation (Spencer-Oatey 2000b), but both the illocutionary and the perlocutionary act can help with the analysis of utterances and behaviour that seems inappropriate. This also underlines the dynamic nature of rapport management, since rapport is interactionally constructed. Looking at inferred intentions becomes more constructive when the rapport effects are taken into consideration.

4.4.3 Dynamic and contextualised rapport management

This chapter has shown that rapport orientations are not distinct categories that function autonomously. Instead, as shown in 4.3.3 and 4.3.4, multiple orientations can be held simultaneously and rapport is often managed at various levels. As Holmes (2000b: 33) notes, “talk is inherently multifunctional” and any speaker will aim to manage rapport in a most efficient and economical way by serving multiple goals and agendas at once. This makes rapport management in small business discourse a dynamic and complex phenomenon and the key to a comprehensive interpretation lies within the context. This section discusses how linguistic choices and rapport management decisions are reflected in various levels of context, from the larger social structure, to the immediate spatial setting.

Some rapport management styles might at first seem random and inappropriate. For instance, I was astonished by the forcefulness and tenacity with which the owner at Warrick’s manages rapport with his employees and I initially saw this as evidence of ineffective and unhealthy superior-subordinate relationships. Similarly, the attitude of some McBicycle employees towards their customers initially appeared unsuitable for any business interaction. However, upon closer examination this seemingly deviant behaviour becomes meaningful within its context. Contrary to a common-sense belief that harmonious social relations are an intrinsic good, the analysis reveals that promoting discordant social relations can be understood as a rational response to individuals’ social and economic contexts. If the rapport principle holds and every rapport management act serves a purpose, then the arrangement of linguistic codes and rapport management strategies is not random but in fact suits this particular context.

To illustrate this point we can take another look at the dynamic rapport management styles of two participants, Warrick's owner Gareth and McBicycle's employee Sjoerd. Extract (26) from Warrick's showed how maintaining a discordant relationship with his employees fulfilled a dual purpose for Gareth. The interaction takes place in the frontstage of the business so that Gareth can reprimand the driver for his mistake as well as create a sense of solidarity and group membership with his customers. That customer relationships take precedence over subordinate relationships makes sense in a small town like Grahamstown where small businesses heavily rely on loyal customers. The manner in which he reinforces the hierarchical role-relationships with his subordinates also suits the wider socio-economic context of South Africa in which labour is cheap and easy to come by and power relationships are normatively predetermined and hierarchical. Thus, Gareth's strategic rapport management is in accordance with its context and he fulfils a socially expected role in a society based on social, racial and economic divisions. However, if he were to pack his bags and move to McBicycle in Amsterdam, his rapport management style would suddenly become unsuitable. His language use would involve different scales and thus different patterns of linguistic normativity. To shout at and insult your employees, especially in front of customers, will likely be frowned upon in a society where horizontal and negotiable power relationships are the norm.

Similarly, Sjoerd displays rude behaviour towards customers in McBicycle (see extract 27 and 29). His discordant style may seem inappropriate but it again suits the macro-context. Firstly, McBicycle is situated in a larger city with a great influx of tourists so there is a large potential customer base and the business's success is not dependent on the satisfaction level of a few individual customers. Secondly, the business has built a strong brand community, whose boundaries Sjoerd is actually reinforcing with his discordant rapport management style towards some of the customers. However, if Sjoerd were to antagonise a customer in Warrick's, he would soon be in trouble since Warrick's success relies heavily on good customer relationships.

The emphasis in this study lies on the individual and how the individual manipulates the available linguistic resources to negotiate interpersonal relationship. Yet, the

above examples show how a social-contextual dimension adds an insightful interpretation to the analysis. This interesting tension is also reflected in the general dialectic between structure and agency in the social sciences, as discussed in section 2.1. Rampton (2011) observes a move away from a focus on structure towards the emphasis on individual agency. At the same time, scholars such as Heller (2007) warn against a too narrow focus on the post-structuralist view of individual agency. She argues that social structure can no longer be seen as fixed and essentialist, but that the role structure plays in facilitating and influencing linguistic choices cannot be ignored. This seems particularly relevant in the context of a post-colonial South African society in which the relations between economic, cultural and racial groups are in many ways still affected by the legacy of apartheid racial domination. Yet, a problematic aspect of an emphasis on structure is that it is a static notion, making it something that should be taken for granted and which is thus less susceptible to change. Critical postcolonial studies have tended to emphasise social structure, but this seems inherently problematic as it resists chance and transformation. By challenging his paternalistic superior, Velile demonstrated in extract (20), that there is room for individual agency in even the most rigorous of structures. Moreover, what the above discussion of discordant rapport management highlights, is that discord is expressed everywhere. In part, social structures influence whether a particular business is predisposed to harmonious or discordant rapport management in any given relationship. However, to assume that maintaining discordant relationships is the output of a hierarchical and unequal society would be incorrect, as we see the same discordance being upheld in a more horizontally structured business in Amsterdam. Thus, societal structure plays an important role but is not the sole factor at play in individual rapport management decisions. For these reasons, this study views structure as the playground in which individuals respond to their social and economic context and exercise their agency to their advantage.

Thus, a speaker's arrangement of linguistic choices is informed, but not determined, by various levels of context. These include the larger societal structure as well as the structure of the business organisation. In addition, the data revealed an interesting interaction on a more local level between events and their immediate spatial setting. This is the level at which individual agency within the larger structure is clearly expressed. For instance, when Velile challenges his boss (in extract 20) he does so

within the space of the tyre changing area, which is Velile's space. He is head of the tyre-changing unit and that makes him a *centre of authority* (Blommaert 2010) in this particular area. The space seems to provide safe boundaries for Velile to display challenging behaviour even though his challenging is constrained by the larger power structure of the business. The office or the frontage of the business would not provide the same stable and safe environment for Velile to challenge his superior. The interplay between power positions and geographical space similarly influences challenging behaviour in McBicycle. In the challenging behaviour displayed by Sjoerd and Saar (e.g. see extracts 27 and 28) the counter seems to play a central role. The customers stand in front of the counter and Saar and Sjoerd stand on the other side, representing their company. In that position Saar and Sjoerd fulfil an interesting gatekeeping role. The counter functions as the dividing line between the front- and the backstage and thereby between the out-group members in front of the counter and the in-group members behind the counter in the backstage. That location, at the border of these two spaces, gives Sjoerd and Saar an interesting degree of authority that allows them to challenge rapport with customers who they do not perceive as desired in-group members. This observed connection between rapport management and geographical space is similar to findings by Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck (2005) who concluded that space plays an agentive role in the organisation of patterns of language use in a multilingual neighbourhood.

To conclude, speakers are able to manage multiple orientations dynamically and simultaneously, and direct their rapport management efforts towards various parties who can be either present or imagined. In order to describe these complex practices fully, the Rapport Management Framework needs to assert a greater focus on contextual analysis and rapport management needs to be understood as something that is accomplished on various levels of interaction. The present study has shown the importance and relevance of drawing links between various micro-analytic and macro-analytic levels of interpretation. Herein lies the value of combining rapport management theory with linguistic ethnography and a sociolinguistics of globalisation. Linguistic ethnography embraces the mutually-shaping interaction between situated practices and their context and a sociolinguistics of globalisation enriches both approaches by offering valuable conceptual tools, such as orders of indexicality and sociolinguistic scales, for the analysis of the connections between

various contextual scale-levels.

4.5 Conclusion

Spencer-Oatey's (2000b) Rapport Management Framework remains a valuable theoretical and analytical model that explores how language is used in the management of interpersonal relationships. However, the analysis presented in this chapter has shown that multilingual small business interactions produce complex rapport management practices. The data obtained in two small businesses located in Amsterdam and Grahamstown have warranted some developments to the framework and to the notions of rapport and rapport orientations in particular. The proposed theoretical developments create an Enhanced Rapport Management Framework suitable for the analysis of complex small business discourse. The adapted model asserts a greater focus on rapport challenging behaviour and emphasises the dynamic and contextual nature of situated rapport management acts. One salient assumption that can be drawn from the analysis is that the behaviour that we observe happens for a reason, and the reason can be found in the context. Rapport management harmonises with the context and reflects both the organisational as well as the larger social structure in which it is embedded. In this regard, seemingly odd behaviour can become meaningful once placed in its context.

5. Conclusion

Processes of globalisation and mobility have led to a transformation of small businesses into sites of increasing language contact (Bargiela-Chiappini *et al.* 2007). I explored situated language practices in small business discourse to examine how multilingual repertoires are used to negotiate agency and power relationships in small business interactions. Since situated language practices in an increasingly globalised context form a complex and multi-layered research object, I chose to draw on insights from three different approaches. Linguistic ethnography allows for a detailed analysis of situated language use and its relation to context. Rapport Management Framework (Spencer-Oatey 2000b; 2008) provides a valuable conceptual model for the study of face work and rapport management and a sociolinguistics of globalisation (Blommaert 2010) provides insightful conceptual tools for an exploration of the connections between the observed situated patterns of language use and various scales of context as well as the connections between language use and space.

The data for this study are drawn from two small businesses in two different socio-cultural settings. One is a tyre and exhaust service station in Grahamstown, South Africa, and the other a bicycle rental and repair shop in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Both shops deal with the main means of transport in their city (cars and bicycles respectively) and both have a multilingual character (see 3.3.1 for a description of the research sites). I spent a total of eight weeks in the shops, collecting data through participant observation, recordings and interviews (see 3.3 for details on the chosen data collection tools). The analysis developed along two lines of enquiry. The first explored the rapport management practices in Warrick's and McBicycle and the second problematises the use of rapport orientations as an analytical tool and theoretically develops the Rapport Management Framework to make it more suitable for the analysis of small business discourse.

I found that both businesses actively employ rapport-challenging strategies and that the maintenance of discordant relationships can be meaningful or even beneficial when it is compatible with the types of customer and the structural organisation of the business. Theoretically, the concept of rapport orientations proved a worthwhile approach for a subset of my data (see section 4.2), but it was unable to accommodate

more complex situations of rapport management. I identified the main problems (section 4.3) and subsequently proposed ways of strengthening the analytical use of the rapport orientations and thereby the Rapport Management Framework (section 4.4). The main theoretical conclusion that I draw is that any description of rapport management needs to acknowledge that speakers manage both harmonious and disharmonious relationships dynamically, simultaneously and for different audiences within micro- and macro-contexts and that all rapport management is mediated by the Rapport Management Principle.

5.1 Small business discourse

This section returns to the research questions that have guided this research and attempts to answer them based on the findings described in the previous chapter. I first turn to the initial two descriptive questions before discussing the third and fourth questions that draw links between the situated linguistic manifestations of power in both businesses and the wider context of Dutch and South African society and small business discourse.

The first two research questions, repeated below, aimed at describing the resources that were available to the participants.

1. *What repertoires do participants draw on in multilingual business interaction?*
2. *What rapport management strategies do they employ?*

There are three things that I would like to note here. Firstly, in both businesses the individual and shared repertoires were evidently multilingual in nature. The difference between the two sites lies in the form and organisation of the multilingual patterns. The multilingualism in McBicycle takes a hybrid and diverse shape that reflects the repertoires of the employees as well as their customers (see 3.3.1 for a description of the participants' repertoires). Warrick's, on the other hand, shows a stable triglossia that reflects the three main languages of the Eastern Cape: English, Xhosa and Afrikaans. As a result, linguistic choices in Warrick's emerged as more static and predetermined than in McBicycle where a high degree of code-switching between a

wide variety of codes was a salient feature of the workplace discourse (see for example 4.2.1.3 on linguistic accommodation strategies).

Secondly, these multilingual repertoires were used as a resourceful tool in the management of interpersonal relations. Besides language this also included dialects and jargon. For example, accommodation strategies included the use of Leids to display an identity and emphasise solidarity, and the use of business-related jargon such as *kettingkast* (English: *bicycle chain cover*) to converge to a shared repertoire and reinforce group relations (see 4.2.1.3). Interestingly, the observed rapport management strategies not only include rapport enhancement strategies, such as humour, small talk and language accommodation (see 4.2.1), but also showed the frequent use of rapport challenging strategies, such as initiating small talk with a superior (see 4.2.3) or the contestive use of humour (see 4.3.3). This challenging aspect has received little attention in the rapport management literature and yet is a salient feature of the language use in Warrick's and McBicycle. Participants manifested themselves as strategic rapport managers, who skilfully manage interpersonal relationships in an effective and economical way.

This creates a complex phenomenon with various levels of interpretation, which relates to the following two research questions:

3. *How does the interplay between repertoires and strategies affect the dynamics of the interaction*
4. *How do these interactions reproduce and transform power relations in business discourse?*

These questions aimed to examine how the situated practices explored in the first two research questions affect their immediate context and how they relate to the power structures in small business discourse in the Netherlands and South Africa. The mobility of linguistic repertoires across various scale-levels involves shifts in function and value of those repertoires and their components (Blommaert 2010). This includes large-scale movement, for example across national borders, as is evident in McBicycle where a diverse range of repertoires come together and interact. However, movement across local levels (e.g. the front- and backstage of the shops) was also

clearly evident in the data. The agentive role that the geographical space played in the organisation of appropriate code and strategy choices is discussed in section 4.4.3.

Another key finding of this research is that group concerns often overrule individual rights and concerns in both businesses (see 4.3.3 and 4.3.4). The direction of this group focus differed between the two businesses. In Warrick's rapport management efforts focused on customer relations and at times these efforts were at the expense of the relationship with employees. In contrast, McBicycle employees strategically manage rapport to enhance and reinforce group cohesion or collegiality amongst employees and this was at times achieved by challenging the relationships with customers. Section 4.4.3 discussed how these patterns reflect both the specific business structure and the wider socio-economic contexts. The interplay between the local practices and their various levels of contexts can explain the otherwise seemingly rude behaviour displayed by some participants. It also shows that discordant behaviour can sometimes be in the best interests of the business or the community of practice.

This also offers one way of looking at the discordant relationship that the owner of Warrick's maintains with some of his employees (illustrated in 4.3.1). He has developed a management style that is fine-tuned to the organisational structure. It reflects the rigid vertical power hierarchy in the business that includes large power distances between the different positions and authoritative leadership exercising close control over subordinates (see 4.4.3). The business structure is also reflected in the noticeable lack of challenges by less powerful employees. Section 4.2.3 examined one of the rare occasions in which an employee challenges his superior. His tentative attempt to negotiate individual agency was constrained by the fixed and stratified structure of Warrick's. To a certain extent this structure and the owner's managerial style are also reflected in the wider social-cultural context of South Africa in which role-relationships are relatively static and differences between economic, cultural and racial groups vast, even in post-apartheid society. A change in the business model could bring forth a change in the way that power relationships are negotiated within the workplace. In McBicycle, the management style appeared more adapted to a horizontal and flexible power structure. The power distance between individuals is also smaller and there is more room for employees to negotiate an individual identity

and position within the business structure. Yet, within this overtly horizontal business structure, participants still negotiate vertical power relations. McBicycle employees functioned as gatekeepers who actively negotiate and regulate access to the McBicycle community by effectively positioning some customers as outsiders (see 4.3.3). Thus, power is played out in both businesses, but it takes on different shapes according to different business models and different societies. In this regard, this study could also contribute to Leadership Theory (Campbell, White and Johnson 2003), as it evidently shows differences between a task-focused and a relational-focused managerial style and the different ways in which power relationships are negotiated within these different organisational structures, as well as the benefits and drawbacks of each style.

5.2 Theoretical implications

At the time that Rapport Management Framework was conceptualised, Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2000: 288) emphasised the need for case studies in order to

explore the genuine concerns about face and sociality rights that arise in different types of interactions and different cultural settings. Such studies are necessary in order to check and validate theoretical concepts, and they may also help (where appropriate) to integrate different theoretical perspectives.

My study provides two such case studies. I chose to look at interactions in two small businesses, set in two different socio-cultural settings. It looks critically at the concept of rapport orientations, which proved worthwhile in some aspects but was inadequate for the analysis of more complex situations of rapport management in my data. As I mentioned, this study also integrates three different approaches. This section looks at some of the theoretical implications of the findings. It discusses the problems that emerged with the original concept of rapport orientations as described by Spencer-Oatey (2000b; 2008) and the developments I propose to make the model more suitable to analyse the complex and multi-layered nature of small business discourse.

These developments primarily affect two concepts of Spencer-Oatey's (2000b) model: the rapport orientations and the definition of rapport. An overview of the changes is provided in table 5.1.

Rapport Management Framework	Enhanced Rapport Management Framework
Rapport is a harmonious relation	Rapport is the quality of a relation and this includes harmonious and disharmonious relations
No access to intentions	Rapport Management Principle: <i>rapport is always being managed</i>
Dyadic focus on speaker/hearer	Multidirectional focus on speaker/hearer/audience (and the groups they represent)
Sequential management of orientations	Simultaneous and sequential management of orientations

Table 5.1: Proposed changes to the Rapport Management Framework

Spencer-Oatey's (2000b: 29; 2008: 31) description of the orientations is not very extensive (some 700 words) and herein lies most of the difficulties with the concept. Many of the problems that were identified during the analysis have been referred to by Spencer-Oatey in her discussion of other aspects of rapport management. So, part of the revisions that I made to the framework lies in integrating these aspects, such as the distinction between interpersonal and intergroup rapport management (Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2000), with the concept of rapport orientations. Other new additions are the Rapport Management Principle and a reconceptualization of rapport.

A first problem presented itself with Spencer-Oatey's (2000a: 3) definition of rapport management as "the use of language to promote, maintain or threaten *harmonious* social relations" (my emphasis). My data showed that participants also actively maintain *discordant* relationships (see 4.3.1). I therefore argue that rapport stands for the quality of a relationship and that speakers can thus manage both harmonious and discordant relationships (see 4.4.1). One of the consequences of this reconceptualization is that the researcher first needs to determine the pre-existing relationship between the participants before being able to establish whether that relationship is being maintained, enhanced, challenged or neglected. It also entails a reconceptualization of rapport management. For example, rapport enhancement and

challenge appear to be two sides of the same coin, since speakers inherently have to challenge the existing relationship in order to build a new type of relationship. This principle is inherent to any form of rapport management but it was also observed in a larger structure in which the relationship with one person would be challenged in order to enhance rapport with another party (see 4.3.3). This made me aware that rapport management is more dynamic and complex than the original description seems to suggest.

Spencer-Oatey (2000b) alludes to this dynamic nature when she mentions that orientations may change between interactions or during the course of an interaction. Yet, this seems to imply that speakers change their orientations in a sequential manner and that is again too narrow an understanding of the dynamic nature of rapport management. As Holmes (2000b: 33) says, “talk is inherently multifunctional” and this is also true for rapport management. Participants in this study were skilful rapport managers who manage relationships in an effective and economical way. I therefore suggest that speakers not only hold orientations in a sequential manner, but also manage them simultaneously (see 4.3.3). Moreover, these multiple orientations can be directed at various individuals or groups at the same time (see 4.3.4). This produces a complex phenomenon that needs to be interpreted on various levels (see 4.4.3). Thus, a study of rapport management needs to embrace the inherently dynamic and contextually embedded nature of situated practices in order to achieve an adequate understanding of rapport management in small business discourse.

Lastly, the concept of rapport orientations relates to the intentions of a speaker. As researchers, we do not have access to these intentions (see 4.3.2). We can, however, closely approximate these intentions in various ways. In an attempt to address these epistemological concerns, I introduced the Rapport Management Principle, which states that a speaker always has the intention to manage rapport in some way in every interaction (see 4.4.2). Once again, this emphasises the importance of context and it encourages one to examine new lines of enquiry. Seemingly rude and inappropriate behaviour can become meaningful in context. For example, I was initially willing to write off the discordant and rude behaviour displayed by Gareth, the owner of Warrick’s, as a personality trait. However, if we are to assume that a speaker always has a motivation for his or her rapport management then this opens up room for other,

more meaningful interpretations. In this case, looking further than my own personal observations and opinions revealed that the owner's behaviour reflected a management style that suits the structure of the business. The assumption that there is always an underlying motivation for any interactional behaviour and that it is up to the researcher to uncover these motivations also aligns with the ideas and principles of ethnography that an ethnographer needs to "assume and accept multiple interpretations" (Heigham and Sakui 2009: 104) and that part of an ethnographer's task is to arrive at explanations for social action.

To summarise, the data from this study warranted developments to the Rapport Management Framework that strengthen its analytical use and make it more suitable to examine complex situations of rapport management in small business. I propose to reconceptualise rapport as the quality of relationship and to assert a greater focus on the contextual dimension of situated language practices and the dynamic nature of rapport management. One way of achieving this is by incorporating valuable insights from other approaches, such as linguistic ethnography and sociolinguistic of globalisation. Lastly, I stipulated the Rapport Management Principle in an attempt to strengthen the validity of the concept of rapport orientations and to deal with some epistemological concerns that surround it.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

The new developments to the Rapport Management Framework were warranted by the data collected from two small businesses. A next step would be to see if the Enhanced Rapport Management Framework and its different components also work adequately in other environments. For example, the research data showed that rapport can be managed simultaneously on an interpersonal and an intergroup level, i.e. employees in McBicycle managed rapport with the corporate in-group as a partially unseen interlocutor. I believe that it is important to move away from a dyadic focus on rapport management interactions and acknowledge that multiple groups can motivate various rapport orientations. It would be very interesting to see how this group identity unfolds in other rapport management situations and if and how speakers align themselves with other types of group identities, for example being a student or being South African.

I posited the Rapport Management Principle, which states that speakers always have the intentions to manage rapport (see 4.4.2). This principle deals with epistemological concerns (4.3.2) regarding the concept of rapport orientations and proved to have a valuable explanatory role in the interpretation of discordant behaviour. Further research could explore the validity of this principle in other rapport management situations and see whether there are contexts when speakers can opt out of the principle (for example, in cases of emergency). The existence of such situations raises the question of whether the Rapport Management Principle is reducible to the Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975). Initial investigations suggest it is not.

Lastly, in my definition of rapport, I posited that rapport management is equivalent to the negotiating of power relations. Participants in this study used rapport management as a means of negotiating individual agency within the structure provided by the organisation. Further research could examine to what extent rapport management is equal to power negotiations in other settings and in different types of discourse.

5.4 Conclusion

This study set out to examine how language is used to manage relationships and negotiate power in multilingual small business discourse. The analysis showed that space plays both a constraining and facilitating role in the linguistic choices of speakers and that speakers strategically manipulate the linguistic resources available to them to manage rapport in an effective and economical way. This entails that rapport management is a dynamic and complex practice in which multiple orientations aimed at multiple parties (i.e. individuals or groups) can be managed simultaneously. In this regard I postulated the Rapport Management Principle, which states that speakers always have the intention to manage rapport. This principle together with an understanding of the dynamic and complex nature of rapport management can explain the seemingly rude and uncooperative behaviour displayed by some speakers. If the rapport principle holds and every rapport management act serves a purpose, then the arrangement of linguistic codes and rapport management strategies is not random but in fact suits its particular context. Together these findings were used to extend Spencer-Oatey's (2000b; 2005) work on rapport management and

create an Enhanced Rapport Management Framework with more descriptive adequacy to explore discursively constructed relationships in small business discourse.

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APPENDIX A: Transcription Conventions

CAPITAL	Loud voice
(.)	Brief pause
(0.5s)	Timed pause in seconds
((laughs))	Non-linguistic features
[unclear]	Researcher's best guess at unclear utterance
Colorado:	Colon indicates an extension of the preceding sound
?	Rising tone
... = ... = ...	Overlapping speech
<i>Italics</i>	English translation
<u>Underlined</u>	Language code-switch

APPENDIX B: Sample Informed Consent Form

Date:

I, _____ agree to participate in the study conducted by Sanne Lauriks at McBicycle during September and October 2012.

I understand that conversations made in McBicycle from 17 September till 13 October may be recorded.

I understand that I am at any moment free to requests that the recorder is switched off or that certain information is not used in the research.

I understand that all effort is made to preserve my anonymity.

I give permission for material produced as the result of this research (fieldnotes, audio recordings) to be made available to others or to be published.

Signature:

APPENDIX C: Runsheet Day 1 McBicycle

Monday 17 September 2012

Activity	Equipment	Type of information/Purpose
Meeting with Manager	Notepad + pen Voice recorder Batteries	Creating goodwill Establish parameters Get permission to hand out consent forms to employees Information about him (job description, languages he speaks, nationality) McBicycle's history
Informal interviews with participants (employees)	Notepad and paper Voice recorder Batteries	Introduction/building rapport Creating participant profiles What languages do they speak? At home/work What nationalities? Job descriptions
Documenting setting	1. Camera 2. Charger (+ laptop) Notepad, pencil, ruler, eraser	Sketched layout of the setting Photographed record of the setting

Processing:

1. Type out the details from the meeting with the manager on the do's and don'ts during fieldwork.
2. Create a participant profile of the manager (Data → McBicycle → Participant Profiles → "Profile Marcel (manager)")
3. Create a business profile of McBicycle (Data → McBicycle → Participant Profiles → "Profile McBicycle").
4. Divide the notes from the informal interviews into individual participant profiles and

the general MB profile (Data → McBicycle → Participants Profiles).

5. Transfer the audio recordings from the recorder to my computer (in Data → McBicycle → audio) and label with date, place and keywords (participants involved and topics we spoke about).
6. Add the recording code (e.g. 0917a) to the relevant participant profile.
7. Transfer the photos from camera to computer (Data → McBicycle → photographs and secondary documents).

APPENDIX D: Data entry table

	Time	Participants	Role-Relation	Gender & Age	Nationality	Event	Style/Tone	Place	Languages	Comments
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										
8.										