"I tell you don't trust the French": National stereotypes in workplace narratives

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National stereotypes are inherently evaluative, often negatively, and potentially prejudicial. While research has examined stereotypes from an organisational perspective, this is overwhelmingly in experimental settings involving students (Landy, 2008); in other words not in workplaces, and not involving employees doing their jobs. Through a corpus-assisted discourse analysis of 53 authentic business meetings, this study finds that among certain communities, national stereotypes are used in workplace narratives, and argues that such narratives constitute a contextual, situated social practice. The novel methodology pinpoints and categorises all stereotypes in business-meeting narratives, before discussing what role they play in indexing the identities of the stereotyped and the stereotyping. Finally, evaluation, ideology and power are critically engaged with to explain their use or non-use, thus making a theoretical contribution to studies of evaluation, workplace narratives, and stereotyping in discourse. While ethically problematic, and potentially detrimental to business success, their use may be motivated by local workplace goals.

Introduction

How do we know whether people use national stereotypes at work? How, by whom, and why, might they be used in such a context? And, does it matter? In answer to the first question, while there is research examining stereotypes from an organisational perspective, it is rarely conducted in or on actual organisations (Landy, 2008: 391). Instead, it tends to be experimental, using student participants – in other words, it does not analyse actual employees doing work, at work. Studies comparing experimental or simulated workplace interactions with authentic ones have shown there are considerable differences in terms of evidence of awareness of workplace goals, of appropriate language choice, and of the complexity of managing intra- and inter-organisational relationships (see Koester, 2006). This research takes up Landy's (2008: 391) challenge that to understand stereotyping at work, we need to "get out of the laboratory and into the field". By examining stereotypes in authentic workplace-meetings, the study shows the significance of context, particularly interpersonal and transactional goals, the relationship and identities of the interlocutors and the communities which they form, and the unfolding interaction in which the stereotype occurs. The study thus explores workplace interaction from a social practice perspective, with practices understood as capturing "habituality and regularity in discourse in the sense of recurrent evolving responses to given situations, while allowing for emergence and situational contingency" (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008: 383).

In considering how, how often, and why, national stereotypes are used in the workplace, this paper argues that an unearthed context-specific association between stories and stereotypes is evidence of a narrative social practice: workplace narratives featuring national stereotypes (hereafter WNNSs). It is a narrative social practice because the analysis follows Bamberg's (2006: 139) exhortation for narrative practices to consider what the

narratives are comprised of, the contexts in which they occur, and the identities they may index. It is context-specific because the social practice occurs in certain workplace-contexts but is absent in others. It is argued here that the contexts in which such social practices do not occur are also noteworthy, as empirically verifiable absences of particular discourse features can indicate, inter alia, social inappropriacy (Schröter and Taylor, 2018).

This study exploits several related lacunas. Despite the wealth of research into stereotypes, national and otherwise (see Stereotypes and narrative below), their use in naturally-occurring interactions is under-researched (Maass, 1999; Landy, 2008). Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) have argued for more research into interactional narratives, and Carbaugh (2007) has stated that the analysis of spontaneous interactions tends to be neglected in cultural discourse studies. Furthermore, despite some exceptions (e.g. Holmes, 2005; Koester, 2006; Handford, 2010; Holmes and Stubbe, 2016; Schnurr and Zayts, 2017), the research on spontaneous business interactions is still piecemeal relative to many other institutional contexts; Landy (2008: 379) even argues that experimental research on organisations and stereotypes, despite forming the large bulk of research into organisations and stereotypes, may be "useless". It is therefore unsurprising that the analysis of national stereotypes in narratives in authentic business meetings constitutes a research-gap. Through a corpus-informed analysis, comparisons are possible which indicate the presence and absence of certain features (Schröter and Taylor, 2018), yet previous corpus-studies have not explored national stereotypes in the workplace. In sum, the discovery that national stereotypes are employed in naturally-occurring narratives among certain workplace communities, and not others, could only be made through a study which addresses these multiple gaps.

In answer to why this matters, there are two related arguments, one ethical and one instrumental. National stereotypes seem to occupy a liminal space in terms of appropriacy. They are heard in many contexts, such as the media and politics, and yet if we accept that

discrimination against nationalities is a form of racism (OHCHR, 2003), then the use of antilocutionary (Allport, 1957) national stereotypes arguably nurtures the soil from which such discrimination grows. Moreover, the practice of national stereotyping at work can evidence a certain degree of ethnocentrism and lack of cultural sensitivity (Handford, 2020). In UK-based small and medium enterprises, the degree of cultural awareness has been shown to correlate with success in international business (Foreman-Peck and Wang, 2014): those with least awareness of the importance of cultural sensitivity do not do well. It is argued here that national stereotyping at work therefore not only creates environments that are not inclusive, it can also affect the bottom line. Furthermore, developing and effectively managing diversity has been shown to be good for business (Mor Barak and Travis, 2009), an incentive for companies to create inclusive and welcoming workplace cultures; this is an encouraging instance of ethical and mercantile goals synergising. It may also be particularly relevant for UK-based businesses in a post-Brexit world.

To develop a robust conception of the practice, and implications, of WNNSs, the study will ask the following questions:

1. How can the patterns concerning WNNSs be theorised in a manner that generates replicable and informative categories for further analysis?

2. How can indexicality explain the range of identities evidenced by and through WNNS?

3. How can evaluation, ideology and power relations explain the patterns of use and the indexed identities?

These questions will be addressed through the analysis of a large corpus of business meeting data (Handford, 2010) focusing on explicit instances of national stereotypes, such as "don't trust the French"; as such, implicit uses will not be analysed (see analysis section). The questions are addressed through an original, replicable 10-step methodology. The first

question analyses patterns primarily at the textual level, both within individual meetings and across the corpus, to develop categories. The second question examines how different identities are invoked through WNNSs, for instance those evaluated through the stereotype, but also the local and temporary identities of the interlocutors. The third question aims to explain how the workplace context determines which patterns will dominate relative to what happens in other contexts, and why. Central to the analysis is the concept of evaluation as employed by the interlocutors, and the final discussion examines whether it is possible to characterize these stereotyping behaviours in terms of a single evaluative motivation.

Conceptual Background

This section critically discusses concepts relevant to our understanding of the practice of WNNSs, such as narrative, stereotyping, evaluation and identity. Extract 1 below exemplifies what is meant by a WNNS, with the interpersonal narrative (beginning in turn 4) emerging from a discussion, part-way through the meeting, about the cost of plugs (turns 1-2 and 20). The meeting is hosted by "Hall and Sons"[1], a medium-sized privately-owned hydraulics manufacturer in the UK-Midlands, and is between their production management team and the Project Manager ($1) of a vehicle manufacturer. The narrative is about a French salesman ("he" in turn 4) who has been delivering apparently free samples to the speaker's company ("Hall and Sons"), but then charging them full price and delivery (turns 4 and 5). This can be

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[1] All names are anonymised.

interpreted as a complicating action (Labov 1972), or unexpected event, with an unfulfilled request for a resolution (turn 12)[2], signalling "tellability" (Ochs and Capp, 2001).

Extract 1

Meeting participants

$2: Production Director

$1: Project Manager

$4: Sales Manager

$3: Design Engineer

1. <$3> I can get er I can get a price for you. Cos=

2. <$1> Yeah. Have you got any details of the thing?

3. <$M> <?>

4. <$3> I've none. All all it was he came along and he gave me a sample. He says (2 seconds) "What can you do with that?"

5. <$2> He keeps giving us samples you know and then he bills us for 'em.

6. <$3> Does he?

7. <$2> Oh aye.

8. <$3> I weren't aware of that.

9. <$2> (laughs) Yes. "Here have this. Try this". A week later a bill comes. (laughs) Plus carriage.

10. <$1> Is that right?

11. <$2> (laughs) Yes.

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[2] It is interesting that this request for a resolution is not taken up; van Dijk's (1987) analysis of racist narratives also found that resolutions were often not verbalised. As in van Dijk's analysis, the lack of resolution arguably further reinforces the negative evaluation of the French supplier.

12. <$1> What do you do with it? Send them back? (1 second)

13. <$3> Eeh he's a right one. (laughs)

14. <$2> I tell you don't trust the French. (2 seconds)

15. <$M> (laughs)

16. <$1> Or the Italians.

17. (5 seconds)

18. <$M> (sighs)

19. (2 seconds)

20. <$1> With your plug package in there.

This narrative demonstrates certain tensions, in the form of typical workplace -
communicative practices, within the oft-occluded context (Handford, 2010) of a corporate
inter-organisational meeting. On the one hand there is supportive laughter throughout (turns
9, 11, 13, 15) and collaborative storytelling, and on the other paralinguistic signs of
problematic reception. When the Production Director of the host company forthrightly
employs the negative stereotype (turn 14, UNTRUSTWORTHY FRENCH[3]), this is followed
by a 2-second silence, before someone eventually laughs. Then, the visiting Project Manager
from the vehicle manufacturer "doubles down" on the national stereotype theme in turn 16,
arguably signalling convergence and shared values. This is particularly of note because the
"doubling-down" is between employees of different companies. Nevertheless, an extremely
long silence, a sigh, another silence, then a return to the transactional topic at-hand are the
responses to these negative evaluations, suggesting partial unease among the participants.

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[3] The interpretation of the stereotype, which may evidence an underlying cognitive stereotype, is given in
capitals. See Methodology (step 7) for further discussion.

Narrative

The approach to narrative in this study draws primarily, as stated above, on narratives as a social practice (Bamberg, 2006; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008). In other words, it examines context from micro and macro perspectives: narratives are seen as unfolding interactional events that both constitute and are constituted by their sites of engagement. Because the study examines business meetings, Holmes' work on interactional workplace narratives (e.g. Holmes, 2005, Holmes and Marra, 2005) is of particular relevance. The narratives-as-practice approach is often contrasted with Labovian-inspired work into canonical narrative structures (Bamberg, 2006). This is because the latter approach tends to neglect the culturally-specific context or the relevance of the relationship between the interlocutors (Cortazzi and Jin, 2000: 103), typically having been elicited through research interviews but rarely occur in spontaneous interactions (Bamberg, M. and Georgakopoulou, 2008). Nevertheless, relevant insights from Labov's seminal narrative analysis are drawn on here. For instance, Labov's argument that evaluation can occur as both a structural element that conveys the point of the story, and can also occur at any moment of the narrative as "internal" evaluation (Labov, 1972: 370-5), are evidenced in the analysis below.

Before discussing the approach to narrative in more detail, evaluation and its complex relation to narrative is touched on, as it forms a key thread of this research. According to Labov (1972), evaluation is the most important element of a narrative beyond the complicating action, and others have gone further to position it as the most important feature of a narrative (e.g. Linde, 1993). Indeed, without an evaluation, the utterance in question is merely a report or a summary (Cortazzi and Jin, 2000). Applying the concept inevitably involves methodological challenges. For instance, evaluation may be present at various points in a narrative, such as in the background/orientation, or the evaluative point of the narrative

may not be explicit, or may be contested, or may even be used strategically by an interlocutor to reinterpret the utterance (as in Extract 4).

Holmes (2005) discusses two types of narratives that are found at work, workplace anecdotes and working stories, while acknowledging that the boundaries between the two can be fuzzy. The shared features that distinguish both types from non-narratives are complicating action and (implicit or explicit) evaluation. These criteria are also applied in this study. Workplace anecdotes have much in common with what Thornborrow and Coates (2005: 6) refer to as "minimal narrative units or 'anecdotes'''", and Bamberg's small stories Bamberg, 2006), within the workplace context. Their key features are as follows:

- Primary function is to entertain/interest/amaze (rather than to inform)
- Not institutionally ratified "on task" core business talk
- Not "required" accountings, strictly redundant to current business
- Minimally includes complicating action and (implicit or explicit) evaluation
- Involves some conflict or transgression of expectation

In contrast, working stories have the following features (Holmes, 2005; Holmes and Marra, 2005):

- Content concerns workplace business
- Concerned with workplace goals, which have a transactional point.

Holmes' (2005) analysis of working stories shows that they may also often follow a more canonical Labovian structure, particularly compared to workplace anecdotes. As such, they are often longer than workplace anecdotes. From a functional perspective, the explicit transactional language, content and purpose of working stories contrasts with that of workplace anecdotes, which tend to focus on interpersonal topics and may achieve interpersonal goals. Extract 1 is an example of a workplace anecdote, as the topic is not related to the agenda of the meeting, and is overtly interpersonal. Nevertheless, transactional

goals, particularly those relating to identity, can be achieved through workplace anecdotes, such as demonstrating a good-work-life balance or emphasising one's creative thinking abilities (Holmes, 2005). The ability to use seemingly interpersonal language, like workplace anecdotes, to achieve transactional goals can be regarded as a valuable professional skill (Koester, 2006; Handford, 2010). Clearly, the ability to tell a working story, with a clear point and relevance to the topic at hand is also valuable, not least for managers in training situations (Holmes, 2005, Holmes and Marra, 2005; Koester and Handford, 2018). Also, concerning extract 1, we might say the negative stereotype "Don't trust the French" positively reflects on the in-group, thus implying that the speaker's company values trustworthiness. The subsequent "doubling down" ("Or the Italians") may further index a sense of shared professional identity across the companies and an implied emphasis on trust, an important aspect of any collaboration. Aside from the practical implications of studying narratives in workplace settings, such analysis may therefore provide insights into the communicative practices, values and norms of workplaces (Holmes and Marra, 2005).

Stereotypes and narratives

As the literature on stereotypes is vast and multidisciplinary, this section will briefly outline the most relevant concepts for the present study, and then explore the relationship between stereotypes and narratives. Because stereotypes are at best overgeneralisations or qualitative judgments, they are either false (Allport, 1957), or unfalsifiable (Leerssen, 2016). Moreover, stereotypes are oppositional, in that they explicitly or implicitly invoke oppositions of Self-Other (Leerssen, 2016).While stereotypes can be a) about any social category, for instance age, gender, profession, b) be analysed from a cognitive, socio-cognitive and/or linguistic

perspective, and c) involve explicit or implicit reference to the group concerned (Hinton, 2002), this study is concerned with explicit national stereotypes as evidenced in interaction. Such stereotypes can be autostereotypes (about the speaker's in-group) or heterostereotypes (about an out-group) (Bar Tal, 1997). Extract 1 is an instance of the latter. Stereotypes can positively or negatively evaluate the group in question, but must do either: evaluation is not only a defining feature of stereotypes, but forms their rationale, as they are typically "used to make rapid judgments about people" (Lakoff, 1989: 145). As such, the approach to defining stereotypes aligns with a sociological, rather than an economic model (Bordalo et al, 2016) in that it assumes they are ethnocentric to some degree, and do not contain a justificatory "kernel of truth". Statements like "the Dutch are tall" are not therefore stereotypes by this measure – they are potentially verifiable generalisations (here as a statistical mean) which lack an evaluative function. Finally, the linguistic form that is used to construct a stereotype has been shown to be important, and to affect evaluation; the use of nouns to index an out-group (e.g. "the French" uttered by a non-French person, as in extract 1) elicits a higher degree of essentialist perception compared to the same group being identified through adjectives (e.g. "French people") (Rothbart and Taylor, 1992).

The evaluative aspect of stereotypes arguably takes on a particular relevance in workplace contexts. This is because evaluating is a central practice of workplaces, and is also a marker of power: evaluating is usually done, and expected to be done, by those in relatively senior positions or with specialist knowledge (Koester, 2006; Handford, 2010). Therefore, stereotypes can be considered a marker of workplace power, a proposal that is taken up in the Discussion section. In terms of stereotypes in narratives, their evaluative force can be employed at various stages of the narrative, as evidenced below.

If we interpret narrative in a broad sense, encompassing historical, literary and societal narratives, then a fecund relationship between stereotypes and narratives becomes

evident across a range of disciplines. In literary analysis, the role that stereotypes play in novels has been the focus of much research, e.g. the "English gentleman" in Conrad's novels (Puxan-Oliva, 2015), or Toni Morrison's analysis of race and racial stereotypes in American literature (1990). Leerssen (e.g. 2016) has developed the concept "ethnotypes" to describe constructed social stereotypes of national character in comparative literature studies. Anderson (1983) and Bhabha's (1994: 95-104) publications on narrative and nationalism (including stereotypes) have had a profound impact in and beyond historical circles. Examining literary, political and mass-media texts from an anthropological perspective, Befu argues that essentialist, ethnocentric stereotypes of Japanese uniqueness have fuelled jingoistic and exclusionary narratives in Japanese society (Befu, 2001).

While there is a dearth of research that explores the role of stereotypes in spontaneous interactions in a range of settings (Maass, 1999; Landy, 2008), experimental research in social psychology has examined how cultural stereotypes (specifically gender) are maintained when participants are required to recall stories, and cultural information is communicated through such stereotypes (Kashima and Yeung, 2010). This provides an interesting parallel with interactional narratives, which are also seen to convey cultural information (Cortazzi and Jin, 2000; Thornborrow and Coates, 2005), as indeed does evaluation in text more generally (Thompson and Hunston, 2000).

Indexicality, identity, evaluation and power

The present study is centrally concerned with identity, defined as "the social positioning of self and other" (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 586). This seemingly simple definition requires unpacking to clarify its relevance here. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identity can be understood in terms of macro categories, such as age, class or nationality, local and

emergent cultural positions including professional identity, and more temporary interactional stances and roles such as storyteller or evaluator. All levels of identity are relevant here: the study examines the production of national stereotypes (macro) among white-collar professionals (local) telling workplace narratives (interactional). Positioning involves indexing a particular stance in and through discourse. According to Bamberg (2006), there are two levels of positioning, the first concerning the content of the talk, and the second concerning the particular social relationships which are constructed in the interaction. In terms of how social positioning can be analysed, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argue that whereas positionality refers to the ontological status of identity, indexicality is the means through which identity positions are constructed. So in order to analyse identity and positioning, we need to employ indexicality, defined here as language (defined broadly) that both signals and constitutes an identity in discourse, and which requires contextual knowledge to interpret (both for interlocutors and analysts).

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) list several ways that identity can be indexed, two of which are of particular relevance here. Firstly, explicit or overt referential identity categories can constitute identities through talk, such as nationality markers like "the French". Bucholtz and Hall (2005) do not distinguish between such references as indexing self or other, or present or non-present identities, and this catholic stance is adopted here. The second aspect of indexicality that has particular relevance to this study is through the evaluative stance taken by speakers about something. Through the act of evaluation, a teller arguably reflexively indexes a stance (thus constituting a position) in at least three ways: in relation to the object of the evaluation, in relation to themselves, and in relation to the audience. Through the utterance "Don't trust the French" (extract 1), not only is the Other's identity indexed, but so is the speaker's through the position taken, and also by implication the audience's by the utterance itself: by choosing to make an evaluative statement, the speaker is not only

constructing an evaluative stance for himself, he is assuming and potentially constructing certain aspects of the audience's identity.

Along with organising the discourse and constructing relations with the audience, the reflection of the value system of the speaker and their community is seen by Thompson and Hunston (2000: 6) as one of the three key functions of evaluation. They argue that:

> "every act of evaluation expresses a communal value-system, and every act of evaluation goes towards building up that value-system. This value system in turn is a component of the ideology which lies behind every text. Thus, identifying what the writer [or speaker] thinks reveals the ideology of the society that has produced the text."

While the thrust of this interpretation is rather deterministic and potentially glosses over the way norms and ideologies are not only indexed in and through discourse, but can also be contested or subverted (Foucault, 1978), it does highlight the important links between evaluations in discourse and the ideologies that both underpin and are constructed by them. According to Bamberg, through the analysis of positioning and the evaluations such positions index, we can then understand the relationship between stories and ideologies and the sense of self of the teller, particularly whether the teller's position is "complicit with or countering dominant discourses" (2006: 172).

Power cannot be neglected when considering the construction of identity in workplaces, despite the complexity of the concept. Much of the literature on institutional, professional and/or business discourse argues that institutions are "intrinsically bound up with *power*" (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 88, italics in original; see also Sarangi and Roberts, 1999; Heritage, 2005; Holmes and Stubbe, 2016). Here power is understood as not only

acting as a constraint, but, through discourse, something that can also be undermined, exposed or transformed (Foucault, 1978: 101). In other words, power is something that can be negotiated in and through discourse, usually through the prism of the asymmetrical nature of institutional relationships which are reflected by and constructed through speaker obligations and rights (Heritage, 2005). As discussed below, such a conception of power decouples the simplistic conflation of power with hierarchical status, while acknowledging that asymmetry can be constructed through both local and temporary interactional identities in workplace interactions.

Methodology

The data analysed in this study is from the CANBEC corpus (Cambridge and Nottingham Business English Corpus, Handford, 2010), specifically the 883,202 words of meeting data (53 meetings) and the ethnographic information collected to inform understanding of the meetings. The meetings involve a range of different profit-making companies, ranging from large multinationals to self-employed people, in the industries including pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, retail, IT, finance, hospitality, and accountancy. In terms of the gender of the speakers, 79% stated they were men, and 21% women. Around 80% of the speakers and the recordings are from the UK, with others from European countries, the US and Asia.

This analysis is a two-stage process, involving several steps at each stage. Stage 1 develops replicable categories (thus addressing research question 1), and Stage 2 explains the range of identities and the unearthed patterns of use (research questions 2 and 3). The analysis thus moves from clarifying what the unearthed patterns are, to examining how they occur in discourse and relate to the wider context, and finally to explaining why these

patterns may occur. In terms of unearthing and analysing evidence of social practices in discourse, such a corpus-assisted discourse analytic approach is adept at combining the search for "habituality and regularity" along with the contextual dynamism and emergence which De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2008: 383) outline as defining features of social practices. In order to categorise WNNSs (stage 1), it is first necessary to pinpoint all instances of explicit national stereotypes in the corpus (step 1); this involves distinguishing between all explicit national identity markers in the corpus that invoke a stereotype and those that do not. The process is demonstrated in the analysis below: some stereotypes are invoked through non-explicit utterances, and are therefore not included, and the bulk of explicit national references in the corpus do not invoke a stereotype. The next step is to identify which explicit national stereotypes occur in narrative, as opposed to non-narrative, interactions in the meetings (step 2) and then to categorise the stereotypes in the narratives according to type (step 3). Each narrative is considered in terms of structure and function (step 4). For instance, is it a transactional working story, or more of an interpersonal workplace anecdote (Holmes, 2005), and what is the place and role of the stereotype within the narrative (step 5)? The place of the narrative itself within the meeting is also considered (step 6). For instance, does it occur at the beginning or the end of the meeting, where we often find small talk, and what immediately precedes the narrative? Finally, the underlying cognitive stereotype which is inferred through the linguistic instantiation in the narrative is considered, and such interpretations are given in capitals (step 7). This novel step, which distinguishes between cognitive and linguistic metaphors, draws on the same inferential procedure as that used in cognitive metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). In sum, these steps thus enable a detailed analysis of the data, in order to answer the first research question.

The second stage is concerned with addressing what identities are constructed through the invoked stereotypes in the narratives, and how evaluation, ideology and particularly power can provide explanatory depth. Not only does the uttering of a stereotype index an identity of the individual or group described, but given the evaluative nature of stereotypes it is argued here that it also indexes the speaker's identity, and by inference that of the audience (although the inferred positioning can be contested). This stage therefore examines the contexts in which WNNSs do or do not occur (step 8). Next, the indexing of the identities of the stereotyped agent(s) and of the interlocutors (step 9) is explored. Finally, interpreting the content of the story and the interactive coordination between speaker and audience in relation to the stereotypes enables inferences to be made about the ideological positions of the interlocutors (and their working environments) in relation to power (step 10). Table 1 provides a summary of the steps.

Table 1: Methodological stages and steps

STAGE	STEP
1: Developing replicable categories	1. Pinpoint stereotypes in the corpus
	2. Distinguish between narrative and non-narrative instances
	3. Categorise according to type
	4. Categorise in terms of structure and function
	5. Categorise in terms of place and role in narrative
	6. Place narrative within meeting
	7. Infer underlying cognitive stereotype
2: Explaining the range of identities and patterns of use	8. Examine contexts of use/non-use
	9. Consider indexed identities of stereotyped and stereotyping

	10. Consider ideological positions in relation to power

Although the analysis examines the whole corpus, the extracts (1, 3 and 4) involving WNNSs are from the same company, "Hall and Sons". This is for ease of reference and because, as shown below, it is a particularly pertinent context.

Analysis and Discussion

Categorising WNNSs

This section deals primarily with the first research question. Step 1 involves finding all instances of explicit national stereotypes in the corpus, which meant rejecting certain borderline cases. One such example is from an intra-organisational meeting in an IT company, between the (British male) Technical Director ($1), and his subordinate, the recently promoted (Colombian male) Technical Manager ($2). At the end of some advice about how to train a new, possibly lazy employee, the Director uses the stereotype-invoking term mañana, then glosses what it means in turn 6.

Extract 2

1. <$1> But what you've really wanted to do is you want them to do it now.

2. <$2> Yeah.

3. <$2> Yeah.

4. <$1> Yeah? Because some people just like working under pressure and if there's no pressure (0.5 sec) you know mañana.

5. <$2> Yeah <?> mañana.

6. <$1> Laid back and and you know "I'll do it sometime"

This is interesting not least because the stereotype indexed by the word mañana (LAZY SPANISH-SPEAKER) is associated with citizens of Spanish-speaking countries, but here it is uttered *to* a Spanish-speaking person *about* a British person. It arguably shows how national stereotypes can be indexed in implicit ways (beyond the scope of this study), and operate as "floating signifiers" (Hall, 2013) in that they are dynamic and open to strategic use. But because there is no explicit mention of a nationality (unlike extract 1), it is not included here. In total, there were 28 instances of explicit national stereotypes in CANBEC (compared to 911 explicit mention of nations, national organisations or nationalities), with all but two being heterostereotypes.

Of the 28 instances, 24 of them occurred in narratives (step 2), meaning nearly all instances of national stereotypes occurred in narratives. This association provides the justificatory foundation for the study. The stereotypes were found to differ in terms of size of reference, and three categories are proposed (step 3): individual national stereotypes (7 instances), national stereotypes of specified groups (7 instances), and whole nation stereotypes (10 instances). Within each category there are further differences. For instance with the individual nation stereotype category, they can concern a known person (e.g. "Pascal's very French"), or an imagined national of a country ("We need a Russian in there now don't we").Whereas "Pascal's very French" indexes a prototypical sense of Frenchness through the predicative nationality adjective plus the adverb "very", the nominal "a Russian" invokes the stereotype through conjuring an image of a typical Russian worker as understood by the meeting participants. The interlocutor then responds by saying "Yeah. Do we Hell" , implying that the stereotype is negative (THE UNRELIABLE RUSSIAN, step 7).

Steps 4-7 are expounded here though the analysis of extract 3, involving an anecdote about cars not starting in the cold weather. The meeting is an intra-organisational production review meeting. Here we see the indexing of a national stereotypical identity (step 7) of a non-present colleague ("Ian") through his purported exception to one national stereotype (THE DRUNKEN SCOTTISH WHO LOVE WHISKY) and then a different speaker ($1) implicitly reinforcing a different national stereotype of the same nationality through reference to Ian's seeming miserliness (THE PARSIMONIOUS SCOTTISH). Both stereotypes are clearly evaluative, and arguably provide an engaging coda to the rather mundane anecdote (step 5); in other narratives, the stereotype may occur as the main evaluation of the narrative itself (e.g. "don't trust the French" in extract 1), or as background to the story. The accompanying laughter suggests that these evaluations are interpreted humorously (step 4).

Extract 3

Participants

$1: Prod Manager

$2: design Engineer

$3: Sales Manager

$4: Department Manager

1. <$3> Mine struggled. Ian's wouldn't start yesterday. He had to have the er A A[4] out. (1 second) The diesel had frozen.

2. <$4> Aye?

3. <$3> In the filter.

4. <$1> (2 seconds) Put a drop of whisky in it.

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[4] The AA is a breakdown recovery service

5. <$M> (laughs)

6. <$4> He d= He don't like whisky Ian does he?

7. <$3> No. (laughs) The only Scotsman who don't like scotch.

8. <$1> (1 second) He'll drink it if somebody else+

9. <$2> Likes+

10. <$1> +that's buying it.

11. <$2> +likes all other spirits+

12. <$3> Yeah. (laughs)

13. <$2> +but not s= not scotch (sniffs).

14. <$3> (2 seconds) We're kicking off. If I go through the minutes of the last meeting just to see where we're up to.

In terms of the narrative itself, like the majority of the WNNSs (step 4), it is a workplace anecdote (Holmes, 2005) and occurs at the pre-meeting stage (Handford, 2010: 69). It is clearly an interpersonal exchange, until the transaction move (Handford, 2010: 69) in turn 14 (2-second silence plus opening expression), which marks the shift to the transactional discussion. Workplace anecdotes often occur at the "bookends" of meetings (Holmes, 2005; Handford, 2010), and workplace anecdotes which feature national stereotypes follow this pattern (step 6). The highly co-constructed nature of this anecdote is of note, as is the evidence for humorous intent, and will be discussed below.

In summary, explicit national stereotypes are not very frequent, but when used tend to occur in workplace narratives. They usually occur in workplace anecdotes as opposed to working stories (Holmes, 2005). Like other anecdotes, WNNSs tend to occur at the beginnings and endings of meetings. The stereotypes refer to individuals, specific groups or

whole nations, are usually about non-present others, and are overwhelmingly evaluatively negative.

WNNSs and identity

The second research question requires an examination of the identities of relevant subjects constructed in and through the discourse, with an emphasis on the identities of the meeting-interlocutors. To do this, a contextual understanding of the meetings is needed (step 8), and will allow for inferences to be made about the use (and indeed non-use) of the stereotypes by and among certain groups. These contextual features help us understand the local and temporary identities that may be indexed. As discussed above, CANBEC features data from a range of different industries, company sizes and meeting-type, which provide context to the utterances. If we were to hypothesize about the use of national stereotypes, we might expect to see them feature in intra-organisational as opposed to inter-organisational meetings (because they are potentially contentious evaluations), across industries, in multinational organisations (because they tend to have staff from different nationalities), and to be used by speakers of higher status (because of their evaluative nature). Interestingly, only the last of these hypotheses is borne out: while they are indeed used by senior managers, there is only one instance in a multinational company (and it is an autostereotype). Instead, all other instances occur in meetings held in medium-sized companies. In terms of industry, the majority occur in manufacturing. They occur in both intra-organisational and inter-organisational meetings. Another feature is that they are used overwhelmingly by men, to men, and when specified, about men; while 79% of speakers in CANBEC self-identify as men and 21% women, this is still a striking pattern.

These patterns also allow us to reflect briefly on the absence of WNNSs in other contexts in the corpus. It is worth stating that narratives are featured in many workplace meetings (Holmes, 2005; Handford, 2010), so the comparative absence of narratives of a specific type (here WNNSs) is interesting. They do not usually appear in meetings held in multinationals or in small companies, and hardly or not at all in the consultancy, finance, retail, travel, IT and pharmaceutical companies. They hardly ever appear in mixed-gender meetings, and are never uttered by employees with relatively lower status in meetings. With one exception they are not used in meetings with different nationalities (in CANBEC they are by people, to people, self-identifying as British). These patterns further demonstrate the context-specificity and situatedness of the social practice of WNNSs: employees have interpersonal and transactional goals, and practices are the way they are achieved (Handford, 2010: 30). The evidence suggests that for the bulk of workplace communities in the corpus, WNNSs are not deemed an appropriate practice to adopt.

As a way of delving further into these patterns and examining how they relate to indexing identity (*inter alia*, steps 8 and 9) an analysis of a further narrative will be conducted which both exemplifies and problematises certain initial findings and theoretical assumptions (such as the distinction between workplace anecdotes and working stories). The extract occurs part-way through an intra-organisational upper-management negotiation meeting in "Hall and Sons", where the marketing director ($1) is reporting about the cost of winches, and a possible solution. The preceding discussions in the meeting have seen disagreements between the production director ($6) and the marketing director; the former hopes to use different, cheaper, suppliers for winches, but the production manager does not want to do this. There has also been ongoing debate in the company about involvement with the Chinese market.

Extract 4

Participants:

$1: Marketing Director

$3: Chairman (company founder)

$5: Design Engineer

$6: Production Director

1. <$1> And they're paying (1 second) fifteen hundred quid for the Billy lift aren't they. <?>

2. <$6> Erm Billy lift tends to be about twelve thirteen hundred pounds.

3. <$5> It's it's really the little <?> or whatever. The <?> which are fifteen sixteen hundred.

4. <$1> Well they ought to be five hundred quid (1 second) didn't they buying those.

5. <$5> Yeah.

6. <$1> <?>

7. <$6> I think those actually cost by the time we've paid carriage getting on for thirteen hundred quid.

8. <$1> Mm. It's ridiculous. Ridiculously expensive. We've just got a winch downstairs come in from a supplier. (1 second) Nice winch but it's just like it's an exact copy of a Delta winch. Nicely made. It's got remote control snatch block handle instructions beautifully packaged in polystyrene… Thirty pounds.

9. <$M> (laughs) (1 second) You're joking. (2 seconds)

10. <$1> That's everything. <?> (1 second) twenty five er foot rope (1 second) swivel everything. Thirty pounds. (2 seconds) How can you make that?

11. <$3> Is it Chinese?

12. <$M> Is that Chinese?

13. <$1> Yeah. Exact copy of a Delta winch. (3 seconds) But it seems to work very
    nicely. We've run it. Does the Does the job. It's got free wheel.

14. <$6> You'll have taken all the kids' fingers out the+

15. <$M> (laughs)

16. <$6> +<?> site.

17. <$M> (laughs)

18. <$M> Yeah.

19. <$5> Self-lubricating. (laughs)

20. <$1> But I mean if you can produce I mean that's thirty pounds. So we the those those
    tail lifts it's such a basic rough job they don't need to be anything more than six
    hundred quid do they. To us.

The Marketing Director states in turn 1 that winches can be around £1500, but he has had a

sample model delivered from a different supplier for £30 pounds (turn 8). In terms of this

developing into a narrative, there is some performative aspect in terms of the delivery

concerning the cost at the end of turn 8 (a short silence followed by ellipted statement of the

cost), provoking incredulity in turn 9. This evidences "tellability" (Ochs and Capp, 2001).

But the exchange so far seems to inhabit the grey area between reports and narratives, with

the high cost arguably the complicating action (e.g. turn 8's evaluation of the price as

"bloody expensive"). The resolution would thus be the low price of the model downstairs,

repeated in turns 8 and 10. From turn 11, however, the marketing director's narrative point is

arguably usurped, as he loses his temporary identity as narrator; the point of the story

changes from overpriced products and their alternatives, to one about dubious foreign

products. This new narrative is therefore both co-constructed (by the other three speakers in

turns 11-19) and contested (by the Marketing Director in turns 13 and 20). It begins following the founder of the company asking whether the winch is Chinese made (turn 11), and once this is verified the Production Director commenting about children's fingers being found in the product (IMMORAL CHINESE MANUFACTURERS), seemingly in reference to the use of child labour in Chinese manufacturing (turn 14). This suggestion is then embellished upon the Design Engineer in turn 19, a kind of evaluative "doubling-down" which was also evident in extract 1. The accompanying laughter around turns 15-19 suggests this is interpreted humorously by some of the participants. In turn 20 the Marketing Director attempts to return to the original point of his story (the cheap cost of the model).

In terms of whether this is a working story or a workplace anecdote (Holmes, 2005), it is arguably a contested hybrid of both, thus problematising the distinction. The first eight turns are clearly transactional in content, and therefore more of a working story (although the brevity is more in line with an anecdote). But from turn 11, and especially turns 14-19, the narrative becomes more interpersonal and humorous in tone (from some of the interlocutors' responses), and therefore more akin to a workplace anecdote. It is noteworthy that the "jokes" are not uttered by the primary narrator (Marketing Director), but by the Production Director and the Design Engineer, with whom he has been disagreeing about the future direction for the company in the earlier part of the meeting, and in other meetings, partly concerning involvement with Chinese suppliers. The "humour" provides a realignment of the argument, potentially acting as a delegitimizing strategy: the Marketing Director's main evaluation of the solution (cheap winches are good) is made less impactful through re-evaluating the product as morally objectionable (and possibly unreliable) and therefore dismissible. The interpersonal interjection thus achieves a clear transactional goal. This goes beyond Holmes' (2005) assertion that workplace anecdotes can achieve both interpersonal and transactional aims: here we see a seemingly interpersonal sequence employed to achieve a transactional

purpose. The original narrative is thus usurped, achieved through the strategic introduction of a national stereotype. And while we have an example of a narrative involving a national stereotype, it is co-constructed by the audience as temporary narrator, rather than by the main narrator, possibly as a divergent negotiating strategy, and one which causes a potential reinterpretation of what the complicating action and point are. It is also indicative that the content of the jokes is not problematised at all, with the first joke embellished in turn 19, suggesting such utterances are acceptable in this community, at least when framed humorously: this arguably reflects certain ideological norms within this community. This fascinating exchange elucidates De Fina and Georgakopoulou's point that narratives-as-practice can be seen to form part of a community's shared resources, but are also "potentially contestable resources" that can result in alternative discourses (2008: 383).

In terms of identity, there are therefore various shifts in the temporary interactional identities. Considering local identities, it is of note that the two main protagonists in this exchange are of equal status, both being directors in this medium-sized manufacturing company. While therefore very senior, their equivalent position means power is negotiated wholly through discourse rather than through claims to pre-existing asymmetrical status. This demonstrates that when there is no clear difference in status, asymmetrical positioning can be achieved through the effective employment of certain linguistic devices. The positioning of oneself as narrator in such power-plays is therefore both risky, as demonstrated by the seeming disruption of the Marketing Director's evaluative position, and potentially engaging and persuasive. This extract thus demonstrates how multifaceted, and yet how context-specific indexed identities can be. The Production Director, for instance, can be seen indexing a range of local and temporary interactional identities: a knowledgeable production manager in a manufacturing company (turns 2 and 7), a joke teller (turn 14), and an adept negotiator who can attract others to his position (evidenced in turns 18-19). All of these

identities are positive, but were he to utter the same joke in an alternative workplace, the reception, perception and subsequent positioning of his identity may be very different; this would depend on the ideologies and norms of the workplace.

WNNSs can therefore index an aspect of the identity of the stereotyped individual, group or nation concerned. As discussed earlier, such stereotypes in CANBEC are overwhelmingly negative, and by invoking the national-level they index macro identities. WNNSs also index the identity of the speakers, as we have seen, both in terms of interactional and local identities, and may implicate at least parts of the audience. There are a range of candidate positions that might explain the use of WNNSs, such as the homogeneity of the speakers and the contexts in which they work, in terms of gender, senior-management status, nationality, industry, company size, location and so on. Rather than a single social identity deterministically explaining such language use, it is worth considering whether such homogeneity itself may encourage a climate whereby certain practices (like stereotyping) can operate. Furthermore, Gregory-Peck and Yang's (2014) work on UK small and medium enterprises and international business is arguably relevant here: this is a UK company which is exploring expanding international business, but one where its ideological norms may militate against this. The ideological implications of the use of stereotypes may be of more interest to the analyst than to the speaker in such cases, but that does not mean the analyst's concerns are invalid: sometimes the etic trumps the emic.

Evaluation and power

This section will address research question 3, discussing how evaluation, ideology and particularly power can explain the use of WNNSs in meetings. As discussed above, when considering power we need to move beyond conflating power and status, and examine how

powerful relations between subjects are constructed in and through discourse. This is not to suggest that asymmetry is wholly constructed through interaction: hierarchies feature in most workplaces. Nevertheless, when considering the construction of asymmetric power relations, we need to examine the interaction as well as the status-positions of the speakers (e.g. extract 4). One of the arguments of this study is that WNNSs can index powerful subject positions. This is because WNNSs are an act of double-evaluation, and in order to shift to an evaluative footing we need to be sufficiently empowered, or risk censure for "speaking above our station". As Thornborrow argues, "certain types of utterances are seen as legitimate for some speakers and not for others" (2002: 4). The findings here suggest while high status is not sufficient for achieving perlocutionary success (e.g. extract 4), it seems to be a necessary condition for the use of WNNSs. Workplace narratives in general can be seen as legitimate for speakers who can successfully negotiate and index power; indeed, Toolan argues that to narrate "is to make a bid for power" (1988: 6). Similarly, the act of stereotyping appears only legitimate for certain powerful speakers. This is because workplaces are sites of constrained power relations, where typically the "is" has become the "should": in other words, what happens in workplace communication is usually what is expected to happen. This is another way of saying that social practices are normative, and embody the mechanisms of power. As Heritage (2005: 117) argues in relation to institutional talk, "the rules that we initially hypothesise from empirical regularities in the participants' actions are in fact rules that participants recognise that they *should* follow as a moral obligation".

I argue WNNSs are a doubly-evaluative social practice because stereotypes by themselves are inherently evaluative, and for an utterance to count as a narrative it must invoke some evaluation (Labov, 1992; Linde, 1993; Cortazzi and Jin, 2000). As we have seen, the stereotype may feature as the main evaluative move in the narrative, but it can also occur in other stages of the narrative. When the stereotype functions as the main evaluation

of the narrative, this is still doubly-evaluative because even when the point of the stereotype may be to reflect positively on the speaker's company/in-group (as in extract 1), to do so it has to also evaluate the nationality. That WNNSs may help achieve transactional goals, for instance about the company's future engagement with certain suppliers, allows for a reconsideration that stereotypes are employed to allow swift judgments about groups to be made, as argued by Lakoff (1989: 79). In each example of these narratives, the stereotype is arguably being employed to achieve a transaction goal; in other words, the quick judgments about people are employed with the purpose of furthering a professional aim, such as winning a negotiation or impressing a client.

This is not to downplay the importance of ideology and its relationship with identity when interpreting such data. Indeed, the very act of indexing identity "relies heavily" on ideology (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 594), as evidenced by the deontic nature of practices discussed above. While the aim of achieving transactional goals is a defining feature of workplaces, the use of national stereotypes to achieve them is clearly not – the absence of such stereotypes in the bulk of the corpus contexts supports this claim. Hall (2013: 253) states a key feature of stereotyping is that it is circular: "it implicates the "subjects" of power as well as those who are "subjected to it", and we might add that the systematic absence of linguistic stereotypes may be equally indexical.

In terms of what ideologies are indexed through the practice of WNNSs, the nationalist discourse of "the dodgy foreigner" is clearly one candidate. But on a meta-discursive level, we might also say that "willingness to use prejudicial language" to achieve your ends might reflect another ideology. Neither of these ideologies are limited to business contexts of course, as recent populist political nationalist discourse demonstrates. Nor are they equivalent: van Dijk (1987) shows that racist narratives are often argumentative or defensive in tone, suggesting that in his data the "dodgy foreigner" ideology at least

recognises some conflict with the "willingness to use prejudicial language" ideology. Such a

conflict is not evident in many of the stereotypes employed in CANBEC; indeed they appear

an evaluative form of "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995), but one directed at "the Other".

Furthermore, the absence of instances of national stereotypes in meeting-narratives might be

evidence of the second ideology rather than the first. In other words, just because people do

not express certain prejudicial beliefs does not entail they do not hold them: it may be more

that they are not comfortable expressing them in the context in question. In terms of

inclusivity in the workplace, perhaps creating environments where any prejudicial language

is inappropriate is a realisable goal.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the use of explicit national stereotypes in workplace narratives

through the creation and application of a replicable methodology which could be used in

other discourse contexts. It has found that while the practice is not prevalent across all

workplaces analysed (an indicative finding in itself), WNNSs do occur in both intra- and

inter-organisational meetings, often in manufacturing companies. The corpus-assisted

discourse analysis shows that there are certain interlocutors who are seemingly comfortable

invoking prejudicial language in the form of a narrative, and many more participants in

CANBEC who do not. These patterns demonstrate the context-specificity of the social

practice of WNNSs: employees always have interpersonal and transactional goals, and

practices are the way they are achieved (Handford, 2010: 30). The evidence suggests that for

the bulk of workplace communities in the corpus, WNNSs are not deemed an appropriate

practice to perform. Of course, the corpus is only a snapshot of interactions, and absence in

the corpus does not entail blanket absence in the real world; nevertheless, the findings are certainly suggestive of wider patterns, and therefore deserving of further critical exploration. The national stereotypes in the narratives are overwhelmingly about non-present others, are negative in evaluation, and may refer to individuals, small groups or whole nations. They may form the main evaluation, or other "stages" of the narrative in which they appear. In terms of the local identities of the interlocutors who employ WNNSs, they are senior male managers in medium-sized companies, and while WNNSs may be interpersonal in content and tone, they arguably address transactional goals. As such, the distinction between interpersonal anecdotes and transactional narratives, as proposed by Holmes (2005), can be reappraised. Furthermore, WNNSs are argued to be "doubly-evaluative" in that stereotypes and narratives are both inherently evaluative. While WNNSs may thus index the power of the speaker through this act of evaluation, and are used only by high-status speakers, there are associated risks in terms of indexing professional credibility. This may be in terms of the ideological stance evidenced in their use (depending on the context of use), or in terms of more local asymmetry in meetings. At the level of temporary identity, WNNSs can be employed to usurp an interlocutor's narrator-status, and delegitimize their argument, as well as construct an interactional identity of a humorous and persuasive storyteller. As such, the practice of WNNSs can achieve other social practices in and through interaction, a valid topic for future study. But as pointed out at the beginning of the paper, for companies aiming to diversify in terms of workforce and markets, stereotyping practices invoking ethnocentric ideologies are likely to hinder success, both in terms of creating an inclusive internal culture and engaging internationally.

Transcription Code

… noticeable pause or break of less than 1 second within a turn

<?> indicates inaudible utterances

+ overlapping or simultaneous speech (the exact onset of overlap is not shown)

(...) words in these brackets indicate non-linguistic information, e.g. pauses of 1 second or

longer (the number of seconds is indicated), speakers' gestures or actions

<$1> number of speaker

<$M> refers to gender of speaker when identity is unclear

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