

A study of linguistic strategies in Irish Dáil debates with a focus on power and gender

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List of abbreviations

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
FF	Fianna Fáil
FG	Fine Gael
FTA	Face-threatening act
Gov	Government
Ind	Independent TD
Lab	Labour
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
Opp	Opposition
SF	Sinn Féin
Soc	Socialist Party
TD	Teachta Dála
UI	Unit of Interaction

Glossary of terms specific to the Irish parliamentary context

Irish language terms denoting some of the institutional roles in the chamber are outlined here. Names of the government leader and deputy leader are also given. These were current between March 2011 and March 2012, the period in which the study takes place.

Taoiseach= Head of the Government: Enda Kenny, Fine Gael

Tánaiste= Deputy Leader of the Government: Eamon Gilmore, Labour party

An Ceann Comhairle= Speaker/Chairperson of the House

Leas-Ceann Comhairle= Deputy Speaker/Chairperson of the House

Teachta Dála= Member of Parliament

Teachtaí Dála= Members of Parliament

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Abstract

Gráinne Toomey

A study of linguistic strategies in Irish Dáil debates with a focus on power and gender

Parliamentary discourse has been described as fundamentally adversarial. In the context of the parliamentary debating chamber, power relations are negotiated and challenged through the strategic use of language. It is the aim of this study to identify the ways in which strategic language is used to negotiate the dynamics of power in the context of Irish parliamentary debate. Given that women are a minority in the Dáil, the topic of gender is a relevant dimension to the research. As a secondary aim, the study investigates whether and in what ways gender is invoked in the strategic use of language.

The study employs a multi-method qualitative approach to analyse strategic language use in the area of parliamentary discourse. It focuses on the micro-level of discourse by undertaking a close linguistic analysis of extracts from debate transcripts from the 31st Dáil. Also, current members of the parliament are interviewed to gain perspectives on the dialectics of speaking in the institutionalised setting of the chamber. Linguistic strategies are analysed using a classification designed for the purposes of the study. The analysis indicates that TDs use a wide variety of forms of strategic language in Dáil interaction. The study also suggests that there is an awareness of the informal and formal rules that are in place in the *habitus* of the Dáil chamber. The multi-method framework of the study uncovers a set of different perspectives between TDs' statements in the interview data and the findings from analysis of debate interaction. The study also suggests that female TDs may use strategic language which invokes gender in order to challenge male authority in debate interaction, and that female TDs may invoke gender more often than their male counterparts when using linguistic strategies.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The parliamentary debating chamber is the most public form of the workings of politics, and can be described as a window into parliamentary democracy. Functioning as an institutional space in which parliamentarians interact and debate legislation, the chamber is where the political processes and the terms of political debate can be seen to be “constituted and communicated through text and talk” (Chilton and Schäffner 1997, p. 208). A parliament contains a democratically elected population of parliamentarians in government and opposition. While the government has decision-making power, the opposition typically holds the government to account and endeavours to influence the drafting and enacting of legislation. Fairclough’s (1989, p. 15) assertion that language is “a site of, and a stake in, struggles for power” is seen to be true in the discourse of parliamentary debate, where the binary dynamic of government and opposition exists. In a Foucauldian sense, where there is power, there is also resistance to power, and thus, the parliamentary chamber can be seen as a site of linguistic contest for power where undermining and attacking other speakers is routine. This proposition can be adopted for the context of Irish parliament, which is under scrutiny in this study.

The study explores the language used by Teachtaí Dála (henceforth TDs) in parliamentary debates in the Dáil, the lower house of parliament in the Republic of Ireland. Until relatively recently, little research had been carried out in parliamentary discourse (Bayley 2004), and there has been no research of which the researcher is aware that focuses on the linguistic analysis of parliamentary discourse in the Republic of Ireland. This study therefore aims to add to the growing body of literature on parliamentary discourse by addressing this gap.

As indicated by the title of this thesis, the key theoretical concerns for this study are power and gender. The institutional context of the Irish parliamentary chamber is taken into account to investigate the subtle ways in which power and gender are constructed. The political representation of the parliamentary chamber in the 31st Dáil – the period under scrutiny in this study – should be clarified to outline why the study explores gender in this context. The study originated partly as a result of the notable paucity of

women at Irish parliamentary level, at 15%.¹ As with many parliaments, there has been a historical under-representation of women in the Dáil. This situation has been slow to change and the Irish parliament sits low in world rankings for women's representation. The issue of the 'democratic deficit' (Galligan 2004) caused by the under-representation of women at parliamentary level in Ireland was topical at the time of research. A further motivation for the study stemmed from the lack of literature exploring the links between the minority status of women in the Dáil and the role of gender in linguistic interaction in debate.

As suggested above, the chamber is a site of linguistic contest for power. The context where interaction takes place is important to determine the pragmatics of the verbal exchange, in other words, how it will be perceived, evaluated and contested. Like many other parliaments, where "[p]olitical dissent characteristically comes in the form of accusations directed against the dominant elites" (Van Dijk 1997, p. 37), the interaction in the Dáil is often adversarial. The theoretical background to the study draws on power as a central factor in the context of adversarial dialogue to suggest that the power relations in the Dáil are non-static and dynamic, and can be negotiated through the use of strategic language in order to undermine and delegitimise the contribution, or position, of another speaker.

Having described the motivations behind the study and the context in which it takes place, the specific research questions are outlined as follows:

- *In what ways is language used strategically by participants in debate to negotiate the power dynamics of the chamber?*
- *Do debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate? If so, in what ways?*

To address the research questions, the study adopts a qualitative close linguistic analytical approach in order to analyse the strategic use of language in Dáil debates. It combines this analysis of debate interaction with data from interviews with practising TDs to gain an insight into the realities of taking part in debate.

¹ This was the figure current from www.ipu.org between March 2011 and March 2012, the period corresponding to the dates of the debate transcripts used for analysis.

1.2 Thesis Structure

Following the Introduction in this chapter, **Chapter 2** outlines the theoretical backdrop to illustrate how power relations and struggles for and with power are a central factor in this study's exploration of the linguistic strategies used in parliamentary debate. It also frames the research in terms of the institutional context that it investigates, with reference to the concept of *habitus*. An overview of literature in the fields of political discourse (focusing in particular on linguistically oriented studies of parliamentary debate) and language and gender contextualises the study and shows how relevant literature shaped its progression. This chapter also outlines the environment of the Dáil chamber as a space in which strategic language is used.

The methods used to address the research questions are outlined in **Chapter 3**, Methodology. It includes a description of how a corpus of extracts from debate transcripts was compiled and how the questionnaire for interviews with TDs was drawn up. In addition, the chapter includes references to preliminary examination of the corpus and pilot interviews and accounts for the way in which these informed subsequent analysis.

Given that the study is concerned with the ways in which language is used strategically to negotiate power dynamics in Dáil debate, a chapter was devoted to developing a classification of linguistic strategies which would be used to analyse the corpus data. **Chapter 4** details the development of a typology of categories of linguistic strategy in use in the debates under analysis and provides definitions and rationale for each of these categories.

The analysis of the linguistic strategies then takes place in **Chapter 5**. Instances of each strategy which appear in the corpus of Dáil debate transcripts are discussed in terms of how they are used strategically.

The second method of analysis used in the study is the semi-structured interviews with politicians, which are analysed in **Chapter 6**. This chapter also presents the key points that emerge under thematic headings.

Chapter 7 links the findings from Chapters 5 and 6 and reflects on these in light of the research questions and the theoretical framework of the research.

In the conclusion in **Chapter 8** the research questions are readdressed with reference to the findings of analysis. This final chapter also outlines the study's contribution to knowledge, addresses the limitations of the study and makes suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As outlined in the introduction, this study focuses on debate interaction in the Dáil chamber to address the following research questions:

- *In what ways is language used strategically by participants in Irish parliamentary debate to negotiate the power dynamics of the chamber?*
- *Do debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate? If so, in what ways?*

In order to address these questions, the study undertakes a close linguistic analysis of debate interaction in the Irish context. This chapter situates the study within the body of relevant literature that has informed the study, by providing an overview of academic endeavour in the fields of political discourse and language and gender.

The chapter begins by outlining the theoretical backdrop to the study with a consideration of theoretical assumptions regarding the concept of power and how power is implicated, negotiated, and challenged in various ways in discourse.

The chapter then moves to an overview of literature concerned with the context of the parliamentary debating chamber, particularly studies which take into account its institutional nature as a site of discourse. This is followed by an overview of research in the field of parliamentary discourse and the wider field of political discourse, with a focus on studies that adopt a discourse analytical approach to discuss the adversarial nature of debate interaction and the strategic use of language in the parliamentary context.

Due to the study's focus on gender, the chapter presents its reflections on gender as a construct, and discusses relevant literature in the field of language and gender, including studies carried out in parliamentary settings. It also describes how the study's central concepts of power and gender are related. Relevant aspects from the literature that have shaped and influenced the research are indicated throughout this chapter. The chapter

concludes by summarising where this study sits in the current literature on parliamentary discourse and language and gender.

2.2 Theoretical assumptions on language and power

2.2.1 Introduction

This section discusses the study's theoretical basis by focusing on the concept of power, which has informed the development of the thesis on several levels.

Firstly, it is necessary to clarify how the concept of power is relevant for the study's focus on linguistic interaction. Power is manifested in various ways in discourse. Commenting on language in general, Fairclough (1989, p. 1) states that language is significant "in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power". In light of this statement, this study seeks to assess in what ways language is significant in terms of negotiating the power dynamics of parliamentary debate in the Irish Dáil.

Fairclough (1989, p. 15) makes the claim that "language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being both a site of, and a stake in, struggles for power". Fairclough's claim is relevant for this study, which aims to examine the ways in which "struggles for power" (ibid.) – or negotiations of 'power dynamics', which is the term adopted in this study – may appear in strategic language used in Irish parliamentary interaction. The term 'power dynamics' that appears in the research questions of the study was influenced by Wodak's (1996) view of power as a transformative and non-static, i.e. dynamic, feature of interaction.

Aspects of power are inherently bound up in the practices of parliamentary debate. Not only are the terms of political debate "constituted and communicated through text and talk" (Chilton and Schäffner 1997, p. 208), but in politics on a broader level, there exists a struggle for power "between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it" (Chilton 2004, p. 3). The study adopts the Foucauldian view that power relations imply a struggle or resistance in order to suggest that a strategic use of language can show evidence of the negotiation of power dynamics in a parliamentary chamber.

2.2.2 Power relations and *habitus*

In this study, relevant theoretical assumptions on power are drawn from Foucault (1982; 1980) and Bourdieu (1991). On the question of what constitutes the specific nature of power, the emphasis in the literature is on the enactment of power upon the actions of others. Foucault's formulation of power relations has been influential for this study. Foucault (1982, p. 788) describes the exercise of power as "not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others. Power exists only when it is put into action". Every power relationship implies a strategy of struggle or resistance, and the mechanisms brought into play in power relations can be interpreted in terms of strategies (ibid.). 'Strategy' here designates the means employed to attain a certain end, in a way in which one seeks to have advantage over others (ibid.). Also, Bourdieu (1991, p. 37) states that linguistic exchanges are "relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized". Drawing on these texts, it can be proposed that power relations in parliamentary debate, which is characterised by a backdrop of both conflict and cooperation, are negotiated and challenged through linguistic interaction. By focusing on the 'strategic' aspect of this interaction, this study aims to show how power dynamics in the chamber can be negotiated through a strategic use of language in Dáil debate.

A further theoretical principle which guides this study is Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, which is useful for understanding how members of an institutional context negotiate the rules of the social domain in which they speak. The notion of *habitus* is considered in the context of this study as it examines language in a particular institutional context. *Habitus* is defined by Thompson (1991, in Bourdieu 1991, Introduction, p. 12) as "a set of *dispositions* which incline agents to act and react in certain ways". These 'dispositions', which "generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regular' without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any 'rule'" (ibid.), could be described as informal rules that govern language use. This study views the Irish political establishment as a *habitus* within which parliamentarians compete for linguistic authority in accordance with the formal and informal rules of the context.

Wodak (2009) simplifies the concept of *habitus* by explaining that in all daily interactions in everyday life it is necessary to learn the rules of the game, and that people are socialised into these rules and the expectations related to certain professional roles. *Habitus* captures this conventionalised and internalised behaviour that is constituted in the professional field where power struggles take place (Wodak 2009). Wodak's (2009) study is concerned with the role of 'identity' and 'multiple identities' of politicians and how they perform their identities within the context of the parliament. She suggests that a period of socialisation into the institutional life of politics, including mentoring from one's party advisors and political colleagues, enables politicians to acquire *habitus* and become accustomed to the rules and rituals of the game (ibid.). While this study does not explore whether a link exists between strategic language use and the identity of an individual politician, it was informed by Wodak's (2009) study, in which she applies *habitus* to frame linguistic behaviour in interaction. The *habitus* of a parliament affects language use in that parliamentarians are aware that there are given rules and regulations to which they must adhere.

2.2.3 Power and Discourse

This section turns to the discussion of how power is manifested at the level of discourse, and how it can be analysed on this level. Wodak (2009, p. 35) asserts that it is the usage of language that ties into its power, when she states that "[l]anguage is not powerful on its own; it gains power by the use powerful people make of it". For instance, power can be manifested on a linguistic level during a debate contribution in what Adams calls the "power of a superior argument" (1988, in Edelsky and Adams 1990, p. 186). This study, however, does not focus on setting out a definition for powerful language per se, be that in terms of making a superior argument in a political debate, or otherwise. Wodak's (2009) assertion that language gains power in the way it is used helps focus on how language is used by individuals in parliamentary interaction. Building on this focus, the following discussion shows how studies by Thornborrow (2002) and Mills (2003) outline a useful understanding of power in discourse that relates closely to the study's focus on power dynamics.

Thornborrow (2002, p. 7) refers to Foucault to describe power as a concept of a "complex and continuously evolving web of social and discursive relations". Her

approach is to see power as a set of resources available to speakers which can be used more or less successfully, depending on the speech situation and who the speaker is. She views power as accomplished in discourse “both on a structural level, through the turn and type of space speakers are given or can get access to, and, on an interactional level, through what they can effectively accomplish in that space” (ibid., p. 8). Holmes (2005, p. 33) also emphasises the dynamic way in which power is constructed and exercised in discourse, where different participants “manifest power in diverse ways as they construct their own identities and roles in response to the behaviour of others”.

Similar to Thornborrow and Holmes, Mills (2003) emphasises how power may be drawn upon by speakers during linguistic interaction. Mills’ (2003) definition of ‘interactional power’ is relevant for discussing the strategic use of language in debate interaction in that it links closely with the study’s focus on the power dynamics in debate interaction. She outlines that when participants engage in interaction, they “are at the same time mapping out for [themselves] a position in relation to the power relations within communities of practice and within the society as a whole” (ibid., p. 175). Mills defines this type of positioning as ‘interactional power’, differentiating it from power roles assigned to participants by class position, relation to institutions and so on.

In terms of the structures that evoke powerful language on a close linguistic level, Stubbs (1998) outlines a set of grammatical features for expressing power relations. These features include whether sentences are positive/negative, active/passive, whether verbs are nominalised, how pronouns (especially *we* or *you*) are used, and how modality is expressed. Such features express whether participants, agency and causation are explicit or hidden and thus “whether claims are being made as factual, certain, taken for granted, authoritative, categorical and part of the status quo, or as tentative and open to change” (Stubbs 1998, p. 97). Stubbs’ (1998) work was helpful in drawing attention to ways in which linguistic features on the sentential level can affect power relations in discourse.

The suggestion that “the locus of ‘power’ is not fixed” (Sunderland 2004, p. 189) in speech acts, but rather can reside (even if only briefly) in the words of any actor, supports the study’s focus on the dynamic, non-static view of power in parliamentary debate, and how this is negotiated through the strategic use of language.

The above section has discussed ways in which power is manifested in discourse, and the benefits of examining interactional power, as discussed by Mills (2003) and Thornborrow (2002), for the purposes of the current study. The next section moves to an exploration of the context of the parliamentary chamber, and of the relevance of power in this context.

2.2.4 Power and performance in the context of parliamentary debate

In the parliamentary chamber, members are divided into government and opposition. While the government holds a certain amount of power by way of having an elected majority of politicians and by way of holding legislative power, the function of the opposition is to hold the government to account for decisions made and to include their views in debate. As a result, participants compete for political power in parliamentary debate, where power is an ongoing dynamic in interaction (Harris 2001). The studies in this section describe ways in which parliamentarians compete for political power during debate.

Official political debates, whether they are held in parliament or in the media, should be arranged with an equal allocation of turns to allow for equality in debate resources (Edelsky and Adams 1990). Edelsky and Adams (1990) outline that one meaning of power in the discursive context of political debate is the control of resources. The effects of this form of control are seen when rules are violated, for example, when a participant's turn is shortened because of their pausing to respond to heckling, or when they are shouted down by other members and cannot continue speaking without asking the chair of debate to quieten other members down. This view is supported by Thornborrow (2002, p. 27), who argues that there is a 'territorial' model of power in interaction, "where the more turns you can take (or stop other people taking) and the greater your occupation of the floor, the more power you have as a participant in the talk". Bevitori (2004) also links the action of accessing the debate floor through interruption to the concept of power. She suggests that when unauthorised speakers get the floor through forms of interruption, they are "performing an action of control and power on the 'current speaker'" (Bevitori 2004, p. 103).

Similarly, Ilie (2013) discusses turn-taking and other forms of rules and regulations in parliamentary interaction. She points out that the rules of parliamentary debate are at certain times “strategically violated to achieve political goals” (Ilie 2013, p. 501). But also, instances where a member uses strategic language during their turn in order to antagonise the opposition and perhaps even to provoke a response are forms of disruptive discourse practice (Ilie 2013). Referring to the purpose of using language in debate, where competition for power is high, Ilie (2010, p. 908) states that the end-goal of strategies in this context, whether made non-legitimately, or legitimately within a member’s turn, is to challenge and “undermine the authority of political adversaries”. This assertion by Ilie (2010) is highly relevant to the study’s focus on the ways in which language is used strategically to negotiate the power dynamics in parliamentary debate.

As discussed in Section 2.2.3, the concept of interactional power (Mills 2003) outlines how individuals position themselves in relation to the power relations in a certain context. Also, Thornborrow (2002) views power as a set of resources that a participant can draw upon in interaction, while Holmes (2005) points to the dynamic way in which power is constructed and exercised in discourse. Following from the view that power is a resource which can be dynamically constructed in interaction, this section now moves to discussing the notion of performance and its link to power.

Goffman’s (1959) work is useful in terms of considering the notion of performance. Performance is defined by Goffman (1959, p. 26) as “all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants”. Chilton (2004) describes performance as a crucial element in the production of parliamentary discourse. Contributions in debate are made to put the views of members on the record, and may attempt to influence a minister’s view on a topic. Regardless of whether a parliamentarian is successful in influencing decisions through their contribution, getting one’s point across in parliamentary debates is a way of potentially influencing public opinion, or at least being heard by the public. Similarly to Chilton, Fenton-Smith (2008) views performance as important, arguing that highly visible segments of parliamentary debate stand out in the public mind as a test of a politician’s ability to ‘perform’. The study considers the concept of performance due to the highly public context of the Dáil chamber. Debates are publicly accessible because they are recorded and can be viewed through media and government websites, and as

such, when a TD stands up and speaks in the chamber, he or she is visibly engaging in a public performance. Certain segments of Dáil debate, such as the Order of Business and Leaders' Questions, could be considered to be more performance-oriented than others, due to the greater numbers of TDs present and the greater media focus during these periods. For example, if heckled, a TD can demonstrate 'territorial' power (Thornborrow 2002) in their performance by retaining control of the floor and continuing their contribution while being heckled.

One concept that has been linked to performance is that of 'frontstage and backstage'. Goffman (1959, p. 114) describes how behind a public arena or "front region" where "accentuated facts", i.e. information, is presented, there may also be a "back region" or 'backstage' – where the suppressed facts make an appearance". Following Goffman, Wodak (2009) uses the terms 'frontstage' and 'backstage' to apply specifically to the workings of politics and the everyday life of politicians. Having conducted research in the 'backstage' of the European Parliament where she shadowed a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for a day, Wodak (2009, p. 154) suggests that a study of the 'backstage' of politics "opens the door to previously secret domains and enables a greater understanding of the real 'business of politics'". In Leinster House, the seat of the Irish parliament, a TD balances a schedule of committee meetings, debate contributions and other appointments. Outside the House, they may have media appearances, not to mention responsibilities at local constituency level. While it is not the aim of this study to discuss the processes of parliament behind the scenes of debate, an understanding of these processes is useful for contextualising interaction in debate. The concepts of 'frontstage' and 'backstage', as informed by Wodak (2009), are therefore approached in Chapter 6 in interviews with practising members of the Dáil.

This study focuses on linguistic interaction on the 'frontstage' of the Dáil chamber. Reflecting on the concept of performance helps to understand the ways in which power dynamics may be negotiated in this highly public space. Also, an awareness of the concept of performance allows for a greater understanding of the reasons why Dáil debate is adversarial, why a TD may use language strategically in debate, and the potential effects of this on participants in interaction.

2.2.5 Community of Practice

The study views language use in Dáil debate within the framework of a *Community of Practice* (henceforth CoP), where the Dáil is viewed as a community of speakers engaged in some form of mutual engagement, where “[w]ays of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavour” (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1998, p. 490). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1998) recommend using this theoretical perspective in order to avoid making abstract assumptions about language and gender. The study takes this recommendation into account, and aims to avoid making abstract claims about language and gender as it examines whether debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of Dáil debate.

While the CoP framework has been conceived as useful for research in language, gender and power (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1998), it has also been used in studies which are not primarily concerned with gender. For example, Harris (2001), who contextualised the topic of politeness against the set of generic expectations within the UK House of Commons, used a CoP framework to make valid claims about language use in debate, but focused on the use of face-threatening acts by members rather than the aspect of gender. By taking into account the historical context, foregrounding members as participants in mutual engagement and tracing their verbal encounters over a sustained period of time, Harris (2001, p. 454) could examine Prime Minister’s Question Time “as a type of discourse not only within the larger community of practice of the House of Commons but in the context of the wider political process”. The current study acknowledges that certain expectations, as mentioned above, enable members of a CoP “to interpret intentional face-threatening acts as an important component of an adversarial [...] political process” (Harris 2001, p. 469) in a way that does not lead to a breakdown in communication (ibid.).

The notion of *habitus* has already been described as relevant for the study’s focus on strategic language use in an institutional setting where rules of behaviour apply. In a theoretical sense, Wodak (2009) describes the notion of CoP as mediating between the *habitus* and the self (identity of a politician). As discussed in Section 2.2.1, *habitus* is a set of habitualised social structures that direct the perception and action of the actors,

whereas a CoP serves to “provide ways to teach newcomers the routines of the organization in terms of specific expertise” (Wodak 2009, p. 13). The study considers the Dáil as a CoP in order to allow for reflection upon the wider context of an utterance in the parliamentary chamber. In a parliament, the interactional strategies used in debate are embedded in a complex hierarchy of social and political structures (Harris 1991). Thus, there are figurative and physical constraints in terms of what a parliamentarian can say. Accordingly, newcomers to parliamentary debate may have to learn to accustom themselves to rules and rituals of the CoP. As members of the CoP of the Dáil, TDs may be conscious that strategic language use can be used to flaunt the rules of the CoP, because a parliamentarian’s ability to adhere to CoP rules or ‘play’ with them is related to their power in the debating chamber (Shaw 2006).

In summary, a CoP framework is adopted due to the importance of analysing how linguistic strategies, as used by members of the CoP of the Dáil chamber, are constructed and constrained within ‘community’ norms, rules and rituals. Moreover, the framework helps to support any claims the study may make about whether TDs use linguistic strategies to invoke gender within this CoP.

2.3 Parliamentary debate: the institutional context

2.3.1 Introduction

The study now moves to an overview of studies which analyse parliamentary discourse, that is, the speeches, language use and interaction that comprise parliamentary debates. Relevant texts in the wider field of political discourse are also discussed a) in light of their focus on a strategic use of language and b) because they explore power dynamics in the parliamentary context, as these focuses form the theoretical underpinning of the first research question in this study. This section also outlines the relevance of the format of parliamentary debates to the analysis, i.e. that they are transcribed and edited before publication. A discussion of rhetoric and orality draws links with the origins of debate.

2.3.2 Institutional context

An institution is defined by Thompson (1991, in Bourdieu 1991, Introduction, p. 8) as a “relatively durable set of social relations which endows individuals with power, status and resources of various kinds”. Foucault (1980, p. 197) also describes how the term ‘institution’ is applied to “more-or-less constrained, learned behaviour”. This description is relevant for outlining how the linguistic behaviour of the Dáil may be constrained and regulated by the institutional context of the parliamentary chamber. Section 2.3.3 argues that the characteristics of language in parliamentary debate are determined by the institutional context in which they are produced. The study considers the institutional context when analysing linguistic practices that have emerged and are constructed in interaction in the setting of the Dáil.

The language of parliamentary debate is described by Bayley (2004, p. 1) as “the most formal and institutionalised variety” of political language. Within the institutional context of the parliament, formal parliamentary talk can take place in the chamber, where talk can tend to be adversarial, or in committee, where it may be more cooperative (Bayley 2004). The focus of this study is on the language of the parliamentary debate chamber. On a symbolic level, parliamentary debate signifies “democratic discussion, decision making and power” (Van Dijk 2000, p. 13), but also has certain functions which other forms of political discourse do not have. Examples of these functions are outlined by Wodak (2000, p. 361), who states that parliamentary debates are distinct forms of discourse because of their functions of “law-making, legitimization and control”. Debates in many countries are accessible to the public because they are televised; therefore, members of the public have access to legislative procedures, policy-making and political conflicts and controversies (Wodak 2000). According to Van Dijk (2000, p. 78), parliamentary debate is contextually relevant “because it helps shape the mind of recipients, both of other MPs, as well as other (elite) groups and institutions (such as the media [...]) and of the public at large”.

2.3.3 Characteristics of language in parliamentary debate

Parliamentary debate takes place in spaces that are dedicated to talk in an institutional context and has several specific attributes as a result. Described by Wodak (2000) as

being like any other sort of persuasive discourse, it is nonetheless distinct in terms of its decision-making and legislative functions, as outlined above. Like other types of political discourse, parliamentary debate features the usual strategies of verbal interaction, “from turn allocation and appropriation in official sessions (including interruptions in parliament), institutional opening and closing of debates, to more or less irrelevant side sequences [questions/assertions/apologies etc.] in official settings[...]” (Van Dijk 1997, p. 37). The current study focuses on examining specific forms of linguistic strategies rather than these general strategies of parliamentary debate mentioned by Van Dijk. It is concerned with identifying and examining strategies that are used to negotiate the power dynamics in debate. As discussed in Section 2.2.4, such strategies have the end-goal of undermining and challenging political opponents (Ilie 2010). To this end, the study is in line with Habermas’ (1984, in Thornborrow 2002) description of institutional talk as ‘strategic discourse’, as Habermas views ‘strategic discourse’ as goal-directed and power-laden.

Bayley (2004) outlines a series of variables that contribute towards shaping parliamentary discourse. First, he states that social and institutional norms as well as the history of a culture will be reflected, to some extent, in the language of a parliament. This involves a number of linguistic and non-linguistic variables: for instance, general rules of politeness, tolerance of aggressive linguistic behaviour, and the concepts of irony or humour in a given culture (Bayley 2004). Second, he proposes that parliamentary discourse is ritualised and rule-bound, and all members are required to keep to the rules. Third, he states that parliamentary discourse is fundamentally adversarial, but that this assertion needs to be qualified. For a start, all parliaments have routine business “for which there is no fundamental political issue at stake” (ibid., p. 21). Bayley (2004, p. 27) suggests that by taking the model of these three points, one can demonstrate a series of linguistic traits, “which when combined contribute to the formation of characteristic and culture-specific register features of parliamentary discourse”. As outlined in Chapter 1, this study examines parliamentary discourse in the context of the Irish Dáil. Thus, Bayley’s (2004) outline is helpful for situating any claims made about strategic language use in Irish parliamentary discourse.

The design of some parliamentary chambers, where the government and the opposition sit facing each other, has been said to be designed for adversarial interaction, in that

“[t]he spatial metaphor of opposition is crucial to the conduct of political discourse” (Chilton 2004, p. 109). Also, the function of debating has shaped the characteristics of the language used in the chamber. Martín Rojo (2000) describes debates as part of a political game. She suggests that the political game aspect affects the characteristics of parliamentary debate: “the struggle and the involvement of all the participants in the same game explain many of the features of parliamentary discourse, and in particular [...] discursive strategies and resources” (Martín Rojo 2000, p. 179). Her mention of discursive strategies as being a political game-related feature of debate is particularly relevant to this study given that it focuses on how language is strategically used to negotiate the power dynamics of Dáil debate. Since parliamentary language is influenced and dictated by the norms and institutionalised context of debate, it can be argued that these norms can be subverted or challenged by certain strategies of language.

Chilton (2004) discusses how language used in parliamentary debate is characterised by strategic functions, outlining three ‘strategic functions’ that pertain to political discourse, which are often interconnected in practice. The first of these is *coercion*, described as not purely linguistic but also dependent on the speaker’s resources and power. Examples of acting coercively through language are selecting topics in conversation, and positioning the self and others in specific relationships. *Legitimation and delegitimation*, the second strategic function outlined by Chilton (ibid.), are linked with positive self-presentation (positive face) and negative other-presentation (negative face) (see Section 2.4). His third strategic function is *representation and misrepresentation*, which Chilton describes as discourse control, with representation simply a form of presenting the truth or reality, and misrepresentation equating to lying, omissions, verbal evasion and denial. These functions outlined by Chilton (2004) will be discussed in greater detail in Section 4.2, which outlines ‘leads’ in the literature that inform the methods chosen for analysis.

One important function in debates is questioning. Questioning is important as a speech act and is generally “a powerful interactional move, because it obliges the interlocutor to produce an answer or to be accountable for its absence” (Cameron et al. 1989, p. 86). In the context of parliamentary debate, questioning is generally used to hold politicians in charge to account; although sometimes questions are simply used to ask for

information (Fenton-Smith 2008; Bayley 2004). Wilson (1990) also suggests that questions in parliamentary debates function to create propositions, presuppositions and inferences through a series of informed steps, and that these questions can be used for either positive or negative effects.

An idiosyncratic practice that is a common feature of the genre of parliamentary debate is heckling, a rule-breaking intervention where a parliamentarian cuts into an opponent's contribution in order to disrupt their contribution. While heckling can contribute to a lively debate, repeated interjections that disrupt a parliamentarian's contribution have a "profound influence" on political discourse as it takes place (Shenhav 2008, p. 224). Analysis undertaken in the course of the study must take into account that language may be used strategically by participants during both legitimate and non-legitimate turns (i.e. heckling) in interaction.

Ilie (2004) examines insults in the context of the UK and Swedish houses of parliament in a study which adopts a discourse analytical approach to examining parliamentary discourse. She suggests that the differences in political tradition between UK and Sweden result in differences in the types of insult used in the two parliaments. Being witty and showing off rhetorical skills is crucial in the House of Commons, whereas in the Riksdag such rituals are not as well-established; ironic statements are made in the Riksdag, but Ilie (2004) argues that this has more to do with the speaker than adherence to ritual. She finds that while in Britain, parliamentary insults are often followed by counter-insults, in Sweden, insults are more often followed by moralising responses, although these patterns are identifiable in both parliaments. However, a common feature of both chambers is that female MPs are more likely to provide moralising responses to insults than male MPs (Ilie 2004). Ilie's (2004) study shows that various kinds of linguistic strategies, and responses to these, can be found in an analysis of parliamentary interaction.

Like Ilie, Harris (2001) also emphasises that as well as ritual insults, wit and humour are used by MPs to ridicule opponents as a strategic means of threatening the positive face (see Section 2.4) of the Prime Minister or of another speaker. Harris (2001, p. 467) suggests that for a member of the opposition, these strategies are more "effective than overtly aggressive linguistic behaviour" (Harris 2001, p. 467). Ilie's (2004) observation

that there are differences in the types of linguistic behaviour, specifically in the strategic use of insults, between the two parliamentary cultures of Sweden and the UK, draws attention to the notion that strategic linguistic use in any parliament may be culture-specific. While the current research is not a comparative case study, it will focus on exploring a number of linguistic strategies used to negotiate parliamentary power dynamics in the context of the Dáil.

2.3.4 The interaction and rules of the Dáil chamber

At this point in the literature review, it is relevant to situate the study in the context of the Dáil, on which this study is focused. The general rules and regulations which set out how debate takes place in Leinster House are set out in its *Standing Orders* (Dáil Éireann Standing Orders 2011). Members are expected to address each other in the third person as “Deputy [surname]”, and should not directly address each other as *you*. Despite the rule that members should be addressed through the chair, it has been observed that when few members are present, the rules of the House are not strictly upheld, and participants often do not address each other through the chair.

The purpose and design of the Dáil chamber is for speaking; the chamber exists because of the oral tradition of debating in parliament. The government sits across from opposition parties, meaning that opponents are face to face. It can be said that the chamber is structurally designed for adversarial debate. Interruptions and rule-breaking are a common feature of Dáil debate, particularly during Leaders’ Questions, and interaction is frequently adversarial, like in parliaments in various other countries (Bayley 2004).

The Standing Orders are applied in debate to ensure equality of speaking time to all individuals so that no single TD has control over speaking. One speaker is authorised to speak and be heard at a time. Unlike some other parliamentary chambers, such as the House of Commons, the Dáil does not have a formal function for a member to ‘give way’. During a debate where members are speaking for a number of minutes, some make use of notes, while other members keep to a prepared script without extemporising. To some extent, the speeches and contributions in the Dáil may be prepared because of how debates are structured, because TDs are usually aware in

advance of the topic of debate. Ministers often read from prepared statements during a debate on an issue relating to their portfolio, and as has been observed in the course of research, there is often little verbal interaction during these statements.

2.3.5 Transcription of parliamentary debate

The Dáil debate transcripts are edited much the same way as the parliamentary debates in the UK House of Commons. Hansard, the UK parliamentary report, corrects certain features “to produce an idealised model of the session” (Chilton 2004, p. 94). Chilton (ibid.) describes this as a distinct type of ‘repair’ that is not carried out during the interaction by the speaker, but afterwards by the stenographers and editors of the debate transcripts. The Dáil debates are edited so that errors, repetitions and false starts and hesitations are not included. Also, forms of direct address that are not made through the chair, i.e. when a member addresses an opponent directly as “you” instead of “Deputy [surname]”, are edited. For example, when a TD says in debate “I know from the broad beam on your face that you’re equally pleased to be here”, this appears in the Dáil debate transcripts as “The broad smile on his face suggests he is equally pleased to be here” (Dáil Éireann debate 14/07/2011). There is also an opportunity for TDs to liaise with stenographers to correct something that they have said in the transcripts (Assistant editor of debates in Dáil Éireann, Personal Communication). Slembrouck (1992) studies the written record of Hansard compared to the original ‘spoken’ record of debates, and describes the discrepancies between these. He reflects on the importance of understanding the practice of how discourse is represented in parliamentary reports such as Hansard and how, as a result, the researcher can characterise “institutional assumptions about what is more or less important in parliamentary discourse representation” (Slembrouck 1992, p. 117). Slembrouck’s (1992) work highlights that “deviations” (Slembrouck 1992, p. 108) between actual utterances and official parliamentary transcripts, such as the rewording of forms of direct address as described above, should be taken into account for analysis. The possibility that these discrepancies could have an effect on analysis has led to the researcher developing the methodological approach used in this study in a way that would help address this issue.

2.3.6 Rhetoric and orality

Although the analysis in this study primarily examines debate transcripts, which are in written form, the study keeps in mind that they are a transcription of *oral* interaction in the Dáil chamber and that non-scripted forms of language use occur frequently. The following studies demonstrate the range of rhetorical features which an interlocutor can employ as part of their linguistic performance.

In the context of the oral nature of political debate, Van Dijk (1997) describes how many studies on political communication have focused solely on political rhetoric, and points out that classical rhetoric developed as an ‘art’ to persuade people in a political assembly. Sauer (1997) argues that historically, rhetoric functioned almost as a form of social engineering, in that a perfect use of rhetoric could be used by an orator to acquire credibility. Rhetorical devices are common in political discourse, for example in televised political party speeches. According to Sauer (1997), the public pay attention to rhetorical skills, especially when public controversy is an issue. Thus, Sauer (*ibid.*) indicates that there are positive implications for parliamentarians who have skills in orality. The increased attention and visibility that a parliamentarian can attain through using rhetorical skills are valuable in a forum of parliamentary debate, where there is intense competition for power. Similarly, Van Dijk (1997, p. 35) has pointed to how rhetorical devices have a persuasive function in parliamentary debates, and therefore hold “political significance in a political context of communication”. One example of a rhetorical function is the device of repetition, which occurs on various levels of interaction. Whether “at the level of sounds (alliterations and rhymes), sentence forms (parallelisms) and meaning (semantic repetition)”, repetition is a strategy “to draw attention to preferred meanings and to enhance [...] their memorization in ongoing persuasion attempts” (*ibid.*). Van Dijk’s (1997) focus on rhetorical devices and their persuasive effect highlights the merits of analysing a range of strategies of language in the parliamentary context on a close linguistic level.

In terms of a style of speaking when contributing to debate, Van Dijk (1997) describes how the volume (i.e. shouting or speaking in lower tones), pitch and intonation of a speaker can influence other participants’ attention and understanding of what is said. The style of speaking therefore has an indirect function, where “[p]referred meanings

are [...] emphasized by shouting, high pitch [and] raising intonation” (Van Dijk 1997, p. 36). Likewise, Baker (2006, p. 122) finds that politicians are aware of the “huge consequences” of the “language game” they are playing by engaging in debate interaction, and as a result “must appear to speak with authority and conviction”. He suggests that “[i]n order to survive these demands they often develop a style of speaking which is opaque, vague or empty” (ibid.). Thus, the literature points to how even speaking styles have strategic functions in the context of parliamentary debate.

2.4 Face-threatening acts and other strategic uses of language that address power relations in debate

Several studies (e.g. Blas Arroyo 2003; Harris 2001; Pérez de Ayala 2001) focus on the production of politeness and face-threatening acts with reference to adversarial discourse in parliamentary chambers. That is not to say that all interaction in the Dáil is adversarial. According to Bayley (2004, p. 21), parliaments do have consensual values and there is cooperation in debate across party lines, as “politics is characterised by both conflict and cooperation”. However, there is always a degree of competition between speakers for the attention of others (those in the chamber, and the wider public), and for political dominance over opponents in debate. Such competition, conflicts and disagreements in parliamentary contexts may be related to the notion of ‘winning’ (Robles 2011). For a parliamentarian, ‘winning’ could be about getting a bill passed in legislation, appearing more competent in a debate or making an opponent look less competent. (ibid.)

The concepts of ‘face’ and face-threatening acts (henceforth FTAs) are useful in the context of this study as they relate to the study’s focus on the use of strategic language to negotiate power dynamics in debate. This section therefore evaluates studies that have explored parliamentary discourse (i.e. parliamentary debates and also, for example televised debates between electoral candidates) within the framework of FTAs and politeness theory. While the study does not operate within the framework of politeness and does not necessarily adopt the same kind of approaches to analysis as these studies, the concept of FTAs as a strategic move used in linguistic interaction is helpful, given

that the aim of this study is to analyse the strategic use of language to negotiate the power dynamics of debate.

‘Face’ and FTAs are linked to politeness theory, which originates from the work of Brown and Levinson (1987), who describe politeness as the way in which people present themselves and act towards others, and the way in which they expect others to behave towards themselves. Linked to the concept of politeness is the concept of face. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) partly draw on the English language idiom “losing face” to define face as a “public self-image” that “can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction”. In interaction, there are two types of face: positive face (positive self-image) and negative face (freedom of action and freedom from imposition) (Brown and Levinson 1987). Politeness theory focuses on the goal of preservation of face in communication, and stipulates that an FTA is an act that “intrinsically threatens face” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 59). It stresses the importance of politeness in avoiding a breakdown of communication between people. However, not all interaction strives for politeness. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory assumes the end goal of cooperation of participants in dialogue, but in the context of the parliamentary chamber, interaction is not necessarily cooperative, and FTAs are almost actively encouraged (Bayley 2004; Harris 2001).

With reference to politeness, Bull and Wells (2012) conduct a systematic investigation of Prime Minister’s Questions in the House of Commons. They list mitigating techniques used by parliamentarians to reduce the force of an FTA (alongside techniques of performing FTAs in questions and techniques of responding to these). These are: third party language (where another speaker is addressed through the chair rather than addressed directly as ‘you’), which is a distancing strategy to soften the attack and make it less personal; humorous discourse; quotation, and mistakes made by an opponent. Bull and Wells’ (2012) study provides a useful starting point to indicate types of linguistic strategies that parliamentarians may use in debate in response to FTAs from other speakers or techniques they may use to reduce the force of FTAs they themselves perform.

Blas-Arroyo (2003, p. 396) demonstrates that in the context of Spanish parliamentary debate, politeness strategies appear for the most part in the “core phases of the debate

where aggressiveness and rudeness are the norm, and much less in the peripheral parts, where the dialectic war tones down”. These periods in debate are, in general, heated in terms of argument and noisy, due to higher numbers of members in the chamber and the greater media and public attention; they are where politicians are under greater pressure to preserve “public positive face” (Wilson 1990, p. 79). Blas-Arroyo (2003) and Wilson’s (1990) focus on core segments in debate could indicate that certain periods of debate are more adversarial than others, and that they may feature more instances of strategic language use.

A relevant claim to the discussion on politeness in parliamentary debate that has been made by studies (Blas-Arroyo 2003; Harris 2001) suggests that debate participants not only have no interest in preserving harmony and consensus as the interaction unfolds, but also aim to inflict maximum damage to the interlocutor’s face. This links with Ilie’s (2013) assertion that strategic violations of debate occur more frequently in the parts of debate where disruptive behaviour is ongoing.

It is of interest to the current study that the latent power dynamics in parliamentary discourse are most evident when language is adversarial and is used to attack and undermine the political opposition, and to hold them to account for their actions. Studies in the field of parliamentary debate point to the use of FTAs as politically strategic (Pérez de Ayala 2001) and argue that parliamentary insults and face threats have become legitimised because of their being ritualised in the genre (Harris 2001, Ilie 2004). A proposition put forward by Harris (2001, p. 466) is that impoliteness is not only sanctioned in Question Time in the House of Commons but is well-received and rewarded “by an adversarial and confrontational political process”. As a result, FTAs rarely lead to a breakdown in interpersonal relationships because MPs, as a CoP, “clearly perceive that the main role of the political opposition is to oppose, i.e. to criticize, challenge, ridicule, subvert, etc. the policies and positions of the Government” (Harris 2001, p. 466). Harris’ claim supports the current study’s use of a CoP framework (see Section 2.2.5) for the examination of strategic language use by TDs in adversarial interaction in the Dáil.

This section now turns to a focus on gender in the context of politeness and linguistic strategy in political debate. Fracchiolla (2011) incorporates gender into a study of how

politeness can be used as a strategy of attack. In the context of a televised political debate during a French presidential election, she discusses how “cultural, social and linguistic representations of gender” can be manipulated in interaction through strategies of politeness (Fracchiolla 2011, p. 2487). Focusing on a televised debate between two presidential candidates, male and female, Fracchiolla (2011, p. 2481) concludes that the candidates’ use of language and how it is interpreted by the other speaker is informed by gender assumptions. She suggests that although the female candidate does not use gendered discourse, her direct, face-threatening way of speaking is “nonetheless received as gendered” and unfeminine by her male opponent (Fracchiolla 2011, p. 2487). The male candidate responds to his female opponent by using a strategy of politeness to mitigate the attacking force of his own comments and simultaneously portray her language and style of interaction as direct and face-threatening. The context of a televised debate between two opponents is, of course, different to a parliamentary chamber, but there are similarities in terms of the set-up of the debate, such as the presence of a chair and allocated turns for participants. Moreover, Fracchiolla’s (2011) analysis of the different FTAs used by both candidates, and the interpretation of an opponent’s attack as gendered,² are relevant in terms of this study’s stated aim to examine the ways in which language is used strategically to negotiate the power dynamics of debate, and whether linguistic strategies are used to invoke gender in the Dáil. Her study highlights that speakers’ utterances are often judged and interpreted in terms of expectations of their gender.

This section has pointed to various ways in which opponents in parliamentary debate may be strategically challenged and undermined within the constraints of CoP and the linguistic *habitus*. It has also pointed to the effects of strategic language use, because the type of strategy used by a speaker may depend on the goal that he or she wants to achieve in linguistic interaction. The discussion of FTAs, in particular, is of methodological value to this study, as FTAs are outlined in the literature as methods of strategically confronting an opponent. This discussion has informed the development of categories of linguistic strategies for analysis, as will be detailed in Chapter 3.

² Sunderland’s (2004, p. 20) definition of the adjective ‘gendered’ as meaning “that gender is already part of the ‘thing’ which *gendered* describes” is adopted for the purposes of this study.

2.5 Language and Gender

2.5.1 Introduction

This section outlines the literature on language and gender that has shaped this study. It begins with a section outlining a reflection on the understanding of gender as a construct. This is followed by an exploration of literature in the linguistic sub-field of language and gender, which shows how the research focus has evolved and developed over time. While studies featuring the aspect of gender have already been detailed in the literature review (Ilie 2004, Fracchiolla 2011), this section discusses further examples of relevant literature on studies of the parliaments of other countries and on women speaking in these public contexts. Lastly, an account is given of how power and gender are related in the theoretical framework of the study.

2.5.2 Gender: social constructionist view

A social constructionist view of gender is adopted in this study. Here *gender*, in comparison to *sex*, is viewed as something which is not biological, but socially constructed and constitutive of identity. This study aims to avoid a view of women as a homogenous sociolinguistic group and essentialist divisions of male and female speech styles. The way in which gender is constructed in interaction varies with the context. As Swann (2009, p. 19) describes, gender can be treated “as a highly contextualized process of identification – something that is ‘done’ in particular ways, in particular contexts”. Holmes and Meyerhoff (2003) suggest that although research has moved away from essentialised notions of gender, it is clear that gender as a social category is still highly prevalent in wider society, and very often it is essentialised, stereotypical gender categories which are perceived to exist and are oriented to in conversation.

In studies in the field of language and gender, gender is no longer viewed as “a prior category that affects how people speak” (Swann 2009, p. 19), rather, it is now more widely accepted that a person’s actions produce their gender (and therefore their identity). The move to social constructionism accounts for the view that social and cultural factors other than gender may shed light on the patterns behind linguistic forms. As Cameron et al. (1989, p. 91) describe, “other variables need to be considered, such as the role taken by participants in interaction, the objectives of interaction, participants’

relative status on a number of dimensions, and so on”. Moreover, “[g]ender is cross-cut by other social divisions and their relative importance is affected by the specifics of the situation (for instance, in a courtroom or classroom occupational role is likely to be more salient than any other social variable)” (Cameron et al. *ibid.*). In the Dáil chamber, gender is an obvious visual factor with the paucity of women representatives, but political experience and party membership may also affect the dynamics of linguistic interaction. Moreover, women constitute a minority representation of 15% in the Dáil, and this percentage has never been surpassed historically (Galligan 2004). Therefore, when drawing conclusions about strategic language use where gender is invoked, the study could consider whether the minority status of women in the Dáil affects the dynamics of debate interaction.

2.5.3 Theorising gender in the context of public discourse

The literature on women speaking in public discourse argues that there are often contradictory expectations of how women can and should participate in public discourse. Studies such as Holmes (2006) refer to the existence of a ‘double bind’ where women who conform to and adopt stereotypically ‘masculine’ forms of speech are often viewed negatively for doing so. These constraints hold true also for women in positions of power in the corporate setting. Holmes (2005) has found that women business leaders have to manage expectations of the ways in which they should behave in discourse. One pattern she identified, for example, was the tendency of powerful women to make humorous or self-deprecating comments to neutralise the effects of authoritative forms of discourse. Holmes’ (2006, 2005) studies show that gender may affect the dynamics of interaction in various ways.

Fairclough (1989, p. 182) points out the conundrum for women in positions of prominence of being “damned if they behave like men, in the sense that masculine behaviour opens a woman to the slur, highly damaging in our society, of being ‘unfeminine’”. Margaret Thatcher, for instance, was often satirised as lacking ‘feminine’ characteristics, such as adopting a ‘husky’ voice (Fairclough 1989). Cameron (2003) also uses Thatcher as an example for her assertion that women receive less credit for adopting characteristics such as competitiveness and decisiveness that are admired when displayed by men. As Cameron (2003, p. 463) states, “[n]obody ever said

approvingly of Margaret Thatcher that she was “in touch with her masculine side”. In another example from a political context, Edelsky and Adams (1990, p. 185) discuss how a political candidate featured in their research was lampooned in political cartoons as being ‘mannish’, and how gender as a category is ‘at risk’ if not done right in an institutional setting.

Stereotypes and folk-linguistic beliefs surrounding gender and language often inform the gender expectations of speakers in public discourse, and this has implications for research in language and gender. Mills (2003, p. 184) draws on the notion of *habitus* to define stereotypes “less as a fixed set of characteristics than as a range of possible scripts and scenarios, (sets of features, roles, and possible narrative sequences), that we hypothesise”. She also describes how these stereotypes can function within a context to inform judgements and “often unconscious” notions of what is appropriate (Mills, *ibid.*). As dictated by *habitus*, people are not immune to the codes and rituals of their linguistic environment. Thus, “if the situation is one in which masculine speech norms have been prevalent over a period of time, it is likely that women who work within the environment will adopt those norms if they are to be seen as professional” (Mills 2003, p. 194).

Walsh (2001, p. 2) suggests that the folk-linguistic supposition that more women in parliamentary debates would have a ‘civilising’ effect on debates is a burden for women parliamentarians, because aside from having to adopt to ritualised norms in a CoP they are moreover “expected to civilise male-gendered spaces”. Following this suggestion, this study aims to consider the assumption that women can have a civilising effect upon parliamentary debates, and the additional burden this could place on women, especially when they are in a minority in the traditionally male-dominated context of Dáil debate.

2.5.4 Power, gender and language

Given that this study focuses on the ways in which language is used strategically in parliamentary interaction, and on whether linguistic strategies are used to invoke gender in debate, it is necessary to outline the theoretical link between the factors of power and gender in this study. This endeavour must be approached with caution, because, as Mills

(2003) warns, there is no simple relation between power and gender, and studies which assume a straightforward link falter.

Cameron (1998) views earlier notions of men's language as powerful and women's language as powerless and of women's language having different formal qualities to men's language (Lakoff 1975) as unhelpful. Her suggestion, as summed up by Mills (2003, p. 180), is to focus less on unchanging, unequal relations between these genders, and more "on the resources available to speakers in particular positions to draw upon strategically". Drawing on Ochs (1992), Baxter (2012, p. 100) asserts that women in positions of leadership can use language as a *resource* rather than a role; "gendered discursive resources" can be drawn upon to enact leadership positions. The concept of gendered discursive resources that speakers can draw upon strategically is highly relevant for the current study in terms of its aim to examine whether gender is invoked in strategic language use.

Studies by Holmes (2005) and Baxter (2012) have discussed the way in which gender interacts with power in a corporate boardroom setting. Baxter's aim was to identify evidence or linguistic 'traces' (Sunderland 2004) of how gendered resources were used by women in a male-dominated senior management boardroom. Baxter (2012) found that women leaders used gendered resources to shift their style of speaking, and concluded that such shifts were ways of challenging and contesting hegemonic practices. Another interesting suggestion by Baxter (2012) was that the use of gendered resources was far less evident in the more gender-balanced CoPs that she studied. Holmes (2005, p. 56) found that while in general, women in positions of relative power in the workplace operated in ways similar to their male colleagues, they would sometimes adopt a strategy that tested the boundaries "of what was considered appropriately gendered behaviour in their place of work". These two studies by Holmes (2005) and Baxter (2012) underscore that even with greater equality of gender in these corporate settings, gender is still very much a factor that can direct interaction and "reinforce the limits of acceptable behaviour for women at work" (Holmes 2005, p. 56).

Kitzinger (2008) points to the importance of method in gender research to show how power is being done in interaction. Focusing on the details of "talk-in-interaction" can enable researchers "to understand *how* power is being produced moment by moment in

the course of interaction” (Kitzinger 2008, p. 135). This suggests that in-depth, ‘moment by moment’ close linguistic analysis of debate interaction is highly suitable for the aims of this study, given its focus on the issues of gender and power.

Walsh (2001) has proposed that women participants in institutional contexts make use of different linguistic speech models and shift between these. She outlines a number of possible strategies for women in traditionally male-dominated CoPs and considers risks and advantages of each in terms of individual career interests of women and of achieving gender equality. One of these includes a “performative model” (Walsh 2001, p. 8), where a protagonist strategically shifts between masculine and feminine styles of speaking, thus “presupposing a performative view of gender as something that can be deployed strategically”. Walsh (2001) draws a link between these strategic shifts and poststructural feminism, as they involve deconstructing polarised beliefs about male and female speech styles. These strategic shifts come on the back of Walsh’s (2001, p. 1) argument that the “masculinist discursive norms” and male-orientated patterns of behaviour and association in Westminster – e.g. aggressive language, shouting down another speaker – have over time “assumed the status of gender-neutral professional norms” (ibid.).

Cameron (1997) draws on Butler’s (1990) concept of gender as performance as a quality that people enact or ‘do’ rather than ‘be’ to argue that while gender is regulated by social norms, men and women are not programmed by early socialisation to forever repeat these norms. Rather, they are “conscious agents who may – albeit often at some social cost – engage in acts of transgression, subversion and resistance” (Cameron 1997, p. 50). Wodak (1997), likewise, sees gender as continually realised in interaction and created in the activities which characterise ‘doing’ gender. However, she accepts Butler’s theory only to a certain degree. She situates Butler’s claims in the real world when she states that in contrast to Butler she believes that in the main, humans are reduced to their biological gender: “ultimately we are always perceived as men or women” and “gender classification seems – consciously or subconsciously – to direct the interaction and behavior of many people [...] in very many contexts” (Wodak 2003, p. 676; also see Wodak 1997). Gender is a factor which affects the membership of and participation within a CoP (Shaw 2006); hence, it is often oriented towards as a category by participants in discourse. Following Wodak (2003; 1997) and Shaw (2006),

this study seeks to examine whether and in what ways gender might direct the interaction of TDs in Dáil debate.

The effects of a minority representation of women in parliament on a political culture has been addressed by political scientists. According to Dahlerup's (1988) 'Critical Mass' theory, when women constitute a 'critical mass' of a minimum of 30%, they can effect change in that they are more likely to be able to contest the dominant discursive practices that prevail in traditionally male-dominated institutions if they have greater numbers in parliament. However, Mateo Díaz (2005) points out that it may be too simplistic to predict that a 30% rate of representation will affect change, as the theory does not take into account factors such as differences in political party, ideology, and so on. Moreover, women are individuals, not a homogenous group, and may have differing views on certain issues (Mateo Díaz 2005). Greater numbers of women may not necessarily have an impact on how the "traditional fraternal networks" (Walsh 2001, p. 17) within parliaments operate. Also, as Cameron (2009, p. 11) asserts, the removing of institutional barriers to women's participation in certain activities, or their access to certain social settings and resources does not automatically produce equality as "[o]ld divisions and patterns of behaviour can persist long after the original structural bases for them have disappeared". In terms of the norms of the Dáil chamber, Galligan (2004, p. 282) suggests that women TDs "have little option but to moderate their views to fit in with the "masculinist culture and norms pervading Dáil business". Aside from their minority status, another reason for having to adapt these norms may well be affected by the Irish political context, where party discipline is a strong factor (Galligan 2004), and voting against one's party leads to expulsion.

However, Walsh (2001, p. 21) contends that much smaller numbers of women than the 'critical mass' can make a difference if they develop "critical difference strategies which ensure that their interactional power exceeds their institutional power and status". Walsh (2001) thus implies that due to their lack of representation, women may have to challenge the power dynamics of the fraternal networks already in place through their language use. As an example, Shaw (2006), who draws on Walsh, has suggested that certain forms of rule-breaking, such as the failure to use the correct term of address such as 'my right honourable Friend' towards other MPs in Westminster is a way of undermining male authority. Drawing on Shaw (2006) and Walsh (2001), the current

study seeks to examine whether women TDs exhibit similar or different ways of challenging male authority and the power dynamics of fraternal networks within the Dáil.

The links between power, gender and language use as discussed in this section provide a number of considerations for the analysis that the study will undertake. In the same way that gender is ‘done’ in any given sphere, power also is not a fixed, static concept, but can be ‘done’ or performed in interaction. Given the context of unequal gender representation in a sphere where democratic decisions are debated and legislated, it may be the case that power and gender are intertwining factors. The minority status of women in the Dáil necessitates a reflection upon whether their lack in numbers can affect their interactional power in terms of their participation and interaction in debate. For instance, there could be ways in which women TDs in the Dáil undermine male authority, by challenging them via a strategic use of language. Furthermore, the study will consider whether women TDs adapt to ‘masculinist’ linguistic practices that may have become normative in the CoP, as Walsh (2001) suggests. A further feature in debate could be the use of strategic language to invoke gender or to call the expectations of an opponent’s gender into question. These considerations all form the backdrop to the second research question of the study, which aims to relate the negotiation of power dynamics to the aspect of gender by asking whether debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate, and if so, in what ways.

2.5.5 Studies in language and gender in parliamentary contexts

A substantial amount of research into political discourse takes place in the UK context. Shaw (2006; 2000) focuses on the adversarial “bear pit” (Shaw 2006, p. 81) of the House of Commons, where there is a low representation of women, and on how gender affects participation there. She hypothesises that the debating chamber is no level playing field for many men and all women because it was for many years the preserve of the white upper-class male elite. As a result, the discursive norms in the chamber have developed as predominantly male. Drawing on Walsh’s (2001) idea of pre-existing discursive practices in institutional discourse, Shaw (2006) questions whether and how

women MPs adapt to these norms of debate, as well as to male-oriented patterns of behaviour. In her analysis of debates, she finds that female MPs are more conscious of the rules of debate and do not break these to the same extent as their male colleagues. Examples of rule-breaking in this parliament are referring directly to a political opponent, using unparliamentary language or using improper terms of address. She demonstrates that male MPs are more likely to break the rules than women, and thus have a greater chance of gaining the floor. Shaw (2006) suggests that one reason for the lack of engagement by women MPs in non-legitimate interventions compared to their male colleagues is that women MPs choose not to engage in these practices. Thus, they may be “actively seeking to alter the culture and norms of the debating chamber” (Shaw 2006, p. 95). Shaw (2006, p. 98) concedes that women MPs may be in a more peripheral position in the chamber because they do not take advantage of rule-breaking like their male counterparts, and that it is beneficial for participants to understand both the “costs and rewards of their existing strategies”.

Shaw follows the research of Edelsky and Adams (1990) in rule-breaking in televised political debate in the USA. It examines the relevance of gender in a site of contest for political power. Rules of debate are in place to ensure fair distribution of time and equality to speakers, but as rules are flaunted, when violations occur, it “becomes an event in which prior inequalities (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity) can be re-enacted” (Edelsky and Adams 1990, p. 171). As discussed in Section 2.2.4, Edelsky and Adams (1990) note that in some contexts, for instance, political debates, an important meaning of power is control of resources. To account for how gender and language are involved in what they term “power-as-played out”, the interaction must be situated in context (Edelsky and Adams 1990, p. 187).

Ilie (2013, p. 502) focuses on how the role of gender is reflected in debate practice and found that disruptive discourse practices tended “to exhibit gender-related asymmetries in parliamentary power balance”. An instance of a disruptive practice was the shifting use of institutional and non-institutional forms of address, or the third and second person pronoun. These disruptive practices made reference to a speaker’s gender or hierarchical role, and Ilie states that these practices were used in the male-dominated setting of parliament “with the specific purpose of downplaying the role and undermining the authority of women” (Ilie 2013, p. 517). Ilie also found that a

particularly cultural difference between Britain and Sweden existed in terms of “gendered parliamentary confrontation” (ibid.), where in the Swedish Riksdag, challenging the power balance between female and male interlocutors is done in more subtle ways. For example, she found instances of a more casual addressing strategy being used by male MPs towards female MPs, which had the effect of embarrassing the female MPs and making them lose face in front of other members of the Riksdag (Ilie 2013). The cultural difference in terms of disruptive discourse practices between the UK and Sweden, Ilie (2013, p. 518) suggests, is due to the “differently institutionalized discursive and rhetorical styles”. In both the UK and Swedish parliamentary interaction, Ilie (2013, p. 510) found instances which, she suggests, show female MPs exercising a strategic form of power in discourse to challenge both the authority of male MPs holding higher positions in the political hierarchy, and the “taken-for-granted male aggressive practices in parliaments”. This finding links to Shaw’s (2006) suggestion above that women MPs may seek to alter the culture and norms of the parliamentary chamber through language use, and shows that there are different methods of doing so.

Literature on language and gender in other European political contexts was of relevance in pointing to methods which could be adopted by the study as well as showing how the current study could complement existing literature. Wodak (2003) researches the projected identities of female members of the European parliament by interviewing them for primary analysis data through the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. She examines whether female MEPs saw themselves more as women, politicians or interlopers in their roles. While this focus on the concept of identity is interesting, Wodak’s exploration of what strategies MEPs use in discourse to present and promote themselves and “guarantee that they are taken seriously” (2003, p. 673) in the political arena of the European Union is of greater relevance to the current study due to its focus on the ways in which linguistic strategies are used to negotiate power dynamics in debate interaction.

In an earlier study of the German Bundestag in a time period between 1983 and 1985, Burkhardt (1992) examines the linguistic contributions of women politicians and the interruptions and interventions by their male colleagues while the women politicians were holding the floor. Using qualitative research methods, he provided five statements to a number of female ministers, asking them to agree or disagree with them. Some

participants in his survey disagreed wholeheartedly with statements such as “When female party members are speaking the noise level is higher, i.e. there are more ‘disturbances’ in parliament” or “Interruptions occur more frequently when female party members are speaking, while on the other hand female representatives interrupt less” (Burkhardt 1992, p. 294).³ Respondents claimed that interruptions had less to do with gender but rather with the quality of the speech, and one made the point that in her experience, the longer a politician has been a member of parliament, the more experienced and influential she is, and therefore the more likely she is to be listened to (Burkhardt 1992, p. 296). However, when Burkhardt compared his respondents’ replies with his own observations of debate interaction, he found many examples of sexist language, high levels of interruption and chauvinistic behaviour towards women MPs in the Bundestag. Burkhardt’s study provides valuable insights into the realities of women speaking in parliament at a time when they were a minority in the Bundestag. Also, his finding that the claims that some female MPs made about the way that women MPs were oriented towards in parliament were in fact contradicted by his own examination of the debate transcripts is highly interesting and shows the complexities involved in researching language use in parliamentary contexts. Moreover, his study highlights that a variety of research methods can be complementary and beneficial for the analysis of parliamentary debates.

2.6 Conclusion

The theoretical background to this study draws upon the concept that power relations imply a strategy of struggle or resistance and views the notion of interactional power as relevant for addressing the research questions. The study was contextualised by focusing on a description of the parliamentary debating chamber, its institutional status and the characteristics of language used in parliamentary debate. The chapter also discussed the notions of symbolic power and *habitus*, and presented parliamentary debate as a site of struggle where a strategic use of language could help negotiate the power dynamics of the chamber. The framework of a CoP is adopted by the study to emphasise the mutual engagement of interlocutors in the Dáil. Drawing on a range of studies using various approaches, the literature review also emphasised that many

³ The researcher’s translation from the German. Source reads: “Bei Rednerinnen ist der Lärmpegel höher, d.h. die “Unruhe” im Parlament ist größer” and “Zwischenrufe sind bei Rednerinnen zahlreicher, während weibliche Abgeordnete umgekehrt weniger Zwischenrufe machen”.

different forms of strategic language can be used to negotiate the power dynamics in parliamentary debate.

The chapter also highlighted the theoretical concern of gender as a social construct. In addition, it outlined the minority status of women parliamentarians in the Irish context. It drew links between the study's key concerns of power and gender by drawing on the literature to discuss ways in which women's lack of representation may affect their participation in debate and to address the concept of gender as a resource that participants can draw upon in discourse (Baxter 2012).

This study aims to contribute to literature on parliamentary discourse by investigating the ways in which language is used strategically to negotiate power dynamics in Irish parliamentary debate. It will also explore to what extent debate participants invoke gender in linguistic strategies. This chapter has shown the use of a combination of methods for a qualitative and discourse analytical approach to addressing the research objectives; thus, it informs the methods which are outlined in the following chapter on methodology.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology chosen for the study. It begins with a broad description of types of research methodologies used in political discourse studies. Various methods for analysis from the literature are discussed insofar as how they have informed this study. Next, the methodology adopted for this study is outlined. Thereafter, aspects of data collection and data management are described.

The research questions address the concepts of language, power and gender, and are restated here, due to their necessary link with the development of the methodology:

- *In what ways is language used strategically by participants in Irish parliamentary debate to negotiate the power dynamics of the chamber?*
- *Do debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate? If so, in what ways?*

The study engages with these questions using mixed qualitative approaches. The first analytical method explores the research questions through a systematic and close analysis of extracts from debates between March 2011 and March 2012 compiled in a corpus for this study. The second analytical method is the use of semi-structured interviews with practising TDs. The research methods have been designed to address the concepts of power, language and gender, which frame the research questions, as explained below.

3.2 Contextualising the methodology

3.2.1 Introduction

Literature from various fields relevant to the study, that is, political discourse and language and gender, was consulted to shape and develop the methodology. In this

section, the theoretical underpinnings of methodological approaches are discussed. Examples of how these approaches are applied practically are also outlined.

3.2.2 Combining research methods

As has been mentioned, this study adopts two methods of analysis: a close analysis of debate transcripts and interviews with politicians. Much literature in the field of language and gender (and also in the Social Sciences more generally) advocates a combination of research methods (Swann 2002; Holmes 1995). Sunderland and Litosseliti (2008) introduce a range of approaches to methodology, commenting that when it comes to identifying a suitable approach, rather than focus on what is the most appropriate approach for gender and language study, it is more productive to question how any given approach adds value.

As has been argued in relevant literature (Simpson and Mayr 2010; Harrington et al. 2008), mixed methods can provide a better understanding of research problems. Moreover, mixed methods research “provides strengths that offset the weaknesses” of individual approaches (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, p. 9). Furthermore, working with more than one method is also beneficial in terms of minimising the risk of bias (Wodak and Meyer 2001).

In terms of this study, which is qualitative in nature, the researcher was mindful of the advantages of using an analytical approach that involves more than one method. The study created a corpus of extracts from Dáil debates in order to provide a broad range of linguistic strategies for subsequent analysis and also conducted semi-structured interviews with practising TDs. These methods were used to generate sufficient data to gain meaningful insights into language use in parliamentary debate. Creating a corpus of extracts from Dáil debates and subsequently analysing this corpus is of added value since it involves a systematic investigation of strategic language use in interaction in the Dáil. Conducting face-to-face interviews with a number of TDs who are participants in the debate interaction under investigation adds value because it allows the study to combine a variety of observations from the interviews with the analysis of the corpus of debate extracts.

3.2.3 Discourse analysis

This study adopts approaches from the field of discourse analysis to engage in a close investigation of the use of strategic language in debate interaction.

Coming from the area of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Wodak and Meyer (2001, p. 66) propose that on general terms, discourse can be viewed as a form of ‘social practice’ which assumes “a dialectical relationship between particular discursive practices and the specific fields of action (including situations, institutional frames and social structures) in which they are embedded”. Simpson and Mayr (2010) also assert that in CDA, analysing the dimensions of discourse practice and social practice is necessary, and that a satisfactory analysis of a text should include:

- a linguistic description of the text
- an interpretation of the relationship between the discourse processes and the text
- an explanation of the relationship between the discourse processes and the social processes (Simpson and Mayr 2010, p. 55)

Fairclough (2003) argues that CDA is as much a theoretical perspective on language as a method. Instead of providing specific methods and procedures for analysis, it is a “method which can appropriate other methods” (Fairclough 2003, p. 210). CDA was useful as a wider approach for informing the development of this study, which focuses on the Dáil as a site where power dynamics may be negotiated through strategic language use. It highlighted that the transcripts of parliamentary debate should be analysed at close textual level, but also that the discursive practices found in analysis should related to and discussed in the context of the wider, complex structures of power in the Dáil. In light of the study’s institutional setting of parliamentary debate, using a CDA perspective can give the researcher access to the study of institutions and social practices, but also “to the study of the social representations produced through these practices, and to their social implications” (Martín Rojo and Gómez Esteban 2004, p. 85).

As this study analyses strategic linguistic use in parliamentary interaction in an institutional setting, the next section investigates discourse analytical methods and the

methodological frameworks adopted by similar research on parliamentary debate in order to identify relevant analytical techniques.

3.2.4 Political and parliamentary discourse analysis methods

In the context of analysing parliamentary debates, Chilton (2004, p. 109) argues that a linguistic and discourse-analytic account helps to achieve a “detailed description of the political behaviour in question, and show how verbal and political behaviour are enmeshed”. A practical suggestion for conducting this kind of analysis is outlined by Schäffner (1997), who suggests that the linguistic analysis of political discourse is undertaken successfully when the details of linguistic behaviour are related to details of political behaviour. This analysis can be done from two perspectives:

...we can start from the linguistic micro-level and ask which strategic functions specific structures (e.g. word choice, a specific syntactic structure) serve to fulfil. Or, we can start from the macro-level, i.e. the communicative situation and the function of a text and ask which linguistic structures have been chosen to fulfil this function. (Schäffner 1997, p. 3)

Chilton and Schäffner (1997, p. 215) simplify the rationale behind this micro-level as “the question that any citizen under ideal conditions of time and reflective capability might ask: ‘Why has X chosen (or why is X obliged) to use such-and-such a pronunciation, intonation, wording, phrasing, text type rather than some other possible one?’”.

Van Dijk’s (1997) arguments on political discourse analysis are also relevant, where he states that the specifics of political discourse analysis need to be situated as to their function in the political context. When examining debate discourse at the micro-level of analysis, “[a]n account of the structures and strategies of, e.g., phonology, graphics, syntax, meaning, speech acts, style or rhetoric, conversational interactions, among other properties of text and talk is therefore necessarily part of political discourse analysis only if such properties can be politically contextualized” (Van Dijk 1997, p. 24). With this statement, Van Dijk indicates that in the course of analysis, attention should be paid to the context of an utterance.

Based on a checklist of procedures for the analysis of political linguistics outlined by Burkhardt (1996), Wodak (2009, p. 7) summarises a list of techniques for the analysis of political language as follows:

- lexical-semantic techniques (analysis of catchwords and value words, of euphemisms, and of ideological polysemy);⁴
- sentence and text-semantic procedures (e.g. analysis of tropes, of semantic isotopes, and of inclusion and exclusion strategies);
- pragmatic and text-linguistic techniques (i.e. analysis of forms of address, speech acts, allusions, presuppositions, conversation, argumentation, rhetoric, quotations, genres, and intertextuality);
- and finally semiotic techniques (icon, symbol, and semiotic analysis)

In this study, debate transcripts are analysed using the pragmatic and text-linguistic techniques in the above list, where for instance indirect and direct speech acts, presuppositions and argumentation are of particular interest in the context of this study.

Following Chilton and Schäffner (1997) and Schäffner (1997), this study focuses on the micro-level of analysis by working on a corpus of Dáil debate extracts. It also follows Van Dijk (1997) in giving consideration to the institutional context in which utterances in debate are made. By following Chilton and Schäffner's (1997, p. 215) suggestion of "using one's understanding of the language and political culture to make clear the links between linguistic choices and strategic functions", the study analyses specific linguistic structures in light of the wider macro-level CoP of the Dáil, in order to understand how they have been chosen by speakers to fulfil a specific strategic function within this *habitus*.

In his application of pragmatics to political debate in the UK and the US, Wilson (1990, p. 7) discusses how political talk is considered from a pragmatic perspective "by focusing centrally on meanings which may be derived beyond the context of what has been said". One relevant example is where Wilson examines the use of presupposition by parliamentarians to challenge and make implications, and how the recipient responds, whether by evading the implication made or moving to respond with a political point. Wilson (1990) also mentions how types of implication, including presupposition, are useful for the maintenance of face relations, thus mitigating

⁴ "Ideological polysemy" means projected identity (Burkhardt 1996).

aggressive behaviour in debate. This study follows the same pragmatic perspective as Wilson to show the ways in which politicians utilise “the available linguistic system in their day-to-day political communication” (Wilson 1990, p. 10). It undertakes a structural analysis of the surface-level of meaning in order to identify the ways in which language is used strategically in the Dáil.

3.2.5 Pilot study using corpus linguistic techniques

Corpus linguistics is used as a quantitative tool for keyword and theme identification in a number of studies (e.g. Bopp 2010; Baker 2006) exploring parliamentary discourse on a linguistic level. The close linguistic level of debate has been explored by Baker (2006), who adopts discourse analysis combined with corpus linguistic methods in a comparative corpus-based study of the UK House of Commons debates on the divisive topic of fox-hunting. It examines keywords such as *cruelty* and the similarities and differences in their usage by MPs in favour of fox-hunting and those against the practice. Bopp (2010) also describes corpus linguistics methods as useful in the field of parliamentary discourse. He uses these methods for keyword and theme identification in order to make statements about the language use of different political parties in the German Bundestag and draw conclusions on the ideological self-representation of political parties.

In the current study, corpus linguistics techniques were initially given strong consideration as a quantitative method. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the primary data for analysis consists of transcripts of parliamentary debates. A corpus of extracts from Dáil debates from March 2011 to March 2012 is used for the primary analysis in this study. It is described in greater detail in Section 3.3 below. Part of the corpus was explored in a pilot study using corpus linguistics tools, with a view to potentially using quantitative methods to investigate language use in the Dáil. However, as the transcripts that appear online are edited on a lexical and syntactical level, there are some differences between the transcripts and the actual utterances in debate. Due to the large size of the corpus, it would have been hugely time-consuming to amend transcripts to compile new transcripts for analysis by using video recordings of the debates as a guide. For the purposes of the pilot corpus study, however, the official transcripts accessed online were used. Wordsmith version 5.0, a type of corpus

linguistics software, was used to create wordlists and concordance lists to examine linguistic features in the corpus. These features included insults, and metalinguistic terms such as ‘heckle’ which showed where heckling and adversarial practice was happening in debate. Also, the concordances for names of prominent female politicians, when examined in context, showed some instances of gender being invoked in linguistic use. For example, an opposition TD referred to the Finance minister as falling “into the friendly embrace of Madame Lagarde again” (Dáil Éireann debate 21/06/2011). During the interruptions that followed this comment in the chamber, Angela Merkel was described as “Enda’s woman” (ibid.).

Attempting to identify issues at close linguistic level using corpus linguistic tools allowed for familiarisation with the corpus, and was useful for showing the functions of certain forms in a specific context. However, as the research developed and was more closely informed by other methods, it was decided to concentrate more on pragmatic methods to address the research questions, which are concerned with the use of linguistic strategies to negotiate power dynamics in debate. The study does not aim to make claims derived from corpus linguistic techniques on lexical choices, collocations and on the close lexical level, as such claims would not be in line with the research objectives.

Moreover, there are limitations to corpus linguistics tools in terms of their ability to uncover items of semantic interest such as synonyms or metaphors (Wodak 2011) and patterns on the ‘micro-level’ (Chilton and Schäffner 1997), which are necessary to develop categories for the analysis of linguistic strategies in the corpus of debate transcripts. Another reason for not adopting corpus linguistics as a method was due to the aforementioned editing of the transcripts. As the research focuses on understanding linguistic strategies in practice, it is important that the transcripts used for analysis are unedited data. Were corpus linguistic methods to be used for the entire corpus, each transcript to be included would have to be compiled individually. Given that the corpus includes transcript extracts from 641 debates, this is beyond the scope of the current study.

Despite the decision not to use corpus linguistic methods, the pilot study was beneficial in many ways and helped shape the methodology. It pinpointed the focus of the research

more sharply by ruling out a sole focus on the lexical level of debate, and supported the more discourse analytical and pragmatic approaches adopted by the study. As noted by Baker (2006), the process of initial analysis can provide initial hypotheses as patterns emerge. This was the case in this pilot study, where some patterns formed the basis for initial stages of research. For instance, the development of insulting/accusing/criticising as a category of strategic language use (described in Chapter 4) stemmed from initial exploration of debate transcripts in the pilot study.

The study did not cut off the link with corpus linguistics completely. Reference corpora can be used by researchers in discourse analysis to uncover ideologies in discourse (Baker 2006) and to check the representativeness of data (Swann 2002). As suggested by Stubbs (1998, p. 127), “[c]omments on individual words and phrases should always be made against the background of comparative data from a corpus”. Therefore, as a complementary aspect to the study, a reference corpus (enTenTen) is used to investigate whether certain linguistic terms found within Dáil debates can be said to be gendered, in order to support the analysis of these terms (see Chapter 5). The use of reference corpora therefore complements the analysis of certain instances of strategic language use in debate.

3.3 The methodology for this study: corpus of debate transcripts

3.3.1 Description of methods for analysis of transcripts

The methods chosen for linguistic analysis of the corpus of extracts from debate transcripts are now discussed in this section. After examining the different approaches listed in Section 3.2, research methods are developed for a detailed exploration of strategic language use in Irish parliamentary debate in order to address the research questions. Specifically, a qualitative approach is employed to provide systematic analysis of debates to identify the ways in which language is used strategically to negotiate power dynamics in Irish parliamentary debate interaction, and to identify whether debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate, and if so, in what ways.

As stated in Section 3.2.4, the study draws on Chilton and Schäffner (1997) and Schäffner (1997)'s close micro-level of analysis to explore parliamentary debate. Another study on political linguistics that has informed the study is Burkhardt (1996), whose pragmatic and text-linguistic procedure of analysis is of relevance to explore certain features of language (e.g. indirect and direct speech acts, presuppositions, argumentation, rhetoric) which could be used strategically in debate. The study addresses the research questions by analysing debate transcripts on a close, linguistic micro-level to focus on language used by speakers in the CoP of the Dáil, and discuss instances of strategic linguistic use as they appear in the transcripts.

The literature pointed to a variety of ways in which strategic language could be manifested in parliamentary discourse. Drawing on leads from both the literature and the data, the study created its own typology of categories of linguistic strategies (detailed in Chapter 4) in order to analyse the debate transcripts. Previous studies (e.g. Ilie 2004; Harris 2001) have focused on the use of specific adversarial strategies such as FTAs and insults, but have not analysed debates using a typology of linguistic strategies. The design of a unique typology for analysis of strategic language in parliamentary debate can be said to be one of the methodological contributions of the study for future research which will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

The methodology uses mixed qualitative methods, as it analyses both parliamentary debates and interviews with the participants in these debates (see Section 3.4) in order to understand the dialectics of speaking within the CoP of the Dáil. The interview questionnaire is designed to elicit the opinions of TDs on topics related to the research questions. In terms of the analysis of parliamentary debates, it is not solely dependent on transcripts but also adopts a semiotic element by examining video recordings of the debates.

3.3.2 Description of Dáil debate transcripts

The core data under analysis is a corpus of debate transcripts from Irish parliamentary debates.⁵

⁵ Irish government debate transcripts:
<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/oireachtasbusiness/parliamentarydebates/>
[Last accessed: 15/06/2014].

Some fieldwork was carried out before the final corpus of debate segments was compiled. The researcher attended several Dáil sessions in 2011, including Taoiseach's Questions and Leaders' Questions, to enhance understanding of the actual event of debate, and to help preparation for the interviews, which took place at a later stage. Attending the debate was useful, especially in terms of understanding turn-taking procedures, observing whether a TD's speech was extemporized or read from a prepared text and watching heckling in practice.

Debate transcripts are not a full verbatim record of parliamentary proceedings, but are nevertheless useful in many ways. For instance, stenographers are always present in debate and can record examples of heckling which are often significant in determining how another TD reacts; and these examples cannot be picked up on the microphone (only one microphone is active at any given time) or cannot be heard from the Visitors' Gallery (as the researcher has discovered on research visits to Dáil Éireann). In this regard, they are extremely valuable as a record of interruptions and heckling, which cannot be heard from the video recordings.

The multi-modal aspect of watching video recordings of the debates and comparing these to debate transcripts is outlined in Section 3.3.5. This method was necessary because, as mentioned in Section 3.2.5, the official Dáil transcript is edited and there are often differences between the spoken interaction and the transcribed parliamentary report. Verbal elements such as repetitions and stammering, which may be of interest to linguists, are smoothed over by stenographers, and common phrases replaced with synonyms. For example, while the phrase 'in relation to' is used frequently in parliamentary discourse, an alternative phrase, such as 'regarding' or 'with regard to' is used in the transcripts (Assistant editor of debates in Dáil Éireann, Personal Communication). Likewise, grammar mistakes are usually corrected or refined according to transcription style guidelines.⁶

A significant amount of the material available online is not of relevance to this study, because it does not involve interaction between TDs. Along with the Written Answers sections, there are often lengthy statements from Ministers and other members in which

⁶ Transcription style guidelines were made available to the researcher in 2011 by the assistant editor of debates in Leinster House.

little or no debate or interaction between members takes place. This material is not of interest for this study and was therefore not subjected to analysis.

To allow for the focus on linguistic strategies in debates, it was necessary to compile a corpus of segments that feature debate interaction. The criteria used for selecting and compiling these segments are detailed in the next section.

3.3.3 Data collection from transcripts

Relatively recent debates from the 31st Dáil (current as of 2013) were chosen for analysis in this study. Transcripts were selected from 123 Dáil debates between March 2011 and March 2012, to ensure continuity in terms of the same participants being present throughout the corpus. It was necessary to scale down the yearlong corpus into smaller segments for detailed analysis, as the debates in their entirety were too large to examine. A selection of extracts from the transcripts provided a sizeable corpus of relevant interactions. Extracts from Dáil debates from March 2011 to March 2012 were then compiled together in one document. The total corpus comprised 641 extracts from debate transcripts. This entire corpus was too large to examine under close linguistic analysis. As a result, 300 extracts were selected for analysis. The subset of 300 extracts was selected at random using an integer set generator.⁷

3.3.4 ‘Unit of Interaction’ definition and preparation for analysis

Each Dáil debate is a lengthy document in textual form, as it spans the course of a sitting in one day. These range on average from 2.30pm until 9pm. As a method of narrowing down the corpus to allow for a systematic analysis of strategic language use, a definition was formulated to pinpoint interactions between TDs in smaller segments of debate that could then be subjected to analysis. Each extract was termed a ‘Unit of Interaction’ (henceforth UI). As one focus of the study is on gender as a variable within the Dáil context, the units included in the corpus are extracts of exchanges between male and female TDs and exchanges between two female TDs. Therefore, the definition of a UI for this study is a segment of debate selected for analysis, which exhibits

⁷ <http://random.org/integer-sets/> [Last accessed: 15/02/2014].

dialogue between two or more participants and is an exchange between a male and a female TD or an exchange between two female TDs.

Each UI varies in terms of length and number of debate participants present. Verbal exchanges in debate, whether adversarial or cooperative, and regardless of the number of participants, do not endure for long because of speaking rights in accordance with Standing Orders and the intervention of the Ceann Comhairle (Speaker/Chairperson) or Leas-Ceann Comhairle (Deputy Speaker/Chairperson). When identifying a UI, therefore, the maximum length of exchange was not deemed as important as the minimum. It was necessary to define the minimum amount of verbal exchange for a UI. In a further step of narrowing down the corpus, short sentences or heckles thrown across the chamber floor which were not followed by a secondary retort by the heckler or responded to by the recipient of the heckle were ruled out for inclusion in the corpus of UIs, as these did not provide enough interaction between two or more participants. Supportive interactions by fellow party members such as “Hear, hear” were not regarded as a unit. Neither were exchanges solely between a TD and the Ceann Comhairle, as the Ceann Comhairle’s function is to be a neutral mediator in debate. At least two ‘turns’ by each debater constituted the minimum exchange for a unit. An example of the minimum number of exchanges in a UI is shown in Table 3.1 below.

The 300 UIs were categorised to develop a unique typology of linguistic strategies for the current study, which is detailed in Chapter 4. The corpus was then analysed for an investigation of these linguistic strategies using the methods described in Section 3.3.1 above.

Table 3.1: Example indicating minimum number of ‘turns’ which constitute a UI

<p>The Taoiseach: Not every person who goes for treatment or to attend at facilities travels by ambulance. I met a woman recently who had breast cancer treatment. She had to travel by bus at 5 a.m.—</p> <p>Deputy Jonathan O’Brien: Answer the question.</p> <p>Deputy Sandra McLellan: Answer the question.</p> <p>An Ceann Comhairle: Please, Deputies.</p> <p>The Taoiseach: —and she had to make a round trip of 180 km to Galway for a treatment lasting four minutes. In many cases there are clear inefficiencies in the way the service is being delivered.</p> <p>Deputy Sandra McLellan: It says it in the letter.</p> <p>The Taoiseach: The letter states that the ambulance service budget has been expended[...]</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Dáil Éireann debate 22/06/2011)</p>
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3.3.5 Multi-modal aspect: video recordings of Dáil interactions

UIs taken from transcripts were scrutinised by watching the corresponding video recordings of the interactions in the Dáil chamber.⁸ This was to check the official transcript against the language used in the video of the same debate. The videos were also examined to analyse body language or physical gestures of TDs in response to the contributions of other members during debate (head-shaking, laughing, finger-pointing etc.). Relevant contextual information such as the use of physical gestures is indicated using asterisks in Chapter 5 below examples from UIs. The video recording for each UI used in the analysis has been examined for consistency of analysis and to account for researcher objectivity. Where there are differences in the transcripts, these are reproduced and discussed in the analysis chapter alongside the original text from the UI (further details are provided in Section 5.3). The function of the video-watching exercise informs the analysis of the UIs in checking the data source, and by reflecting upon visual aspects such as the aforementioned physical gestures that may affect the interaction between TDs.

3.3.6 Researcher objectivity

The approach utilised in this study is reflexive in nature. It is important for the researcher to state her position and values as well as research interests, and to be aware

⁸ <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/watchlisten/playback/> [Last accessed: 15/06/2014].

of multiple readings of a text, while “de-constructing texts and discourses systematically and precisely in a retroductable way” (Wodak 2008, p. 196).

One potential criticism of discourse analytical methods, like those drawn upon in this study, is that their choice of data is subjectively selected. To address this, the researcher follows Billig (2000, in Baxter 2008) in self-reflexively acknowledging that the categorisations of discourse in this study have been constructed.

This study in the strategic use of language in parliamentary debate aims to be as objective as possible in conducting analysis. In this regard it follows Chilton and Schäffner (1997, p. 220), who point out that what is seen as political “depends on the standpoint of the commentator”. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) discuss the idea of reflexive objectivity, which involves striving for sensitivity about one’s own prejudices and one’s subjectivity where a researcher must be reflexive about the contributions they make to the production of knowledge. In light of the above suggestions, this study has strived to analyse the data systematically, for instance by cross-checking the debate transcripts alongside videos of debate and by using a reference corpus to support instances of gendered terms found in the corpus of UIs (see Section 3.2.5).

3.4 The methodology for this study: semi-structured interviews with TDs

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the second main analytical method incorporated in the study is the use of semi-structured interviews with practising TDs, which complements the analysis of UIs. The interviews were conducted to examine the opinions of a number of politicians, both male and female, from the current Dáil about how men and women use language in political communication – in particular, in parliamentary debates.

The Dáil has 166 elected Teachtaí Dála from four main political parties (Fine Gael, Labour, Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin) and a number of Independents and candidates from smaller parties. In choosing subjects for interview it was desirable to interview a broad spectrum of TDs to ensure representativeness.

In a study of rule breaking in UK parliamentary debates, Shaw (2000, p. 83) used a qualitative ethnographic approach “to contextualise the parliamentary discourse [...] and identify interactional norms in relation to gender”. The methods employed in this study engage a partial ethnographic slant to take background information of the institutionalised context and the participants into account and gain an understanding into the realities of TDs’ lives, particularly when it came to their taking part and speaking in debates. By interviewing politicians (largely within Leinster House), and reflecting on non-linguistic phenomena (Edelsky and Adams 1990) such as gender and political experience, the study combines this ethnographic perspective with a linguistic micro-level approach (see Section 3.3.1) to gain an understanding of the socio-cultural context of language use. In theoretical terms, the juxtaposition of data analysis of a corpus of what politicians say in the debating chamber with their opinions on debate from interviews corresponds to Wodak’s (2009) suggestion (drawing on Goffman (1959)) that political institutions operate on ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’ levels. As the study draws on notions of performance, and ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’, this has added further justification for the use of interviews alongside analysis of the corpus of UIs on a linguistic micro-level. Interviewing took place ‘backstage’, in that the researcher interacted with TDs and their parliamentary assistants (to set up the interviews) in Leinster House or their constituency offices. In contrast, debates are at the ‘frontstage’ of the workings of politics (Wodak 2009), and the study’s primary interest lies in the analysis of the ‘shop window’ parliamentary debates in the Dáil chamber.

3.4.1 Interview design

In this study, the interviews are semi-structured in nature, broadening the interviewer’s scope for developing certain questions, where appropriate, and making the interview open-ended. At the same time, the questionnaire incorporates the essential questions geared towards eliciting the specific views of the interviewee on certain topics (Berg 2004). This style of interviewing gives the interviewer freedom to engage interviewees to elaborate on answers they have given, and simultaneously gives room to interviewees to bring up new issues and discuss their feelings, perceptions and experiences. Berg (2004) gives a useful description of the main features of semi-structured interviews, which was consulted when interviews were being designed. The study follows Berg (ibid.) by designing an interview structure where the wording of the questions is

flexible; the language level can be adjusted; questions can be reordered during the interview; the interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications; and the interviewer can add or delete probes to or from the interview between subsequent subjects.

The interviewing style followed Berg's (2004) suggestions for an interviewer to be conscious and reflective and to try to establish a degree of rapport with the interviewees in order to encourage their full participation. The work of Gillham (2000) was consulted more generally for familiarisation with the interview procedure and method, for example the use of prompts during the interview to ensure the main points to the questions are covered, and probes to encourage the interviewee to expand on and clarify a response.

3.4.2 Criteria for selection of interviewees

This section outlines the criteria used to identify appropriate subjects for interview. It describes the rationale for choosing subjects for interview in the absence of a statistical or random selection of candidates.

As has been stated above, the study aimed for the range of interviewees to be as representative of the makeup of the Dáil as possible. This was to ensure a greater understanding of the interactional norms in debate and the factors and practices affecting language use during debate.

In relation to gender, although the study focuses in particular on the role of women in debate, it was decided that interviewing men as well as women would achieve a wider understanding about power dynamics in the chamber, the strategic use of language in debate, and the role that gender may or may not play in language use in the CoP of the Dáil.

It was necessary to interview a range of female TDs to gain a meaningful perspective on the realities of speaking as a minority group in the chamber. The total number of interviewees was equally balanced in terms of gender, with six female and six male TDs. It was also salient to interview participants along criteria wider than gender, because other factors may be relevant in debate interaction. A further reason for the

criteria below was that the analysis of the primary corpus was in its early stages at the time when interviews were taking place, and certain decisions about the focus of analysis were not yet concrete. It was anticipated that this selection of parliamentarians would result in a greater variety of interview data that could be analysed and discussed with reference to the analysis of the primary corpus of UIs. This was of importance as the interview analysis is designed to complement the UI analysis. To sum up, the criteria other than gender for selecting interviewees are:

- Frequency of contribution
- Frontbench/Backbench
- Experienced/Inexperienced
- Range of political parties

A total of 12 TDs, six female and six male, were interviewed, which amounts to a total of about 9% of the TD body. From the corpus of UIs it was possible to identify TDs who engaged more frequently in debate interaction. The selection of interviewees aimed to be representative, by interviewing both prominent TDs who were frequent contributors to debate and backbenchers who contributed less, and TDs who were first time members of the Dáil as well as those who had been elected several times, in order to gain a broad set of perspectives on engaging in debate interaction. From observing the Dáil record and the recordings of debates, the visible interest of TDs in the institutional arrangements of debate proceedings (e.g. calling out opponents on time-wasting, referring to Standing Orders) also influenced the selection choice. It was anticipated that these candidates would provide a richer source of data. In terms of political party membership, a similar number of interviewees were selected from each party: two from Fianna Fáil, two from Labour, three Independents, three from Fine Gael and two from Sinn Féin.

3.4.3 Interview questionnaire

The interview questionnaire was designed to relate to the theoretical conceptions of power, strategic language use and gender, which inform the research questions as outlined in Chapter 2. At the stage of designing the questionnaire, the specific definitions and typology for the categorisation that is used in the analysis of the primary

corpus in Chapter 5 (i.e., the categories of invoking gender as a strategy, patronising as a strategy, insulting/accusing/criticising as a strategy, and metalanguage as a strategy) had not yet been concretely outlined. Therefore, the questionnaire asked a wide range of questions based on language use, power dynamics, performance, adversarial and cooperative interaction in the chamber, and gender. Organising questions in this way helped obtain rich descriptions of the specific phenomena to be categorised, which is important when categories are not formally developed until interviewing and analysis (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Designing the questionnaire in this way allowed for findings from both the analysis of the UIs and the analysis of the interviews to be discussed together. Therefore, while the interviewee questions did not directly relate to the specific linguistic strategies analysed in Chapter 5, the themes of both sets of analysis overlapped.

The questions designed to ask participants on the topics of gender and rule-breaking were influenced by Shaw (2006), who also interviewed politicians as part of her research. A copy of the semi-structured questionnaire can be seen in Appendix B. Several interview questions were structured around the topic of gender (Questions 11, 12 and 14, Appendix B). For instance, interviewees were asked whether they felt gender was a factor that affected the contributions of participants in debate (Question 12, Appendix B). Also, they were asked whether they felt increased women's representation in the Dáil would affect the nature of debate (Question 14, Appendix B). Other interview questions concentrated on the pragmatic elements of debate by asking TDs about their opinion on speeches (Question 6, Appendix B) and on the concept of debate as performance (Question 5, Appendix B). Some questions focused on the linguistic level by, for example, asking interviewees whether they made a conscious choice about the language they used in debate (Question 2, Appendix B). There were also several questions asking interviewees about the adversarial nature of debate (Question 8, Appendix B) and whether they felt heckling had a political function (Questions 9 and 10, Appendix B).

3.4.4 Ethical Issues

The research interviews were subject to ethical approval, which was granted by the DCU Research Ethics Committee. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) were consulted on

ethical guidelines pertaining to informed consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the role of the researcher. For transparency, the interviewee was briefed at the beginning of each interview on the rationale behind their selection. The candidates were made aware that participation in the project was voluntary and that they could opt out at any stage. They were also informed that the interview would be recorded, and also that their contribution was anonymous and confidential and that any information that could identify them in the interview transcripts would be redacted. The transcripts of the interviews have not been included in the appendices of the study to protect anonymity. All participants were provided with a Plain Language Statement, which they could read if desired. They were asked to read and sign an Informed Consent Form. These documents can be viewed in Appendices D and E respectively.

3.4.5 Piloting the interviews

This section describes the trial and piloting stage of the research interviews as well as reflections and the outcomes of both stages, all of which form an important part of the methodological development. The pilot interviews aimed to examine whether the questionnaire would function adequately and identify any areas that potentially needed to be refined prior to the interviews. Gillham (2000) was consulted on aspects and practicalities of conducting pilot research interviews, and on how to correct problems in terms of interview length and the content of questions that emerge as a result of pilots. In order to contact pilot interviewees, an introductory email was sent to a male and female TD to request an interview. It explained that the interview was a pilot and that data from the interviews would be used to consolidate the interview questionnaire and inform further stages of the research. Both agreed to take part. The pilot interviews were conducted and then transcribed.

3.4.6 Re-evaluating the interview questionnaire

Following the trialling and piloting stages, there was a period of reflection upon interview technique and on the structure of the interview. The questionnaire was shortened slightly to allow for manageability of time and some questions were reworded to make them more precise. Changes included improving the clarity of the questions. Some questions were also rephrased more clearly to avoid excessive nominalisation. For instance, “language use” was rewritten as “how they use language” (see Question

11, Appendix B). Also, instances of repetition were identified and eliminated in the question list and some questions were merged together. Given that many questions focused on negative aspects of debate – which could potentially compromise the neutrality of the questions – some additional questions on more positive attributes such as co-operative dialogue were added (see Question 8, Appendix B).

In terms of interview practice, it became apparent from the piloting stage that interviewees veered off the question's topic in their answer, and a gentle leading back by the interviewer towards the focus of the question would sometimes be necessary. The interviewer had kept to the prepared questions as closely as possible during the trialling of the interviews, but due to one of the two pilot interviewees being under time pressure, some questions were omitted during their interview. Nevertheless, most key questions were answered. Both pilot interviews ran slightly over the planned time limit. As it was intended to keep interviews to a time limit of 30 minutes due to the potential size and scale of the data to transcribe, as a result of the pilots, the questionnaire was made shorter.

A further observation from the pilot-stage questionnaire was that the first interview question did not fulfil a warm-up function and seemed misplaced in the order of interview questions. The question “To what extent are public speaking and debating skills important in Dáil debates?” was dropped as the first question and tied in with a question on the role of political experience in the Dáil, which would come later in the interview. The first question was then reformulated to ask “How significant is debating in terms of Dáil activities?”, a potentially more engaging question for the beginning of the interview.

One of the original questions in the pilot interviews asked interviewees if there were any aspects to debate and language – or more general non-linguistic aspects of debate – that the interviewees would like to see changed. At the post-pilot stage, it was felt that this question was irrelevant to the key issues of language, gender and power, in that the research does not discuss potential Dáil reform but rather describes existing norms and practices. As a result, the question was dropped from the list for the main interview candidates.

The pilot questionnaire did not ask directly whether interviewees felt there was an aspect of performance at play in debate. Despite the topic being unsolicited, one pilot interviewee described participation in debates as performance. After considering that a discussion of the concept of performance could help the researcher towards a greater understanding of the processes of power in interaction and why a TD uses linguistic strategies to negotiate the power dynamics in debate, it was decided to make the topic more prominent in the interviews. As a result, a new question was added to the finalised questionnaire to ask interviewees, “Would you say there is an element of performance in debates?” (see Question 4, Appendix B).

A final outcome from this stage was the decision to include the pilot interviews in the main body of interviews for analysis. Despite the fact that the questionnaire had been shortened, essentially the same questions (bar those asking the interviewees about the significance of debate and on the aspect of performance) were asked of both the pilot and the primary interviewees, and the data from the pilots was found to contain valuable insights which could not justify exclusion from the data.

3.4.7 Interviews

Following the trialling and piloting stage, the list of interview candidates was consolidated and finalised, along with a newly revised and shortened questionnaire of 16 questions, as shown in Appendix B. The post-pilot interviews took place from January to June 2013. The process of securing interviews began with email communication to candidates. Depending on whether a candidate agreed or did not agree to be interviewed, interviews (and replacement interviews) were organised in the weeks following the communication. As the participants have a high public profile, it was not always straightforward to gain access to them; travel to constituency offices was sometimes required.

Table 3.2 provides a breakdown of the gender of each of the 12 candidates, and also describes whether they are in government (Gov) or in opposition (Opp). The political party of the candidates is not given for reasons of anonymity. It should be noted that as Fianna Fáil had no female candidates in the Dáil during the period under analysis, there were no interviews with a female participant for that party.

Table 3.2 Interviewee gender and government/opposition status

Candidate	Gender	Gov/Opp
Interviewee A	M	Opp
Interviewee B	F	Gov
Interviewee C	F	Opp
Interviewee D	M	Gov
Interviewee E	M	Opp
Interviewee F	F	Gov
Interviewee G	M	Opp
Interviewee H	F	Opp
Interviewee I	M	Gov
Interviewee J	M	Opp
Interviewee K	F	Gov
Interviewee L	F	Opp

3.4.8 Transcription and Analysis

The interviews all took place face-to-face and were recorded by a handheld recording device. All 12 interviews, including the pilots, were transcribed partly by hand and partly by using Dragon Dictate voice recognition software. The transcription stage in itself fulfilled an important part of analysis as it provided an opportunity for close familiarisation with the data as it was transcribed, and for drawing links between interviewee responses.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that the transformation of an oral discourse into a transcript may cause certain elements of the conversation, such as tone, intonation and breathing to be lost and decontextualised. Decisions had to be made about how to interpret parts of the interviews, to produce a transcript that could be used as solid empirical data. For instance, as the interviews were conducted with confidentiality, certain details had to be retracted to preserve anonymity of the subject and of their political party.

Silverman (2011, p. 315) states that the transcript adopted for the study should depend upon what is being attempted in the analysis, “as well as upon practical considerations involving time and resources”. It was therefore paramount to decide on a transcription style that would suit the research purposes. Also, for accuracy of analysis of the interviews, as well as for ethical reasons, it was important to provide verbatim transcriptions of the interviews. All details of non-lexical hesitation (such as ‘eh’, ‘ahm’), and repetition were left in the transcriptions, but items such as outbreaths and inbreaths were omitted. The responses of the interviewer were included in the transcripts to demonstrate active listening and rapport.

In terms of analysing the interviews, the study is informed by the process of bricolage, which “adapts mixed technical discourses, moving freely between different analytic techniques and concepts” (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 233). The approach is adopted in this study to count interviewee statements indicating different attitudes to a topic, and generally bring out and tie together connections.

3.5 Conclusion

The first section of this chapter draws on key approaches adopted from different forms of qualitative research to outline the methods adopted for the purposes of this study. To address the research questions, the study developed a methodological framework which combines a close linguistic analysis of debates along with the comments and reflections of practising TDs from interview data to gain meaningful insights into how language is used strategically to negotiate the power dynamics of the chamber.

With reference to the literature on parliamentary discourse and language and gender reviewed in Chapter 2, this chapter also discussed how a close linguistic analysis could uncover the effect of specific linguistic choices in spoken interaction. The study draws on the micro-level approach (Chilton and Schäffner 1997) to analyse political discourse by considering the sentential level of an utterance in the wider context of the parliamentary debate. A pilot study in corpus linguistics at an early stage of the research was discussed in terms of how it shaped the project. The chapter then moved on to describing the data for the primary analysis of this study, and outlined how a dedicated

corpus of UIs from Dáil debate was compiled for the purpose of analysis. The chapter also discussed the methodology for conducting semi-structured interviews with TDs, and how the interviews were designed to complement the analysis of the corpus of UIs by centring on the same themes of power, strategic language use and gender. The next chapter, Chapter 4, outlines a classification of linguistic strategies which is used for the analysis of the corpus of UIs in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 Classification of linguistic strategies

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines how a typology of linguistic strategies in Dáil debate was designed to enable a systematic analysis of the corpus of UIs. It draws on analytical methods from the literature discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 and a preliminary analysis of the corpus of UIs in order to form categories of analysis. The chapter provides insights into how the content of the 300 UIs chosen for analysis was categorised and clarifies how it was divided into separate categories.

Categories for the analysis of linguistic strategies are formed in three ways. Firstly, the categories are based on observations made in the process of reviewing the literature in Chapter 2. More detail on this process is provided in Section 4.2. Secondly, familiarisation with the corpus gave rise to some initial leads for identifying and classifying linguistic strategies. The ‘leads’ from this data set are discussed in Section 4.3. Thirdly, the process is also informed by transcribing the data from the semi-structured interviews. The process of the formation of the typology of categories of analysis and the rationale for each of these categories are outlined in Section 4.4.

In Chapters 2 and 3, literature in the fields of language in parliamentary debate, strategic language use in the context of political discourse and language and gender was explored in order to establish what kinds of linguistic features could be included in analysis. Due to time constraints and the size of the corpus, it is not feasible to analyse all the linguistic strategies identified through the leads from the literature and the data. Instead, this chapter makes the case for analysing four categories of linguistic strategy. These four categories will be presented in Section 4.4.

4.2 Linguistic ‘leads’ in the literature

This section outlines how the literature influenced the development of the categories for analysis. To begin with, the literature informed the development of the central analytical concept of the ‘linguistic strategy’. Several key texts point to how language is used strategically in parliamentary debate through techniques (Bull and Wells 2012) or

strategic functions (Chilton 2004; Chilton and Schäffner 1997). Although analysis also reflects on the impact or function of each strategy – for instance, presenting an opponent negatively through a delegitimising strategy – the term ‘linguistic strategy’ is used in this study to place emphasis on the action of using language in a strategic way.

Chapter 2 described how Chilton (2004) has outlined three ‘strategic functions’ that pertain to political discourse, which are often interconnected in practice. Of the three sets of functions, the second, *legitimation and delegitimation*, is the most relevant for the typology for the analysis. The concept of delegitimation, in particular, is adopted for analysis of the corpus of UIs to show how linguistic strategies are used. Delegitimation is a strategy of presenting another speaker negatively through “the use of ideas of difference and boundaries, and speech acts of blaming, accusing, insulting, etc.” (Chilton 2004, p. 46). Other forms of delegitimation include marginalising, attacking the moral character of the individual and attacking the communicative cooperation of the other (Chilton 2004).

This study aims to explore whether the negotiation of power dynamics in parliamentary interaction is made apparent by the use of linguistic strategies, because, as discussed in Chapter 2, the end-goal of such strategies is to challenge and “undermine the authority of political adversaries” (Ilie 2010, p. 908). Following Chilton (2004), it is also suggested that specific linguistic strategies can have the effect of delegitimising another speaker’s position. Analysis at the sentence level of debate aims to uncover the power dynamics at play within the framework of debate by showing how TDs use language to potentially undermine political opponents and delegitimize their position.

In terms of the study’s focus on gender, fewer studies were found to examine gender in the context of strategic language use in interaction. As discussed in Section 2.4, however, Fracchiolla (2011) finds that strategic linguistic use in political debate interaction may draw on stereotypical representations of gender to undermine another speaker. Her study draws attention to the possibility that parliamentarians might use language strategically in a gendered way or draw on gender stereotypes to call the expectations of an opponent’s gender into question or to cast aspersions on their character.

As also became apparent in the literature review in Chapter 2, several other strategic uses of language in parliamentary debate in the literature focused on the use of FTAs (Harris 2001; Pérez de Ayala 2001; Martín Rojo 2000). When insults, accusation, criticism and other FTAs are made indirectly, where for instance they are couched in the form of a question, they are less face-damaging to the speaker performing the FTA. Moreover, an indirect FTA carries less risk of sanction from the chair of debate, which points to the value of using strategies subtly in linguistic interaction in debate. FTAs are a clear way to strategically undermine an opponent in debate and produce a reaction from other parliamentarians, but speakers must refrain from unparliamentary language. Ilie (2001) describes how FTAs can be mitigated through appeals to the notion of respect. For instance, an insult may be accompanied by a face-saving hedge in order to strike a balance between a speaker presenting themselves as polite (face-saving) while insulting another speaker (face-threatening) (see Section 2.4). An example from the corpus of 300 UIs which shows this co-occurrence is in the contribution of Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin, where the respectful phrase “with the greatest of respect” is used to preface a strong criticism of the Taoiseach:

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): With the greatest of respect, it is time for the Taoiseach to stop blaming everyone for decisions he is taking. The Taoiseach’s answer this morning lacks credibility and is pathetic.

Ilie’s (2001) point above illustrates the complexity of interaction in parliamentary debate, where one linguistic strategy may be used singly or in conjunction with another.

Much literature on political language discusses the use of various forms of presupposition. Wilson (1990, p. 20), who defines presupposition as “an element of inferred information which emerges from the use of specific linguistic forms”, is concerned with the use of presupposition to make inferences, as discussed in Chapter 3. Chilton (2004, p. 64) refers to presupposition as an interesting feature to examine in discourse, because it states a fact that is presumed to exist; it can be seen “as a way of strategically ‘packaging’ information”. Wodak (2009, p. 49) also describes presupposition as an effective way to “manufacture consent”. In terms of their use in adversarial dialogue, parliamentarians can present their worldview by using presuppositions to state a fact which could potentially threaten their opponent’s face, and induce their opponent to retaliate or respond in some form (legitimately, by waiting

for their turn to speak, or non-legitimately through heckling). Presupposition is one subtle way of strategically directing an FTA towards an opponent; part of a speaker's reply may be taken up by addressing the presupposition made towards them. Implication is also a common trait of an indirect linguistic strategy, which is "useful for directing hearer's interpretations" (Wilson 1990, p. 21) while at the same time absolving the speaker of any responsibility for inferences the hearer might make. As explained in Section 2.4, statements and questions that contain presuppositions and implications can be particularly damaging to political opponents in terms of face threats (Bull and Wells 2012; Harris 2001; Wilson 1990). The frequent mention in the literature of implication and presupposition being used strategically in parliamentary language suggests that evidence of these features in Dáil debate could point to strategic language use in interaction.

The literature discussed in this section points to ways in which language is used strategically to negotiate power dynamics in interaction. While this study does not draw on politeness theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of the FTA as a method of strategically confronting an opponent has informed the development of the strategies for analysis in this study. The literature also pointed to how language in the parliamentary context can be complex, and pointed to the fact that one strategy may be accompanied by another linguistic technique to mitigate its face-threatening effect. The notion that more than one strategy may be at play in debate has led to the awareness of the need to analyse how strategies may be used in conjunction to undermine an opponent. Leads from Chilton (2004) showed how delegitimisation can be manifested in various ways, for instance in attacking the moral character or the communicative cooperation of an opponent. Finally, a study by Fracchiolla (2011) demonstrated that language use which calls the expectations of an opponent's gender into question can be used strategically in debates in a political context. The study draws on these leads from the literature to examine how linguistic strategies may be used to undermine an opponent and delegitimise their position.

Having drawn on the literature on parliamentary language in particular to outline strategies that emerged as potential linguistic 'leads', the next step is to outline leads that emerged from the preliminary stages of data analysis.

4.3 Linguistic ‘leads’ in the data

The ‘leads’ found in the literature pointed to different forms of strategic linguistic strategies and specific linguistic features that can be used to undermine an opponent and delegitimise their position. These ‘leads’ then informed the examination of the data. During the compilation and preliminary analysis of the corpus, patterns in debate interaction emerged and these patterns then led to the classification of linguistic strategies. As outlined in Section 3.3.1, unlike previous studies (e.g. Ilie 2004; Harris 2001) which have focused on the use of a single type of adversarial strategy in parliamentary debate, this study has designed a typology specifically for analysing several types of strategic language use. This typology will be used for analysis of the corpus of UIs.

As the corpus was compiled, some patterns of strategic language use in the data were observed. Four of these patterns were developed into categories for analysis. The criteria for a linguistic strategy to form a category of analysis included the linguistic strategy’s relevance to the study’s key concerns of power and/or gender. More specifically, a strategy needed to show relevance to the research questions:

- *In what ways is language used strategically by participants in Irish parliamentary debate to negotiate the power dynamics of the chamber?*
- *Do debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate? If so, in what ways?*

The linguistic strategies could take the form of questions, statements or interjections in debate. One of the four categories focuses on gender, to reflect the second research question, while the other three categories focus on different types of linguistic strategy.

Other categories of linguistic strategy had been identified at an earlier stage of analysis, but these were omitted due to their lesser relevance to the research questions. For example, one of these categories was related to the issue of heckling as a form of interruption and whether a TD responded to heckling during their contribution. Heckling is not explored as a separate category of analysis as the act of interrupting

another speaker is a non-verbal strategy of disruption (Ilie 2004), and is often more functional rather than a formal part of the exchange.

The discussion on linguistic strategies thus far has centred on the adversarial traits of parliamentary debate. This is due to the nature of the debating chamber, where language can be used strategically to undermine other speakers and delegitimise their contributions in a highly competitive environment. However, as mentioned in the literature review, cooperation in politics is also an important characteristic, for the obvious reason that politicians must work together to enact legislation. The corpus of 300 UIs reflects the fact that there is both conflict and cooperation in parliamentary debate. While many of the UIs exhibited many different forms of adversarial interaction, a number of UIs contain cooperative styles of debate. Out of the 300 UIs randomly chosen for analysis, 127 were deemed to be entirely cooperative in terms of interaction, while 106 were mostly cooperative but show elements of mild disagreement among participants, with, for example, no strong FTAs. The cooperative UIs in the corpus (such as UI 3 below) show positive facework, where positive comments about other members are often reciprocated, thus enhancing the self-presentation of both participants in the dialogue. They depict mutually consensual dialogue which contains rapport between speakers. From examining these UIs, it seems that they occur during quieter periods in Dáil interaction where for instance, a TD was questioning a minister, with fewer members present. There seem to be fewer instances of cooperative interaction during Leaders' Questions, when more members are present and it is standard practice for the opposition to hold the government to account.

An example of a cooperative UI follows, with positive facework from Stephen Donnelly, a TD in opposition, and Kathleen Lynch, a government minister:

UI 3. 12.04.2011/09

Deputy Stephen Donnelly (Ind): I thank the Minister of State for that response. We have some examples of good practice, for example in Limerick and in the mid-west where we have the 30 hospice beds and the multidisciplinary teams. [...] I suggest to the Minister that the issue is one of variance and would like to know what is being done about that. [...]

Deputy Kathleen Lynch (Lab): [...] I take on board the Deputy's comments. No matter where people are, their needs are the same and we must ensure an equitable delivery of the service.

Deputy Stephen Donnelly: I have the 2009 plan here and agree it is a good plan. I suggest the HSE is the problem and that it is a managerial problem. [...] As the

Minister pointed out, we are now in a Fianna Fáil-induced IMF world and must try to save money. [...]Can anything be done about that organisation, which does not appear to be reacting to its own plan, specifically in an area which could save us significant money and provide better health care to people all over the country?

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: The Deputy has asked some relevant questions. We cannot, for the very reasons the Deputy has asked the question, have a county by county, or regional approach to this. We must pull it together and have a national service. [...] I hear the Deputy's concerns.

To summarise, the analysis of the corpus of UIs in the study focuses on uncooperative strategies which emerged as leads from the data. The instances of language use which become the basis of these categories for analysis showed relevance to the study's key concerns of power and/or gender and largely depicted adversarial interaction.

4.4 Rationale for adopting the categories

The four categories for analysis are:

- *Patronising as a strategy*
- *Invoking gender as a strategy*
- *Insulting/Accusing/Criticising as a strategy*
- *Metalinguage as a strategy*

The rationale for adopting these four categories will now be explained.

Instances in the UIs where opponents used patronising language towards each other also piqued interest because this is a particular, nuanced form of strategic language designed to undermine and belittle a speaker. 'Patronising' linguistic strategies therefore merited discussion as a category of their own. Out of the 300 UIs, 18 UIs showed instances of a patronising linguistic strategy.

The category of invoking gender as a strategy emerged from a preliminary analysis of the UIs, where instances of language use that saw TDs invoke their opponent's gender were observed. The emergence of this analysis category is relevant to the research question which asks whether debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate. The observation of these instances in the corpus indicated that some debate participants do appear to use linguistic strategies to invoke

gender in the Dáil chamber. The sub-question, which addresses the ways in which gender is invoked in linguistic strategies, will be explored through analysing the excerpts from the corpus of UIs.

While examples of female TDs performing a face threat to male opponents by challenging their masculinity were observed in preliminary analysis, the category was widened to include other instances. These were instances of male or female speakers using language in a gendered way or drawing on gender stereotypes in comments directed to other male or female speakers. Out of the 300 UIs, eight UIs were found which showed participants directly invoking the gender of a speaker or using gendered language to call the expectations of their gender into question or to imply weakness or failings.

FTAs in the form of insults, accusation and criticism are found frequently in the corpus of debate transcripts, and have a unique political function in calling another member or party to account. The analysis was restricted to direct insults, accusation and criticism on individuals only. There were many examples of insults, accusation and criticism towards a political party as a collective but due to reasons of size, and due to the fact that party-directed criticism is a fundamental and common element of parliamentary debates, these were omitted. The instances of insults, accusation and criticism were subsumed into one category for analysis due to their shared function of performing a direct threat to another TD's face. This analysis category is larger than the previous two, as 38 UIs from the corpus showed instances of this strategy.

Metalinguage, where participants refer to the language spoken in interaction, is often alluded to in debate, where for instance, a TD is accused of grandstanding, filibustering or evading the question, or where the lexical features of an opponent's language practice are referred to in a critical manner on a metalinguistic level by other participants. Therefore, metalinguage also emerged as a feature which could be categorised as a strategic use of language. This analysis category contains 33 UIs from the corpus which showed instances of this strategy.

The UIs in the corpus often exhibit more than one type of linguistic strategy, depending on the section of debate, the number of TDs present and the debate topic. For instance,

Leaders' Questions and the Order of Business, where more TDs are present and where issues deemed urgent can be raised, typically exhibit greater amounts of interaction between members. The following excerpt from UI 42 in the corpus displays examples of both patronising as a strategy and metalanguage as a strategy, with an interpretation of the language used in brackets:

UI 42. 09.02.2012/03

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): [...] Therefore, the Deputy's mystification about it now is a little odd. Perhaps he did not understand it at the time and that is the reason he is now befuddled. [*Patronising as a strategy: implies that McGrath is lacking in understanding of a particular matter*]

Deputy Timmy Dooley (FF): That is outrageous.

Deputy Michael McGrath (FF): I am looking for information. [*Metalanguage as a strategy: Burton is evading the question*]

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Order, please.

[...]

Deputy Michael McGrath: That response is beyond belief. [*Metalanguage as a strategy: Burton's response is not satisfactory*]
(Interruptions).

Deputy Michael McGrath: The Minister was asked simple straightforward questions—

Deputy Alan Shatter (FG): The Deputy had a bad time on “Morning Ireland” and he is continuing it here.

Deputy Michael McGrath:—about what the savings will be arising from the retirements that will take place at the end of this month. She gave no answer to any of those questions. [*Metalanguage as a strategy: Burton is evading the question*]

Excerpts from UIs where more than one linguistic strategy appears will be accounted for in Chapter 5, where the individual linguistic strategies of each UI will be analysed under the relevant categories.

Following this outline of how the four categories were initially selected from the data, each category is now defined in the context of the research questions and with reference to relevant literature.

4.5 Definitions of linguistic strategies

Patronising as a strategy

Aside from standard dictionary definitions for the noun form of patronising, *patronisation*, which is “to assume an air of superiority towards; to treat or speak about

(a person, etc.) condescendingly, esp. with apparent indulgence or kindness” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2014), academic literature was consulted to develop the definition as a category. *Patronising* is an intentional action designed to embarrass or belittle another person (Adler 2001, p. 625). Adler’s definition of patronising, in a general, non-political context, is as follows:

For a person (the “actor”) to act patronizing toward someone (the “victim”) is for the former to treat the latter (a) as less able (in a certain respect) or his or her activities, rituals, or practices (or the products of these) as of less value than (he ought to recognize as) appropriate, (b) in a way (manner or style) that is belittling, condescending, or demeaning, and (c) with an intention that is somewhat kindly or beneficent or positive toward the victim (or the patronizer so represents it). (Adler 2002, p. 621)

According to Adler (2002), a person using patronising language will put on a face of good intentions during the act of patronising another speaker (which can infuriate him/her). The ‘patroniser’ may be aware that they are not hiding their attempt to patronise the other person. There may be an element of hypocrisy or pretence involved when the positive intention is overt or heavy handed (Adler 2002).

For the purposes of this study, instances which alert us to the use of patronising language as a linguistic strategy are where a TD speaks to a political opponent in a patronising manner, sometimes with a pretence of kindness or ‘understanding’, while at the same time inferring the inexperience, naivety or lack of competence or understanding of the other member.

An example of a lexical item that flags patronising language is ‘little’. For instance, the following exchange takes place in debates from the calendar year 2011-2012 from which the corpus of UIs is extracted, but it does not feature in the corpus itself. The Taoiseach responds patronisingly to a male opposition TD, who has been vocal in his condemnation and questioning of the Taoiseach, with “we will get answers for him and he will be a very happy little boy”. Example No. 16, excerpted from UI 224, follows as an example of patronising strategy, where Creighton refers patronisingly to Martin’s initial period in opposition (after previously being in government) by stating that she knows this period was “difficult” for him. Indicating that she understands his ‘difficulty’ can be seen as a way of undermining Martin:

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): [...]

Deputy Martin and others have suggested that the Government has not set out a path or communicated its views. I know the Deputy's initial period in opposition was difficult —

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): No, it was not.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: —because he was trying to play the statesman and work constructively with the Government.

Deputy Micheál Martin: I was not playing anything.

Invoking gender as a strategy

Of all four categories, this has the most obvious link with the theme of gender in this study. It deals with instances from UIs where gender is invoked to potentially undermine a speaker.

The term ‘invoking gender as a strategy’ is contextualised in the context of the Dáil in this study to create a definition that is then operationalised in the analysis component of this study. The literature review foregrounded that gender may be used as a linguistic resource by participants in interaction (Baxter 2012) and, as discussed in Sections 2.4. and 4.2, stereotypical representations of gender and gendered language can be drawn upon to strategically undermine political opponents in debate (Fracchiolla 2011). From an exploration of the UI data, examples of strategic language were seen in instances of female TDs performing a face threat to male opponents by challenging their masculinity, thus calling the expectations of their gender into question. This use of language to emasculate opponents drew attention to occurrences in the data of invoking gender as a linguistic strategy.

The standard dictionary definition of ‘emasculatation’ is “the depriving of force, vigour, or manliness; making weak or effeminate” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2014). The study suggests the term *defeminisation* as the binary opposite to emasculatation. While ‘emasculate’ means to show signs of weakness, and therefore a lack of masculinity, ‘defeminisation’ is used to question a woman’s perceived lack of feminine characteristics. It is defined as “the divesting of feminine qualities” (Collins English Dictionary, 2014). Chapter 2 of this study discusses how women who conform to and adopt stereotypically masculine forms of speech are often viewed negatively for doing so, particularly in the media but also within their own CoP (see discussion of Margaret Thatcher in Section 2.5.3). Although examples of defeminising as a linguistic strategy

did not appear as a lead in the preliminary analysis of the corpus, in the interests of gender equality, this study aims to examine examples of defeminising as a linguistic strategy should such examples emerge in analysis.

Having considered the above definitions, in the context of Dáil debate, invoking gender as a strategy is defined as undermining an opponent by invoking their gender or by using gendered language to call the expectations of their gender into question or to imply weakness or failings. UI 184, which is example No. 5 in the category of invoking gender as a strategy, follows as an example from the corpus of UIs, with the language which corresponds to invoking gender as a strategy underlined:

Deputy Joan Burton: The Deputy should withdraw that. It does not become him to tell lies in this House and attribute them to—

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: I do not believe—

Deputy Joan Burton: Is the Deputy man enough to withdraw that?

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: The Minister is the one who is declaring that.

Deputy Joan Burton: The Deputy should be man enough to withdraw that now. Is he a man or a mouse?

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: Minister—

Insulting/Accusing/Criticising as a strategy

Chapter 2 showed how there is a prevalence of adversarial forms of speaking in the genre of parliamentary discourse. Accusation and criticism are manifestations of the adversarial nature of debate, where opposition members are there essentially to oppose the actions of the government (Bayley 2004). Insults, accusation and criticism are types of face-threatening acts (FTAs) that are often made on a collective, party-based level in the chamber, where opposition and government are pitched against one another. Common examples of these FTAs towards political parties in the Dáil, as seen in the corpus of UIs, target the Labour party critically for supporting its majority coalition partners, Fine Gael; Fianna Fáil for leading the country into economic crisis; and Sinn Féin for its perceived lack of credible alternative measures. Due to the size of the corpus, instances of insults, accusation and criticism made towards an individual speaker only, rather than a party, are considered for inclusion in this category. These instances are often identifiable in the corpus because they lead to a strong reaction from other members in the chamber, as can be seen in example No. 36, excerpted from UI 284:

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: [...] I find it deeply ironic that the Labour Party in government seeks to sabotage the work done by a previous Minister for Education of that party. I have to say, Eamon Gilmore, you are some piece of work to talk about equality.

(Interruptions).

A Deputy: You are not bad yourself, Mary.

An Ceann Comhairle: We normally address Members as either Minister or Deputy.

Insults are stronger than accusations and criticism according to Ilie (2001, p. 259), who defines parliamentary insulting strategies “as subversive transgressions of the institutional boundaries of parliamentary language use and practices”. It may be more difficult for a speaker who has been insulted to recover during interaction because they have been seriously undermined.

For the purposes of analysis, the category of insulting/accusing/criticising as a strategy refers to instances of FTAs that are achieved through insults, accusation and criticism made by one TD towards another. They are made towards an individual speaker who is present in the debating chamber. This analysis category includes insults, accusation and criticism together in the same category. It was not always possible to clarify whether a specific FTA was either an insult or a strong criticism, as the FTA may be a combination of the two. Therefore, it was decided to group instances of all three types of FTA (i.e. insults, accusation and criticism) into one category of linguistic strategy and they will be analysed together within this category. The following instance, example No. 20 excerpted from UI 115, shows the use of accusation during debate in the form of questioning:

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh (SF): [...] In attempting to defend these indefensible cuts in recent days the Minister has repeatedly argued that 21% of those in receipt of the household benefits package do not use all the units included in the allowance. Will she acknowledge that neither she nor the Department knows anything about the circumstances of these 21% of recipients or, in fact, in many instances, the circumstances of the remaining 79%?

In the Dáil, TDs must address one another as ‘Deputy [surname]’ (Dáil Éireann Standing Orders 2011). It can be seen in Chapter 5 that TDs frequently break the rules when addressing each other, as the analysis shows many examples of TDs addressing each other in the form of ‘you’ rather than through the chair. This strategy adds agency and draws attention to both the user and the recipient of an FTA in debate. Instances

where they address each other on a first name basis are viewed as constituting a very direct threat to face and transgressing the rules of debate. An example of this from the corpus can be seen in example No. 28 excerpted from UI 201, which is directed towards Minister Joan Burton:

Deputy Pearse Doherty (SF): [...] Why is there no outcry, Joan? What has happened?

Metalanguage as a strategy

One dictionary definition of ‘metalanguage’ is “Any use of language about language, as for instance in glosses, definitions, or arguments about the usage or meaning of words” (Baldick 2008). Metalanguage has long been thought of as ‘part and parcel’ of language (Cameron 2004) and has been described by Cameron (2004, p. 311) as “not only a necessary scientific tool utilized by logicians and linguists; it plays an important role in our everyday language”. Cameron (ibid.) also specifies that metalanguage is necessary for the successful use of language in communicative acts. Jaworski, Coupland and Galasiński (2004, p. 4) outline how metalanguage, which they define as “direct or indirect quotation of previous utterances, or commentary on language performance, style or rhetorical function”, can be used as a resource for strategic communication. They give the example of the metalinguistic comment “What I was trying to say was...” to describe how the speaker can “influence and negotiate how an utterance is or should have been heard, or try to modify the values attributed to it” (Jaworski et al. ibid.).

Harris (2001) points out that exchanges which centre on the metalanguage of asking and answering questions in the House of Commons can fulfil a role in calling a minister to account for not providing answers, for example. By demanding that an opponent answers their question, for instance, they make metalinguistic reference to the question/answer format of debate, and thus wider-scale reference to the rituals of the institution. The demonstrated awareness through metalanguage of the question/answer framework can function as a specific form of a face-threatening strategy on another member. Harris (2001, p. 460) gives an example from a debate of an MP directing a term of abuse towards the Prime Minister on an individual level as “the man of all gags and no policy”. According to Cameron (2004, p. 313), another reason why parliamentarians use ‘metalinguistic’ communication is to make “sense of – and

participate in – the process of social differentiation through linguistic variation”, where metalinguistic vocabulary is used “not merely to categorise others, but to signal approval or disapproval of them” (ibid.).

To form a category of linguistic strategy, instances of metalanguage are defined as language used by a speaker to refer to another TDs’ use of language within the chamber, often in a critical manner, or to make reference to the practices surrounding language use in the chamber. Examples from the UIs of metalanguage as a strategy where another TD’s use of language is referred to are: “The Deputy uses nice pejorative terms” (example No. 18, excerpted from UI 168), “Answer the question” (example No. 17, excerpted from UI 168), and “I like the Taoiseach’s diversionary tactics” (example No. 4, excerpted from UI 23). Instances where a TD talks about their own language or modifies what they have said do not count as instances of metalanguage as a strategy in this study.

4.6 Instances of overlapping categories

Some difficulties with overlapping categories were encountered during the analysis stage, where a single UI may exhibit linguistic strategies from more than one category. As explained in Section 4.4., where this occurs, the relevant strategies are discussed in the different sections of the analysis chapter. However, there are some strategies which caused difficulties in deciding how they should be categorised.

An example of a UI which presented difficulty in terms of categorisation is UI 187, which is example No. 14 in the category of patronising as a strategy.

UI 187. 01.02.2012/05

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett (Ind): [...]

It is extraordinary to hear the Minister, Deputy Varadkar, talk about how the Irish public would not understand the provisions of the treaty and get caught up in extraneous issues. It is unbelievably insulting —

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): I think he was probably talking about the Deputy rather than the people of Ireland.

In this example, Lucinda’s Creighton rebuke to Richard Boyd Barrett is classified as patronising. This is due to her response “I think he was talking about the Deputy...”

meeting the criteria for patronising as a category, because it belittles Boyd Barrett by suggesting that he does not understand the issue. However, one could also say that Creighton's response is a direct insult, and therefore could be classified under insulting/accusing/criticising as a strategy. In the end, these problematic strategies were simply categorised as one or the other form of strategy and analysed accordingly.

The difficulties that arise from categorising show how strategies may be multi-functional in terms of their effect on discourse. It may also be the case that these difficulties arose because the typology was newly created for the purposes of the analysis in this study and had been previously untested in research.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter described how a typology for the linguistic strategies analysed in this study was developed. The categories of linguistic strategy were developed by drawing on the literature as well as examining the patterns of linguistic strategies that emerged in the course of a preliminary exploration of the main corpus of 300 UIs. Having outlined the four main categories of linguistic strategies as patronising as a strategy, invoking gender as a strategy, insulting/accusing/criticising as a strategy and metalanguage as strategy, the next chapter moves to the main analysis of the corpus of UIs. The analysis adopts the definitions for the strategies outlined in this chapter to identify the ways in which linguistic strategies are used to negotiate the power dynamics in Dáil debate, and further, to explore in what ways linguistic strategies may be used to invoke gender.

Chapter 5 Analysis of the corpus of Dáil debates

5.1 Introduction

The narrative of the thesis thus far has moved from a theoretical discussion of the issues of power, gender and language use in parliamentary discourse to a consideration of methods which could be used for analysis. The methodology in Chapter 3 described how the corpus of UIs was compiled alongside the methods that have been chosen. This chapter now addresses the research questions by analysing the corpus of UIs under the four categories of linguistic strategies outlined in Chapter 4, which are restated in Section 5.2. It aims to show the ways in which language is used strategically to negotiate the power dynamics in the Dáil. With regards to the second research question, instances of gendered linguistic strategy were found in preliminary data analysis in the previous chapter, which suggests that TDs may use linguistic strategies to invoke gender. This chapter will therefore explore the ways in which gender may be invoked in debate.

5.2 Classification of linguistic strategies

As explained in Chapter 4, UIs are analysed under the four categories of linguistic strategies that were found to be relevant to the central theoretical concepts of power and gender. These four categories are:

- *Patronising as a strategy*
- *Invoking gender as a strategy*
- *Insulting/Accusing/Criticising as a strategy*
- *Metalinguage as a strategy*

The rationale behind the selection and definition for each category for the purposes of this study is restated here. Further details can be seen in Chapter 4.

The category of *patronising as a strategy* focuses on instances where a TD speaks to a political opponent in a patronising manner, sometimes with a pretence of kindness or

‘understanding’, while at the same time inferring the inexperience, naivety or lack of competence or understanding of the other member.

The category of *invoking gender as a strategy* analyses instances in the corpus where a speaker invokes gender to call the expectations of their opponent’s gender into question or to imply weakness or failings.

The category of *insulting/accusing/criticising as a strategy* analyses instances of FTAs that are achieved through insults, accusation and criticism directed towards an individual speaker present in the chamber when the FTA is made. Instances that insult a party rather than an individual speaker are not considered due to the size of the corpus.

The category of *metalinguage as a strategy* covers the analysis of the metalevel of language use in debate. Metalinguage is defined as language used by a speaker to refer to another TD’s use of language within the chamber, often in a critical manner, or to make reference to the practices surrounding language use in the chamber.

5.3 Outline of analysis

This section describes how the main analysis section contained in this chapter is structured. As outlined in the methodology, 300 UIs are selected for analysis, where a UI is defined as an extract from debate transcripts which exhibits dialogue between two or more participants and is an exchange between a male and a female TD or an exchange between two female TDs (see further details on the construction of the corpus in Section 3.3.4).

Section 5.4 presents the four categories of analysis, which examine UIs that instantiate the linguistic strategies relevant to each. Each UI which instantiates a linguistic strategy in each category is numbered chronologically in the analysis chapter for clarity. As explained in Chapter 4, some UIs fit more than one of the four categories of interaction because they instantiate more than one strategy. Where this is the case, the relevant excerpt(s) from the UI containing the strategy are discussed separately under each category.

UIs from transcripts have been cross-checked against the video recordings provided on the Oireachtas website. As already indicated in Section 3.3.2, however, as only one microphone is turned on at a time in the chamber (for the speaker in possession of the floor), the interjections and comments of other speakers are not always audible. In this study, where there is a difference between the transcript and the actual utterance, the actual utterances made available from the recording are provided underneath the excerpt from the UI and marked with one or multiple asterisks. An example of how this appears is provided in the following example from UI 176, where the actual utterance is provided below the transcribed utterance:

Transcript:

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: *The Deputy needs to behave himself.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: That is rich coming from the Minister of State.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: He is no longer in the position he used to hold. **He should behave himself and have some manners.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: I never pinched the patients. I might visit them but I would never do that to them.

Actual utterance:

* Mattie, you need to behave yourself.

**You should behave yourself. A little bit of manners now. A little bit of manners now.

The entirety of each UI does not appear in analysis as the UIs can be lengthy and much of the text in each UI does not contain those linguistic strategies that are under investigation in this study. For clarity and in order to provide sufficient context, where necessary, dialogue preceding and following the excerpts from the UIs is included for the reader to understand the context of the utterance. There is no minimum or maximum length for each excerpt. Gaps between relevant utterances indicate the sections of the UI that have been omitted. These gaps are indicated in the examples from the UIs as [...]. The full-length versions of each UI are attached as Appendix A on CD for reference and are numbered there according to their chronological order in the corpus, which contains 300 UIs (e.g. UI 53 in the example below).

In each category of analysis which follows in Section 5.4, examples from individual UIs which instantiate a linguistic strategy are discussed in the order they appear in the corpus of UIs. Furthermore, each example is also numbered in chronological order within the category of linguistic strategy. The date of the debate featured in the UI and the page number as it appears online on the Irish government website

(www.oireachtas.ie) is referred to using the following format: Category No. X., UI No. X., DD.MM.YYYY/page number. For example:

1.

UI 53. 04.05.2011/03

The corresponding excerpt from the UI that includes the linguistic strategy then appears underneath. This is then followed by an analysis of the linguistic strategy in the example.

As outlined above, one of the criteria for compiling a segment of debate as a UI is that it is an exchange between a male and a female TD or an exchange between two female TDs. An excerpt from a UI in the analysis shows strategic language use in the direction of female to male, male to female, male to male, but less often in the direction of female to female. On occasion the excerpts discussed in analysis do not involve female speakers, because a female TD has not made the linguistic strategy under discussion but has spoken in a part of the UI not present in the excerpt shown in analysis. The analysis shows a greater frequency of certain female members more than others, because some female TDs speak more in debate due to their roles as government ministers or deputy leaders of a party, for example. Tables 1 to 4 in Appendix F show the gender of both the TD performing the linguistic strategy and the gender of the TD(s) on the receiving end of the linguistic strategy.

5.4 Analysis of linguistic strategies in Units of Interaction

Following from the definitions for the linguistic strategies behind the category selection, and the description of how the analysis of the UIs is structured, this section contains the main body of analysis in this chapter.

5.4.1 Patronising as a strategy

This section analyses instances of patronising linguistic strategies in the corpus of UIs, where a patronising linguistic strategy is defined as a manner of speaking in a

patronising manner towards, and/or inferring the naivety, inexperience or lack of competence of another member.

1.

UI 5. 03.05.2011/13

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): In that reality, of course, the decision to pump those billions into Anglo Irish Bank, which the Taoiseach has supported, is not fiscally neutral. The Taoiseach said adjustments will be made. I discern from this that we face further cutbacks in order to give life to this jobs initiative. Can he confirm that? The Taoiseach appears to be hiding behind language. [...]

The Taoiseach (FG): I would not get carried away with what the Deputy discerns from my words. A total of €6 billion is being taken out of the economy in 2011 and obviously that is not all about growth and productivity.

In example 1, excerpted from UI 5, the Taoiseach responds to a supplementary question from McDonald, and the impact of her strategy to threaten his face within that question can be seen in his response. He replies to her accusation of appearing to hide behind language with a patronising putdown “I would not get carried away with what the Deputy discerns from my words”. This linguistic strategy can be seen to belittle her and presupposes that she is getting carried away, or reacting too strongly.

2.

UI 8. 08.06.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF):

When will the penny drop with the Taoiseach and his colleagues that the issue of the private debt with which the State has been burdened must be dealt with? He correctly said that other member states act in their national interest.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy is over time.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: *Well done to the Taoiseach for figuring that out; the challenge for him is to act in the interest of this State and its citizens and so far, he and the Minister for Finance, Deputy Noonan, have abjectly failed in that task.

((Opposition TDs: Hear, hear))

McDonald employs a patronising linguistic strategy in example 2, excerpted from UI 8, by implying that the Taoiseach is stating the obvious or sounding foolish by saying that other member states act in their national interest, by sarcastically stating “Well done to the Taoiseach for figuring that out”.

3.

UI 26. 20.10.2011/08

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív (FF): It has taken the Government months and the Minister of State does not have an answer for me today. In the event of the insurance companies now not providing insurance on a risk-management basis to the people, who according to the Minister of State's documentation should get it? What will the Government do next?

Deputy Brian Hayes (FG): I know the Deputy enjoys this type of pantomime performance every so often since his very sharp exit from office and I know he is in difficulty for all kinds of reasons. However, it is not appropriate to turn this into some kind of plaything across the House.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: It is the Minister of State who is doing that.

In example 3, excerpted from UI 26, Hayes uses a strategy to patronise O' Cuív, with his use of "I know" signifying the potential pretence of Hayes' sincerity and understanding. The patronising phrase "I know he is in difficulty for all kinds of reasons" suggests that O'Cuív's "difficulty" and "his very sharp exit from office" are the reasons for O'Cuív's "pantomime performance" behaviour in debate. Hayes also implies that O'Cuív is trivialising the issue by turning it "into some kind of plaything".

4.

UI 42. 09.02.2012/03

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): [...]

Therefore, the Deputy's mystification about it now is a little odd. Perhaps he did not understand it at the time and that is the reason he is now befuddled.

Deputy Timmy Dooley (FF): That is outrageous.

Deputy Michael McGrath (FF): I am looking for information.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Order, please.

Deputy Michael McGrath: Has the Minister got the numbers?

Deputy Joan Burton: In regard to my Department, and I speak for my other colleagues —

Deputy Timmy Dooley: I would say they are happy about that.

Deputy Joan Burton: —of course we have been aware of this scheme, we inherited it from your good selves[...]

As to why Deputy Michael McGrath would be concerned —

Deputy Timmy Dooley: He is asking the questions. The Minister is supposed to be answering them.

Deputy Joan Burton: —and befuddled by arrangements his party put in place —

Deputies: Hear, hear.

Deputy Joan Burton: —leaves me slightly puzzled.

(Interruptions).

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Order, please. I ask Members to have respect for the speaker. Deputy Michael McGrath has one minute to ask a supplementary.

Deputy Michael McGrath: That response is beyond belief.

(Interruptions).

In the interaction directly before example 4, excerpted from UI 42, Michael McGrath, to whom the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, replies, had criticised her cabinet colleagues, but was not adversarial towards her specifically. In her response, where she discusses a scheme put in place by McGrath's party, she uses patronising language to attack, saying "Perhaps he did not understand it at the time and that is the reason he is now befuddled". Following this inference of her opponent's lack of understanding, Burton continues her turn with a sarcastic aside that her government has inherited the scheme under discussion from his party and she is therefore "slightly puzzled" as to why he is "befuddled". It can be said that she is thereby patronising him by suggesting that there is no reason why he should be confused.

5.

UI 71. 21.09.2011/12

Deputy Alan Shatter (FG): [...]

Unfortunately, the Deputy has a somewhat simplistic view of the complexities of the issues involved in regard to Gaza. I have very particular concerns about the impact on the population in Gaza of the regime which has taken over in Gaza. [...] The issues are a good deal more complex than the Deputy may wish to accept, but it is a particular concern of the Government that the peace process be reactivated and dialogue recommence with a view to facilitating an end to what is a very tragic and continuing conflict.

Deputy Clare Daly (Ind): Whatever is the Minister's official role, he has an important role to play in this situation. It is totally remiss of him not to take the opportunity when he is in the region to attempt to visit Gaza. [...] I do not believe I have a simplistic view. The Minister's own view is partisan. Perhaps he might develop a better understanding of the situation and the plight of ordinary people if he were to take the trouble to take the not too large a step of paying a visit to view the situation in Gaza at first hand. He might then be better informed and able to come back and brief the House.

Deputy Alan Shatter: The Deputy is obviously unaware that I visited Gaza some three months after the last conflict which took place between Hamas and Israel, that I saw the nature of the difficulties in Gaza and that I am intimately aware of the complexity of the problem. It is a great pity in addressing the issues in the region she sees it all completely in black and white and is not prepared to engage in a manner which might genuinely contribute to the advancement of the peace process.

Deputy Clare Daly: The Minister was not in his current role at the time.

In example 5, excerpted from UI 71, Shatter addresses Daly in what appears to be a patronising manner, implying that she has "a somewhat simplistic view" of a situation

and that “[t]he issues are a good deal more complex than the Deputy may wish to accept”, suggesting that she is lacking in knowledge and experience on the topic. After Daly suggests in her response that it would be remiss of him not to visit Gaza given the opportunity, Shatter responds that “she is obviously unaware” that he has visited this location which counters her criticism by pointing out that she is mistaken. Further, he states somewhat moralistically that “[i]t is a great pity in addressing the issues in the region she sees it all completely in black and white”, which implies that Daly’s views are impeding a cooperative discussion on the topic. In this interaction, the seemingly patronising language used by Shatter initiates hostility between Daly and himself. It can be argued that his use of linguistic strategy here cumulatively undermines Daly by calling her expertise into question.

6.

UI 78. 13.10.2011/05

Deputy Clare Daly (Ind): [...]

The idea of selling a portion of these companies to raise funds to perhaps create jobs as the Minister stated is absolute nonsense. In the first case, the Minister admitted his masters have not even given him permission to do this and to use the money to do so.

In example 6, excerpted from UI 78, it can be suggested that Daly uses patronising language to undermine and disempower Minister Brendan Howlin. By asserting that “the Minister admitted his masters have not even given him permission to do this”; Daly portrays Howlin as having a lack of autonomy within government, belittling him for being under the influence of “his masters”, i.e. the leader and deputy leader of government.

7.

UI 82. 17.11.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): [...] *The Tánaiste cannot run away from the issue of high-level accountability if he is serious about reform. That is a fact. It might fit the Tánaiste better to demonstrate respect to the ordinary citizens of this State who rely on public services.

*You see, you can’t run away from the issue of high-level accountability, Tánaiste, if you are serious about reform. That is a fact. It might fit you better, Tánaiste, to demonstrate...

In example 7, excerpted from UI 82, Mary Lou McDonald uses patronising language towards the Tánaiste. He is accused indirectly of being cowardly. McDonald undermines him by implying that he is evading the issue and recommends that he changes his actions, in a moralistic turn of phrase which could also be construed as patronising: “It might fit you better, Tánaiste, to...”. The verbatim transcription of McDonald’s debate contribution is provided below the UI excerpt to indicate how McDonald repeatedly uses the Tánaiste’s title in a way that appears to address him more directly. This may be a strategy of further putting him under pressure by holding him to account for the issue.

8.

UI 116. 21.09.2011/08

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): [...]

While some on the other side of the House may scoff at that, anybody who talks to retailers, particularly in the hospitality sector, including restaurants, pubs, hotels and so on, will almost unanimously say it has made a profound impact on their trade, and they welcome the measures introduced by the Government earlier in the year. These have boosted trade, in particular tourism over the summer months, *whether Deputy Boyd Barrett likes to acknowledge it or not. I know it is difficult for him to acknowledge that anything at all that happens in this country is good but—

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett (Ind): Just look at Dún Laoghaire main street.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: ** —hopefully, he will begin to see things in a slightly more positive light. Perhaps if he talks to retailers and business people in his constituency—

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett: I do.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: *** —he might get a flavour of some of the good news that is happening in this country. [...]

If one reads the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times* and all the euro-press in pretty much every member state — ****I do not know whether Deputy Boyd Barrett takes the time to do this—

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett: Yes, I do.

* whether you like to acknowledge it or not. I know it is difficult for you, Deputy Boyd Barrett, to acknowledge that anything at all that happens in this country is good but—

**—hopefully, you will begin to see things in a slightly more positive light. Perhaps if you talk to retailers and business people in your constituency—

***—you might get a flavour of some of the good news that is happening in this country.

**** I don’t know if you take the time to do that, Deputy—

During her contribution to debate, Minister Lucinda Creighton targets the Independent TD Boyd Barrett on the opposite benches repeatedly in a patronising manner in

example 8, excerpted from UI 116. There appears to be a pretence of understanding in Creighton's contribution as she states "I know it is difficult for you, Deputy Boyd Barrett, to acknowledge that anything at all that happens in this country is good", which may be patronising him by implying a lack of ability on his part to speak positively. Creighton also implies that he is not informed, assuming that he has not spoken to his local businesses or read the financial newspapers: "I don't know if you take the time to do that, Deputy".

9.

UI 126. 26.10.2011/07

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): I never—

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): I do not believe the Deputy participated in those debates at European Council level. The Taoiseach did participate and I assure the Deputy there were robust exchanges and huge pressure applied. When I visited Paris and Berlin on behalf of the Government very significant pressure was being applied. The Deputy is a little naïve if that is his view.

Deputy Micheál Martin: What was the formula?

In example 9, excerpted from UI 126, Creighton criticises her opponent for his views. It can be argued that she uses patronising language to undermine his position by suggesting that Micheál Martin is "naïve" if he holds a certain view.

10.

UI 142. 01.02.2012/05

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): That is open to the Parliament. It would, however, be in breach of international obligations. The circumstances are exactly the same in respect of any other international treaty we sign up to, as Deputy Martin well knows.

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): The introduction of abortion—

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: He is long enough in this House to understand how legislation operates. *At least, I hope he understands it.

Deputy Micheál Martin: There is a problem there and **the Minister of State knows it.

* At least, I hope you understand it.

**and you know it.

In example 10, excerpted from UI 142, Creighton uses patronising language towards Martin as she states that he is a long-serving member of parliament and thus should

understand how legislation operates: “At least, I hope you understand it”. Thus, she implies a lack of understanding of legislation procedures on Martin’s part.

11.

UI 165. 28.06.2011/09

Deputy Clare Daly (Ind): [...] The Minister also indicated that searches and surveillance were carried out at the request of the Garda Síochána. Were searches or surveillance carried out at the request of the United States authorities? If so, will the Minister indicate what was the cost of such activities?

Deputy Alan Shatter (FG): Oh dear. Some of the Members who sit in the top rows in this Chamber can never quite get away from obsessing about countries that are supposed to be the enemy — if it is not Israel, it is the United States.

Patronising language can be deployed strategically through brief utterances, as is the case in example 11, excerpted from UI 165. Minister for Defence Alan Shatter begins his response to Daly’s questioning with “Oh dear”, a patronising aside which could serve as an implication that Daly cannot see the wider picture to the political issue under debate. He may also be undermining her by inferring that “some members” (referring to Daly indirectly by not targeting her individually) “can never quite get away from obsessing” about the issue of foreign government surveillance.

12.

UI 176. 26.10.2011/29

Deputy Kathleen Lynch (Lab): *The Deputy needs to behave himself.

Deputy Mattie McGrath (Ind): That is rich coming from the Minister of State.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: He is no longer in the position he used to hold. **He should behave himself and have some manners.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: I never pinched the patients. I might visit them but I would never do that to them.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Please, Deputy.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: ***Have some manners.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: The Minister should have some manners too, with respect.

[...]

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: We have to accept also that we can no longer dictate to people just because they have problems with their emotional well-being—

Deputy Mattie McGrath: The Minister cannot pinch them either.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch:—and we intend to deliver a better service in a different environment. That is what will happen.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: To hell or to Connacht.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: ****As for the little tour Deputy McGrath wants to go on, no problem.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: When?

- * Mattie, you need to behave yourself.
- **You should behave yourself. A little bit of manners now. A little bit of manners now.
- ***Have a little bit of manners now.
- **** And as for the little tour you want to go on, Mat, no problem.

In example 12, excerpted from UI 176, Minister of State Kathleen Lynch is constantly interrupted by Independent TD Mattie McGrath throughout her contribution. As part of her strategy to regain the debate floor without interruption, she patronisingly states “Mattie, you need to behave yourself”, which suggests that McGrath is out of order in terms of his behaviour in debate. McGrath reciprocates by suggesting that Lynch should also have manners, although he qualifies his rebuke with the qualifier “with respect”, perhaps as a mark of politeness or chivalry towards Lynch. A more direct form of Lynch patronising McGrath is in her following statement: “And as for the little tour you want to go on, Mat, no problem”. Lynch’s use of the term “little tour” is a way of patronising and disempowering him in rebuke to his heckling where she says that bringing him on a “little” tour to see a health facility is no problem for her. She is therefore indirectly suggesting that he has no need to continue heckling her during her contribution.

13.

UI 180. 24.11.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): I ask the Tánaiste again whether he will pull the plug on the nomination. Will he live up to his promise of accountability within the public service? Will he allow the public to be confident that, at last, the political system will have one rule and one standard for all the people and not cosset those at the very top?

[...]

The Tánaiste (Lab): [...] There is a rule regarding accountability, whereby people are called to account, but they are also given the opportunity to answer for themselves. I do not know if it is part of the culture of Sinn Féin—but it is something Deputy McDonald appears to find difficult to understand.

The Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore refutes McDonald’s allegations made prior to example 13, excerpted from UI 180, and also seems to be patronising her, as he states that accountability “is something Deputy McDonald appears to find difficult to understand”. In this way, he may be indicating that she has a lack of comprehension on that topic.

14.

UI 187. 01.02.2012/05

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett (Ind): [...]

It is extraordinary to hear the Minister, Deputy Varadkar, talk about how the Irish public would not understand the provisions of the treaty and get caught up in extraneous issues. It is unbelievably insulting—

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): I think he was probably talking about the Deputy rather than the people of Ireland.

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett: —and antidemocratic. What will the next move be?

In example 14, excerpted from UI 187, Boyd Barrett criticises a comment by Creighton’s government colleague, who he claims stated that the public would not understand an EU treaty. Creighton insults Boyd Barrett during his contribution by interjecting with “I think he was probably talking about the Deputy rather than the people of Ireland”. Her implication that Boyd Barrett might not understand the provisions of the treaty is a patronising comment which may belittle him by suggesting he is lacking in understanding.

15.

UI 194. 16.02.2012/03

Deputy Jerry Buttimer (FG): What about Sinn Féin’s Westminster expenses?

Deputy Michael McCarthy (Lab): What about Sinn Féin fund-raising?

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: Deputy Mac Lochlainn is quiet now.
(Interruptions).

An Ceann Comhairle: Can I have your question Deputy as you are over time?

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: You are quiet now, Pádraig.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): When will the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Deputy Hogan—

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: You are quiet now, Pádraig.

Deputy Emmet Stagg (Lab): They take the Queen’s shilling all right.

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn (SF): Calm down, Jerry.

In example 15, excerpted from UI 194, during interruptions across the floor which are preventing McDonald from making her contribution, Buttimer heckles Mac Lochlainn specifically and repeats mockingly “[y]ou are quiet now, Pádraig” three times. His strategy is to suggest that Mac Lochlainn has no response to his accusation regarding Mac Lochlainn’s party claiming Westminster political expenses despite not attending parliamentary sessions there. Mac Lochlainn finally does reply to his heckling with the patronising response “Calm down, Jerry”. This intervention may be construed as patronising because it suggests that Buttimer is acting hysterically and showing a lack of control by repeating himself in trying to get Mac Lochlainn’s attention.

16.

UI 224. 30.11.2011/05

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): [...]

Deputy Martin and others have suggested that the Government has not set out a path or communicated its views. *I know the Deputy's initial period in opposition was difficult—

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): No, it was not.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton:—because he was trying to play the statesman and work constructively with the Government.

Deputy Micheál Martin: I was not playing anything.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: It is clear that he has abandoned that approach and has resorted to opposition for opposition's sake.

Deputy Micheál Martin: This is a serious crisis.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: It is interesting that there has been more engagement from Sinn Féin—

Deputy Micheál Martin: Can the Deputy do better than that?

Deputy Lucinda Creighton:—which seems to be providing the only real opposition in this House.

[...]

Deputy Micheál Martin: We have been telling you that in here for six months.

****I welcome the Government's belated conversion to our thinking.**

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: It is not a belated conversion.

[...]

Deputy Micheál Martin: I have been saying this for the past six months in this Chamber and the Minister of State ridiculed me. Only a month ago, the Minister of State claimed we had made a great breakthrough.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: We seem to have touched a raw nerve on the other side of the House.

* I know it was a difficult period for you in opposition, trying to play the statesman and work constructively with the Government.

**It's a belated conversion which I welcome you to.

In example 16, excerpted from UI 224, Minister Lucinda Creighton uses patronising language towards Martin, the leader of the Fianna Fáil party, undermining his efforts to work with the government. There appears to be a pretence of understanding in Creighton's contribution as she states that she understands his difficulty: "I know it was a difficult period for you in opposition, trying to play the statesman and work constructively with the Government". Martin interjects at one point in Creighton's contribution with patronising language, by sarcastically welcoming the government to what his party has been suggesting: "It's a belated conversion which I welcome you to". It can be argued that Martin's comment undermines Creighton by suggesting that she is belatedly adopting his party's proposal.

Creighton adds a further jibe towards the end of the excerpt to imply that she and her fellow government colleagues have provoked an emotional reaction from Martin: “We seem to have touched a raw nerve, Deputy”. This is another example of a patronising linguistic strategy which may indirectly suggest that Martin is overreacting or is upset by what she has said.

17.

UI 240. 07.02.2012/31

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn (SF): [...]Some of the participants then talked about what community employment meant to them.

*I would like to get the Minister’s attention when her colleague is finished speaking to her.

Deputy Colm Keaveney (Lab): I am listening to the Deputy.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Deputy, please.

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn: **I would like to get the Minister’s attention because I want to hear her clearly what I am about to say.

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): I can hear him clearly. He should not get too excited.

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn: I thank the Minister for giving me her attention. A couple of years ago, about 8,000 people were on the live register in Donegal. Today there are almost 23,000 people on the register. Again, Leas-Cheann Comhairle, can I ask for the Minister’s attention?

* Minister, when I can get your attention when your colleague...

** Okay, Leas-Cheann Comhairle. Can I just get the Minister’s attention because I want you to hear without interruption what I’m about to tell you.

*** Don’t get excited. I can hear you.

The use of a patronising linguistic strategy is evident in example 17, excerpted from UI 240, where Pádraig Mac Lochlainn is addressing Joan Burton. Mac Lochlainn feels that the minister’s attention is diverted from his contribution and repeats several times throughout his contribution that he would like to get her attention. She retorts that she has been listening and says, “Don’t get excited”, which is a patronising putdown and can be seen as inferring that he has been overreacting in an emotional manner.

18.

UI 274. 12.10.2011/06

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett (Ind): *Is it not time to admit that the routine of being the best boy in the European class is not working? The mounting evidence, whether in Greece, the latest figures on Irish bond yields, the downgrading of Irish growth forecasts or the growing awareness that the European economy will contract, means that this is not working. **No matter

how much the Taoiseach submits, promises to be the best boy and imposes austerity, it is not working.

Is the postponement of the European Council meeting not symbolic of what is going on in the EU? Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy postponed the meeting so they can hatch a plan that suits their interests. President Barroso, who is an unelected Commissioner, orders the Taoiseach to Brussels to tell him what they have decided.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): The meeting was scheduled before they met. That is the Deputy's conspiracy theory out the window.

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett: [...]

We should do what the people in Greece and in Wall Street are doing, which is to protest and resist and demand a strategy that puts jobs and economic growth first.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: So protest. There is nothing stopping the Deputy from protesting.

The Taoiseach (FG): The Deputy is worried about his re-election.

* Taoiseach, isn't it time to admit that being the best boy in the class, in the European class routine, just isn't working?

**No matter how much you submit, no matter how much you promise to be the best boy and impose the austerity, it's just not working.

There are several examples of patronising linguistic strategies from both government and opposition sides of the chamber in example 18, excerpted from UI 274. It can be suggested that Independent TD Boyd Barrett is undermining and disempowering the Taoiseach by patronisingly portraying him as “the best boy in the European class”, with the term “best boy” implying that the Taoiseach is powerless or subservient. Creighton's interjections involve a number of patronising remarks, with the phrase “[t]hat is the Deputy's conspiracy theory out the window” implying paranoia, and the trivialising comment “[s]o protest. There is nothing stopping the Deputy from protesting”. This use of patronising linguistic strategy may be an attempt to undermine Boyd Barrett. The Taoiseach also interjects at the end of Boyd Barrett's turn to patronise him, by framing Boyd Barrett's suggestion that the public should protest as an ulterior motive for re-election: “The Deputy is worried about his re-election”.

Summary of analysis in this category

The analysis shows instances of patronising language being used strategically to depict an opponent as lacking in understanding or capability (No 2, UI 18; No 4, UI 142; No 5, UI 171; No 9, UI 126; No 10, UI 142; No 13, UI 180; No 14, UI 187). There are instances in the analysis where patronising language is used in pretence, possibly to

feign a sense of sincerity and understanding of another TD's situation in order to mock and undermine them (No 3, UI 126; No 8, UI 116; No 16, UI 224). Also, several instances of patronising as a strategy show how patronising language may be used to delegitimise another speaker's position by suggesting that they have lost emotional control or are overreacting (No 1, UI 5; No 15, UI 194; No 16, UI 224; No 17, UI 240). Finally, three examples from the corpus show patronising language being used strategically to disempower an opponent (No 6, UI 178; No 12, UI 176; No 18, UI 274). There were 12 instances of this strategy used by female TDs toward male speakers and five instances used by male speakers towards female speakers. Table 1 in Appendix F shows the gender of both the TD performing this type of linguistic strategy and the gender of the TD(s) on the receiving end of the linguistic strategy in each UI.

5.4.2 Invoking gender as a strategy

This section of analysis focuses on instances in the corpus of UIs where it is suggested that gender is invoked in language use to undermine another member of the Dáil or delegitimise their contribution to debate by calling the expectations of their gender into question.

Use of reference corpus

Chapter 3 referred to the use of a reference corpus as a complementary aspect to analysis for validating claims made about whether individual words and phrases used in the UIs are gendered. In this section, a reference corpus search is undertaken for two terms, “shrinking violet” (No. 2, UI 60) and “shrill” (No. 7, UI 250). The collocates (words that co-occur with the search term) of the terms to be investigated are checked in enTenTen, a large web-based corpus of English.⁹ First a rule of frequency is established to determine whether a term is gendered. If a term occurs more than twice as frequently with female collocates as with male collocates in the reference corpus, or vice versa, it will be defined as gendered. A reference corpus search was also conducted for the phrase “make an honest man of” (No. 7, UI 180) to check its relative frequency compared to the phrase ‘make an honest woman of’. The reference corpus searches are

⁹ The enTenTen corpus was chosen as the reference corpus in this study due to its large size (4.65 billion tokens) and its relatively recent compilation (June 2012). Available from: <http://www.sketchengine.co.uk> (Compilers: Kilgariff et al.)

discussed in this section in the analysis of each UI where the potentially gendered term appears.

1.

UI 53. 04.05.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): [...] I must say it is getting a little tedious in this House that when a straight question is put to the Taoiseach, he runs for cover behind the record of his predecessors. That is not acceptable. [...]

Can the Taoiseach give an assurance on behalf of the Government that he will give more than lip-service, rhetoric or abuse towards these boys here on these benches —

(Interruptions).

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy McDonald, please.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): —I think many on the Government benches are boys — [...] I would like answers to those questions —

An Ceann Comhairle: I thank the Deputy. We will get an answer now for her.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: —rather than a ruaille buaille¹⁰ with Deputy Martin and the Taoiseach.

In example 1, excerpted from UI 53, further to her description of the government leader's running "for cover" behind the record of his "predecessors" in government (opposition party Fianna Fáil (FF)), McDonald refers to the members of FF as "boys", which can be seen as an act of emasculating them through her contribution. She repeats the emasculating comment of calling male TDs "boys", this time towards the male members of the government benches: "I think many on the Government benches are boys". It is suggested that McDonald invokes gender in a way that may undermine political opponents by commenting on the cross-chamber adversarial interaction between the male TDs of both parties and implying that their disruptive behaviour is diverting attention from the issues under debate. McDonald's comment could also be construed as a challenge to her male counterparts by portraying them as a boys' club.

2.

UI 60. 08.06.2011/05

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): I do not have any sense of urgency from the Taoiseach in regard to this matter. *I never had him chalked down as the shy, retiring, shrinking violet type, so I do not think it was this that led to his failure to raise this matter directly with the British Prime Minister. [...]

**He was not shy about setting out that message — a bad message, as far as I am concerned.[...]

¹⁰ 'Commotion' in the Irish language.

An Ceann Comhairle: This is Question Time. Will you pose a supplementary question?

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: ***It is not a time to be shy. When will the Taoiseach raise this with the British Prime Minister? Will he put the issues of burden sharing and debt on the agenda?

* I certainly never had you chalked down as the sort of shy, retiring, shrinking violet type

** You weren't shy about setting out that very clear message: a bad message, by the way, so far as I am concerned.

*** So it's not a time to be shy.

In example 2, excerpted from UI 60, while putting a question to the Taoiseach, McDonald again invokes gender in a strategic manner, possibly to delegitimise his position, where she says “I never had him chalked down as the shy, retiring, shrinking violet type” (see results of the corpus search in Table 5.1). Here, although she states that he is *not* a “shrinking violet”, it may be the case that she has used the terminology in the first place to undermine him. Her gendered use of language could be said to emasculate the Taoiseach for his failure to raise the issue of debt restructuring with the British Prime Minister. It can be suggested that by repeatedly calling him shy – “He was not shy about setting out that message”, “It is not a time to be shy” – her implication of his shyness undermines his authority.

Table 5.1 Results of corpus search for *shrinking violet*

enTenTen corpus search for <i>shrinking violet</i>	
Non-gendered collocates (i.e. without explicit reference to gender)	24
Collocates referring to male gender	5
Collocates referring to female gender	11

A corpus check for the phrase “shrinking violet” showed that most collocates were non-gendered (inanimate objects, large groups of people). However, there were 11 collocations for the use of the phrase to describe women, and just five to describe men. According to the definition of frequency as outlined at the beginning of this section, “shrinking violet” stands as a gendered term and its use could be considered as an emasculation of the Taoiseach, who is being addressed.

3.

UI 105. 21.04.2011/04

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Kathleen Lynch) (Lab): I should start by noting my appreciation of the work that has been done by various Members of the Opposition in respect of this Bill, in which there is great interest. [...]

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin (SF): [...] It would be remiss of me not to again reflect on the absence of the Minister. Perhaps the Minister is a little confused. I have absolutely no objection to the Minister of State, Deputy Kathleen Lynch, taking this Bill today as both she and her colleague, the Minister of State, Deputy Shortall, are highly skilled elected representatives who are very informed on all that is taking place. However, it strikes me — and I do not mean to be humorous — that the Minister, Deputy Reilly, may simply have misunderstood what the Nurses and Midwives Bill was all about. Did he really feel that women in Labour had to take this legislation in its passage through this House? While I am sure he will answer this some day, I have no doubt this is somewhat appropriate.

Example 3, excerpted from UI 105, shows Ó'Caoláin making a gendered comment during a debate on a bill on nursing and midwifery as a way of criticising the Minister for Health James Reilly, who is absent from the chamber. He states that it has been left to Reilly's junior ministers Lynch and Shortall, who are both female, to take the bill through parliament. While stating that he does "not mean to be humorous", by making the gendered joke "Did he really feel that women in Labour had to take this legislation in its passage through this House?", it is apparent that Ó'Caoláin is criticising Reilly for his absence from the debate. His gender-based remarks that Reilly's female colleagues are better informed on an issue on midwifery than Reilly may be a way of undermining Reilly for being uninformed and for not understanding "what the Nurses and Midwives Bill was all about".

4.

UI 180. 24.11.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): Yesterday the Taoiseach promised he would make an honest man of the Tánaiste. Some would say he will have his work cut out for him given the number—

A Deputy:¹¹ What about Gerry?

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: —of promises the Labour Party has broken since entering office.

¹¹ "A Deputy" appears in transcripts when it is unclear which TD made the comment.

In example 4, excerpted from UI 180, McDonald uses emasculation as a form of gendered attack on the Tánaiste, the deputy government leader: “Yesterday the Taoiseach promised he would make an honest man of the Tánaiste”. Her term “make an honest man of” stems from the traditional expression of a man marrying a woman ‘to make an honest woman of her’ (see results of the corpus search in Table 5.2 below). In the previous day’s debate the Taoiseach had defended the honesty of the Tánaiste’s party, the Labour party. It can be argued that McDonald emasculates and undermines the Tánaiste by using the gendered analogy of marriage between him and the Taoiseach to imply that the Tánaiste is the partner whom the Taoiseach will make “honest”. McDonald’s strategy may also delegitimise the Tánaiste’s position by stating that the Taoiseach will “have his work cut out for him” in trying to make the Tánaiste honest, due to “the number of promises the Labour Party has broken since entering office”.

Table 5.2 Frequency in enTenTen corpus of *make an honest woman/man of*

make an honest woman of	61
make an honest man of	21

The reference corpus was checked for the number of occurrences of the phrase to show that it potentially is a subverted version of the phrase ‘make an honest woman of’. For the query ‘make an honest woman of’, enTenTen gave 61 examples of the phrase. For the query ‘make an honest man of’, enTenTen gave only 21 examples. This shows that ‘make an honest woman of’ is the more commonly used phrase. Therefore, a gendered claim can be made about McDonald’s subversion of it.

5.

UI 184. 08.12.2011/17

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): The Deputy should withdraw that. It does not become him to tell lies in this House and attribute them to—

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh (SF): I do not believe —

Deputy Joan Burton: The Deputy should withdraw that.

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: If the Minister shut up for a second, I might do that.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Charlie McConalogue): Order, please. The speaker has the floor.

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: If the Minister was not so ignorant, so impolite —

Acting Chairman (Deputy Charlie McConalogue): Order, please.

Deputy Joan Burton: *Is the Deputy man enough to withdraw it?

Acting Chairman (Deputy Charlie McConalogue): The speaker has the floor.
Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: —and insulting, she might give me an opportunity to let her know that I do not believe anybody on social welfare is wayward or a scrounger.

Deputy Joan Burton: *Is the Deputy man enough to withdraw that?

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: The Minister is the one who is declaring that.

Deputy Joan Burton: The Deputy should be man enough to withdraw that now.
**Is he a man or a mouse?

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: Minister —

Deputy Joan Burton: Is he man enough to withdraw a false accusation?

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: I withdraw nothing because I did not make that charge. The Minister made that charge.

*Are you man enough to withdraw it?

** Are you a man or a mouse?

In example 5, excerpted from UI 184, Joan Burton interrupts Aengus O'Snodaigh's contribution to call for a withdrawal of an accusation he has made and disrupts the flow of his contribution. Their interaction turns to insults, with Burton breaking parliamentary rules to imply he is telling lies. While it is still his turn to speak, Burton uses gendered language as she repeatedly asks him whether he is "man enough" to withdraw the statement, asking him: "Are you a man or a mouse?". This use of language by Burton is highly gendered, as it attacks O'Snodaigh's masculinity in an attempt to weaken his position. Her repetition of the above phrase disrupts O'Snodaigh's turn in debate.

6.

UI 206. 02.06.2011/04

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): Watching the antics of this Government in recent times reminds me of "Fawlty Towers". The latest water charges episode has the Tánaiste and the Taoiseach cast as Manolos, claiming they know nothing.

Deputies: Manuel.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: Or even Manuels.

Deputy Arthur Spring (Lab): Manolos are shoes.

An Ceann Comhairle: Can we proceed, please?

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn (SF): They still know nothing.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: Whatever about the Tánaiste's preference for footwear, when can we expect to see legislation on water charges, which the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government has stated will be imposed on households from 1 January?

Example 6, excerpted from UI 206, shows Mary Lou McDonald making a mistake in her use of language. While wanting to portray the Taoiseach and Tánaiste as comic characters from a TV show, she calls him “Manolos” instead of “Manuels” (from the classic British comedy *Fawlty Towers*). Her comment backfires as other TDs point out her mistake and it leads to laughter in the chamber about her mistakenly referring to Manolo Blahniks, a high-end women’s footwear brand. McDonald recovers with the aside “whatever about the Tánaiste’s preference for footwear” which, although a light-hearted comment in the spirit of banter, is a gendered comment directed towards the Tánaiste because it suggests that the deputy leader’s correction of her original mistake shows familiarity with and a “preference” for women’s footwear.

7.

UI 250. 21.03.2012/16

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): [...] It is fair to state that the Government’s handling of this issue has been shambolic. It is also fair to state that its desperation is evident, particularly when one considers the increasingly shrill tones used by Ministers in trying to frighten citizens into paying the charge. I put it to the Government that it should stop trying to bully the electorate[...]

In example 7, excerpted from UI 250, McDonald portrays male government ministers as being in desperation over a certain issue, by describing “the increasingly shrill tones used by Ministers in trying to frighten citizens into paying the charge”. The use of the adjective “shrill” (see corpus search below) has associations of being a “feminine voice quality associated with being overly emotional” (Fairclough 1989, p. 183). It can be suggested that by using this gendered term, McDonald is questioning the legitimacy of the government’s actions and calling their credibility into account.

Table 5.3 Results of corpus search for *shrill*

enTenTen	
Non-gendered collocates (i.e. without explicit reference to gender)	29
Collocates referring to male gender	1
Collocates referring to female gender	10

A corpus search for the adjective “shrill” (see Table 5.3) showed that the majority of collocates were non-gendered, with 29 non-gendered collocates being identified. Only

one instance of a male collocate was given. There was a much greater frequency for female collocates, with 10 instances of the use of shrill to describe women speakers. As a result, it can be claimed to be a gendered term.

8.

UI 273. 12.10.2011/04

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): Will we have the review in advance of the budget?

The Taoiseach (FG): Yes.

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): What about the presidential election?

Deputy Pat Rabbitte (Lab): That will be before the budget.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer (FG): The election that Deputy Martin's party does not care about.

Deputy Robert Troy (FF): Neither does Fine Gael judging by its choice of candidate.

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): The presidential election will be before the budget.

Deputy Micheál Martin: I meant how the publication of the review will fit in with the presidential election.

(Interruptions).

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: Thank you, gentlemen.

I understand we will have sight of the Keane report some time around now.

In example 8, excerpted from UI 273, a strategy to regain control of the floor during her turn, where heckling across the floor is wasting time and preventing her from continuing her contribution, McDonald uses the phrase "Thank you, gentlemen" to encourage male TDs to stop cross-floor interruptions. Invoking the gender of the male TDs disrupting the debate may be a strategic way of bringing order to a noisy and prolonged period of heckling between members of the other political parties.

Summary of analysis in this category

The analysis of the UIs in this section has shown the ways in which gender may be invoked in the strategic use of language to undermine another speaker. For example, the data exhibits instances of gendered language being used by female TDs towards male speakers to potentially emasculate them and call the expectations of their gender into question (No 1, UI 53; No 2, UI 60; No 4, UI 180; No 5, UI 184; No 7, UI 250). There was also one instance where gender appeared to be invoked as a strategic means of reclaiming the floor of debate (No 8, UI 273). There were eight instances of this

analysis category in the corpus of UIs. Within these eight instances, there were seven instances used by female speakers towards male speakers, and one used by a male speaker towards another male speaker. No instances were found of male TDs using strategic language to invoke gender towards female TDs. Table 2 in Appendix F shows the gender of both the TD performing this type of linguistic strategy and the gender of the TD(s) on the receiving end of the linguistic strategy in each UI.

5.4.3 Insulting/Accusing/Criticising as a strategy

As explained in Section 5.2, this section analyses patterns of strategic language use or FTAs that are achieved through instances of insults, accusation and criticism directed towards an individual speaker who is present in the chamber when the FTA is made.

1.

UI 8. 08.06.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): I am beginning to suspect that the ten years of the bailout agreement will have run out and the Taoiseach will still be coming in here telling us that he will do the business on the interest rate.

[...]

When will the penny drop with the Taoiseach and his colleagues that the issue of the private debt with which the State has been burdened must be dealt with? He correctly said that other member states act in their national interest.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy is over time.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: Well done to the Taoiseach for figuring that out; the challenge for him is to act in the interest of this State and its citizens and so far, he and the Minister for Finance, Deputy Noonan, have abjectly failed in that task.

((Opposition TDs: Hear, hear))

In example 1, excerpted from UI 8, McDonald criticises the Taoiseach on what she perceives as his refusal to deal with an important issue, saying that in 10 years he “will still be coming in here” talking about the issue without acting on it. She further criticises the Taoiseach, implying that he is failing to realise that he must act on the issue of private debt, by using the idiom “when will the penny drop [...]?” to state that the issue must be dealt with. She finishes her contribution with a strong criticism directed towards the Taoiseach and the Minister of Finance, accusing them of having “abjectly failed” to act in the interest of the State and its citizens. This FTA can be seen as a strategy used by McDonald to delegitimise her opponents’ position.

2.

UI 12. 05.07.2011/19

Deputy Niall Collins (FF): I did not interrupt the Minister. Am I in possession, *Sir?

Deputy Paudie Coffey (Chair): Deputy Collins is in possession.

Deputy Niall Collins: **I thank the Acting Chairman. The Minister voted down our Bill on personal and corporate donations, but will he bring in his own Bill in advance of the presidential election?

Deputy Phil Hogan (FG): The Deputy has a brass neck talking about corporate donations ***after 14 years.

Deputy Niall Collins: ****The Minister is fund-raising to beat the band. I read somewhere that the Minister's party leader was over in Cricklewood in London hosting a fund-raiser there recently.

Deputy Phil Hogan: Yes. Is that illegal?

Deputy Niall Collins: He is fund-raising to beat the band. I am curious because he has produced legislation to limit fund-raising, yet at the same time he is merrily fund-raising on his way in advance of the presidential election.

Deputy Phil Hogan: We operate legally.

Deputy Olivia Mitchell (FG): The Deputy could teach us how.

* Chair

** Thank you, Chair. Are you going to bring in the Bill? You voted down our Bill on personal and corporate donations—are you going to bring in your own Bill because of the presidential election?

*** after 14 years. 14 years!

****You're fundraising away to beat the band.

In example 2, excerpted from UI 12, both Collins and his opponents (Minister Hogan, and Mitchell who engages with Collins to a lesser extent) are engaged in light-hearted interaction, which takes place while the adversaries are smiling at each other.¹² However, they deploy criticism and insults towards each other with phrases like “you’re fundraising away to beat the band” and “You have a brass neck talking about corporate donations after 14 years. 14 years!”. Hogan and Mitchell both interject with FTAs directed towards Collins on the topic of political donations. Mitchell sarcastically asks for Collins’ advice on fundraising: “The Deputy could teach us how”. Here, it can be suggested that Hogan and Mitchell are strategically undermining Collins with their use of FTAs in an attempt to show hypocrisy on his part.

3.

UI 15. 14.07.2011/18

¹² Video recording checked.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): We are pleased the Minister is in the Chamber to take our questions. *The broad smile on his face suggests he is equally pleased to be here. [...]

Why can we not have sight of it in its entirety? It could be published on the Department's website, an innovation of which the Minister is rightly proud.

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): I thank the Deputy for her ****positive** comments.

*I know from the broad beam on your face that you're equally pleased to be here.

****[emphasis: change in tone]**

In example 3, excerpted from UI 15, McDonald's sarcastic FTA, "I know from the broad beam on your face that you're equally pleased to be here", when Howlin is not actually smiling,¹³ accuses him of being reluctant to take part in the debate. McDonald's contribution ends on a positive note by lauding a recent document from Howlin's department. Howlin thanks her for her positive comments, stressing the word "positive" to indicate that he does not thank her for her other sarcastic comment regarding his pleasure in being present to answer questions. In so doing, he makes the criticism that McDonald's comments are usually negative.

4.

UI 17. 21.07.2011/22

Deputy Phil Hogan (FG): [...]

Deputy Catherine Murphy spoke about waste to recovery. *If she is against waste to recovery she is against EU law. [...]

She wants the taxpayer to pick up the tab if we are in breach of the EU landfill directive in 2013. **If that is what she wants at least she is honest about it, but I am trying to ensure that the taxpayers and her constituents in Kildare North by this process will engage more in waste to recovery rather than in landfill.

Deputy Catherine Murphy (Ind): What are we recovering?

* If you're against waste to recovery you're against EU law

****If that's what you want at least you're honest about it.**

In example 4, excerpted from UI 17, Hogan criticises Murphy, who has just voiced disapproval of a proposal of his prior to this UI. Hogan's strategy appears to delegitimise his opponent's position by accusing her of wanting "the taxpayer to pick up the tab" if she is against his proposal. He further responds to her criticisms in a way that appears to undermine her by suggesting that her proposals would have a negative

¹³ Video recording checked.

effect on her constituents, stating: “If that’s what you want at least you’re honest about it...”

5.

UI 18. 20.09.2011/14

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): There the Taoiseach goes again. It happens on his watch but he is not accountable for it. He knows as well as I that under the pensions legislation it is at the discretion of Government to sign off on added years of service. He knows full well that had he wished to stop that payment to the outgoing Secretary General, he could have done so. [...]

Shame on the Taoiseach and the Government — particularly as they are cooking up massive cutbacks that will hurt ordinary people — for being so coy and duplicitous in respect of the those in the upper echelons of the public and civil service. The Taoiseach should make a commitment to the House that no county or city manager will walk away with a payment of €74,000. He should not sell us that it is Fianna Fáil’s fault. The Taoiseach is in charge now.

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn (SF): Hear, hear.

Deputy Michael Noonan (FG): The Deputy still does not recognise the court.

The Taoiseach (FG): It appears the Deputy is still being affected by the comfort she enjoyed during her party’s recent meetings in the Shelbourne Hotel. She conveniently forgot to state that the Government changed the terms of reference [...]

In example 5, excerpted from UI 18, McDonald uses a very direct, adversarial style of FTA to criticise the Taoiseach and his government. Her repetition of “He knows” at the beginning of sentences during her contribution appear to be a way of putting pressure on the Taoiseach and accusing him of being disingenuous. She then turns to very strong accusation to hold her opponents to account: “Shame on the Taoiseach and the Government”. She accuses the Taoiseach of blaming the last government and evading responsibility, reminding him that he is now in charge. Further to this, a pejorative metaphor is used, where those on opposing benches are accused of “cooking up massive cutbacks”. She also accuses the Taoiseach and the government of being “coy and duplicitous”. In response the Taoiseach begins his reply with the FTA that McDonald is “affected” by the luxurious surroundings of a hotel where her party has recently held meetings. It can be said that he is delegitimising McDonald’s party’s position by painting their actions as contradictory and out of touch with the public. He also criticises McDonald in a sarcastic manner for “conveniently” forgetting to mention position measures the government has taken, implying that she is purposefully omitting these details in order to criticise the government.

6.

UI 25. 19.10.2011/28

Deputy Willie O’Dea (FF): [...]

There is not one suggestion in the Keane report that I have not read in the various commentaries on mortgage arrears written by academics journalists and so on. Some of the solutions were suggested to me in pubs in Limerick.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch (Lab): In between rounds no doubt.

Deputy Willie O’Dea: [...] When this process has been concluded, the Central Bank must go through it. No doubt it will have more recommendations to put on top of the existing recommendations. Then, Laurel and Hardy — I apologise, the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Justice and Equality — will examine it with their civil servants, amounting to a committee by another name. I presume they will have suggestions to add to the existing suggestions.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: Deputy O’Dea can make a decision at 3 a.m. just like that*

Deputy Willie O’Dea: There have been three reports after eight months. **Deputy Lynch was a good person to stand up for the working class people who were struggling to pay their mortgages and to get by from week to week. She has forgotten her base. She went into Government like the rest of the Labour Party [...]

* [Snaps fingers]

**“Deputy Lynch, you were a good person to stand up for the working class people who were struggling to pay their mortgages and to get by from week to week. You’ve forgotten your base since you went into Government, like the rest of the Labour Party.”

In example 6, excerpted from UI 25, O’Dea is criticising a government report for unoriginal suggestions, maintaining that similar suggestions were made to him in other contexts, including pubs. Minister Kathleen Lynch humorously interjects with “In between rounds no doubt” and later with “Deputy O’Dea can make a decision at 3 a.m. just like that”, an insult which appears to undermine O’Dea for discussing politics in a pub environment. After Lynch interjects, O’Dea contrasts her position in government with her position beforehand to criticise her and her party: “Deputy Lynch, you were a good person to stand up for the working class people”. O’Dea’s accusation that she has forgotten her constituents appears to be a strategy to delegitimise Lynch by suggesting that she has neglected her voters: “You’ve forgotten your base since you went into Government, like the rest of the Labour Party”.

7.

UI 37. 14.12.2011/32

Deputy James Bannon (FG): I want to put the record straight on the bin charges. They were introduced by those on the other side of the House when in government.

Deputy Catherine Murphy (Ind): They were introduced in 1983 by Fine Gael and Labour.

Deputy James Bannon: The Deputy will have her opportunity to speak. She left the meeting earlier today when we were discussing the septic tank charge.

Deputy Catherine Murphy: I left it in good hands.

Deputy James Bannon: It is a bit rich of her to come in here and contradict me today. I note there is a split in the Technical Group but that is its own business.

In example 7, excerpted from UI 37, Bannon uses an FTA to mention Murphy's leaving a parliamentary meeting earlier that day, implying a lack of commitment to the issue. He criticises her for interjecting, stating that she left a meeting on the same issue early: "It is a bit rich of her to come in here and contradict me today". An additional FTA towards Murphy and her allies among the Independent TDs, suggesting that they are split on an issue, is also performed, perhaps to undermine Murphy by suggesting that her political position is weak.

8.

UI 43. 14.02.2012/03

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett (Ind): [...]

How on earth can the Minister claim this is meeting the recommendations of the Ryan report? [...]

Is there some massaging of the figures going on in terms of moving social workers from primary care teams and community preventative programmes into child protection? [...]

Deputy Frances Fitzgerald (FG): I reject Deputy Boyd Barrett's interpretation and I will give my reasons.

In example 8, excerpted from UI 43, FTAs are performed through the use of questioning by Boyd Barrett. He strongly criticises Minister Fitzgerald to hold her to account by asking "How on earth can the Minister claim this is meeting the recommendations of the Ryan report?". His question on whether there is "some massaging of the figures" in the minister's department contains the implication that figures are being manipulated in the government department for which she is responsible.

9.

UI 46. 28.02.2012/03

Deputy Brendan Howlin(Lab): [...]

The Deputy is wrong, as she knows, in regard to incentivised schemes. [...]

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): [...] Nothing in the master plan or the planning, scant as it is, addresses the question of improving excellence in service provision or efficiency. The Minister is engaged in a crude cull.

Deputy Brendan Howlin: [...]

Deputy McDonald accused me of being fixated with numbers. I am fixated with two things, namely, restoring the economic sovereignty of our State, which is a job I have been given, and reforming the public service.

In example 9, excerpted from UI 46, after McDonald is critical of a report from Minister's Howlin department, he responds with an FTA by stating, "The Deputy is wrong, as she knows, in regard to incentivised schemes". As well as asserting that she is incorrect, the claim "as she knows" appears to be an attempt to delegitimise McDonald's contribution, in that it implies that she is manipulating the truth in order to criticise him. In a follow-up question McDonald accuses the minister of being "engaged in a crude cull". Howlin appropriates McDonald's use of the face-threatening term "fixated" to enhance his own positive face and refute her accusations: "Deputy McDonald accused me of being fixated with numbers. I am fixated with two things [...]" This strategy is used to refute McDonald's criticisms.

10.

UI 48. 01.03.2012/21

Deputy Barry Cowen (FF): [...] Does the Minister accept, therefore, that the fraud statistics published by her Department are misleading in that they clearly imply an exorbitant level of fraud that is not statistically verifiable?

[...]

Deputy Clare Daly (Ind): The Minister would make Margaret Thatcher proud. Nobody is arguing that fraud should be tolerated but the Minister has elevated this issue to the extent that people who, through no fault of their own, may be in receipt of an inaccurate payment, are being demonised as people who are robbing the State, more or less.

Example 10, excerpted from UI 48, displays an example of a presupposition in an FTA, where Minister Joan Burton is asked by Cowen whether she accepts "that the fraud statistics published by her Department are misleading". With this presupposition Cowen makes a strong but indirect accusation, by claiming that Burton's department is publishing misleading information. In questioning the minister, Daly takes a more hard-line, direct approach by stating that the Minister "would make Margaret Thatcher proud". The reference to Margaret Thatcher implies that Daly feels that the measures

taken are harsh on people who “are being demonised” by the State as a result of Burton’s measures. It is suggested that Daly’s criticism presents Burton as lacking in empathy for the public and holds her to account for her measures.

11.

UI 52. 21.04.2011/04

Deputy Clare Daly (Ind): It is not good enough for the Tánaiste to leave open the question of when the McCarthy report may be discussed in the Chamber. I wish to take up his suggestion that we would discuss it, not at some eventual day when the Cabinet has discussed it, but immediately upon our return. Some 40,000 semi-State workers, of whom I am one—

Deputy Paul Kehoe (FG): Is the Deputy double-jobbing?

Deputy Clare Daly: —are trembling, having listened to the Minister with responsibility for public expenditure and reform, Deputy Brendan Howlin, on the radio this morning talking about his imminent decision to proceed with the sale of State assets, which is a threat to those workers.

(Interruptions).

Deputy Clare Daly: What security will the Tánaiste give to those workers and their families and to the taxpayers that he will not stand over the butchery of our assets?

In example 11, excerpted from UI 52, Daly is critical of the Tánaiste for not implementing a date for discussion of a report, stating that this inaction is “not good enough”. Daly also describes a decision made by the Tánaiste’s colleague as “a threat” to semi-State workers. A further FTA from Daly criticises the decision by the government by describing it as “butchery”: “What security will the Tánaiste give [...] that he will not stand over the butchery of our assets?”. It can be suggested that Daly uses the critical term “butchery” to hold the Tánaiste to account for measures planned by the government. Daly also holds him to account by presupposing in her question that he should give assurance to workers who will be affected by his measures.

12.

UI 53. 04.05.2011/03

The Taoiseach (FG): Let me tell *Deputy McDonald something. I have been a public representative for many years. I know exactly the kind of conditions of which she speaks. On each occasion I must visit any constituency in an official capacity or, indeed, when I go to Britain or the United States, I make a point of dealing with those who look after the vulnerable in society, in the case of those who are abroad who are of an Irish Diaspora. **Deputy McDonald should not come into this House and assume that the Sinn Féin Party is the only one which has an interest in those who are underprivileged, deprived or disadvantaged.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin (SF): Would the Taoiseach answer the question?

(Interruptions).

The Taoiseach: ***It is beneath Deputy McDonald, coming in here from Cabra—

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: Dear God.

The Taoiseach: —to lecture us as if she is the only one who understands these difficulties. Every Deputy in this House of all parties and none deals with this on a regular basis.

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn (SF): Fine Gael is running the country.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: They are in power.

(Interruptions).

*you

**Don't you come into this House and assume that

***It is actually beneath you coming in here

Example 12, excerpted from UI 53, shows the Taoiseach criticising McDonald, who has been critical of him prior to his contribution (see example 1, excerpted from UI 53, Section 5.4.2). His comments criticise her in moralistic terms for assuming that the government does not have an interest in the disadvantaged in society. He tells McDonald not to assume that she is the only one who understands difficulties faced by deprived communities: “[d]on’t you come into this House and assume that [...]”. He also states moralistically that it is “beneath” McDonald to come into the chamber to “lecture” other TDs on their actions. The Taoiseach’s FTA towards McDonald can be seen as a way of delegitimising her position, and also could be seen as a way of diverting attention from his answering McDonald’s question.

13.

UI 55. 11.05.2011/24

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): [...] Yesterday the Minister for Finance painted a picture of export-led recovery. He informed us this was in line with expectations. He knows full well that growth in the export sector has proved to be largely jobless. The truth is there will be no recovery, whatever about growth, without job creation. [...]

Example 13, excerpted from UI 55, contains an accusation where McDonald states that the Michael Noonan, the Minister for Finance, “knows full well” that export-led economic recovery does not create jobs. With this FTA, she appears to be implying dishonesty and a failure to act responsibly on Noonan’s part.

14.

UI 60. 08.06.2011/05

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): *I do not have any sense of urgency from the Taoiseach in regard to this matter. [...]

The Taoiseach is reluctant, hesitant and slow to make any sort of measurable progress on the interest rate and he refuses, as I see it, to deal with the issue of burden sharing and the core issue of the unsustainability of the debt. All the while, cutbacks bite and people suffer. *The Taoiseach knows this as well as I do.

An Ceann Comhairle: Sorry, Deputy. This is Question Time.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): The Taoiseach last week told Irish diplomatic staff to go back to their posts internationally and tell everybody the happy news — not — that the Irish people will continue to bail out bankers, speculators and people who gambled and lost. ****He was not shy about setting out that message — a bad message, as far as I am concerned.

The Taoiseach (FG): [...]

*****That clear and positive message has gone out around the world. [...] We have been through adversity before and this is an economic challenge that we will get through. From that point of view, I differ entirely from *****the Deputy's interpretation of the outcome of the meeting at which she was not present.

*Taoiseach, I don't have any sense of urgency from you...

** You're reluctant, hesitant, slow to make any sort of measurable progress on the interest rate and you point blank refuse...

*** You know that as well as I do.

**** You weren't shy about setting out that very clear message: a bad message, by the way, so far as I am concerned.

***** And that message has gone out around the world, and far from your interpretation of it, the message was very clear and very positive.

***** your [emphasis: change in tone]

In example 14, excerpted from UI 60, McDonald is critical of what she perceives as the Taoiseach's lack of action on an issue and threatens his face in several direct ways. She criticises the Taoiseach by describing him as “reluctant, hesitant, slow” in terms of making progress. Also, she accuses him directly of refusing to deal with a certain issue: “you point blank refuse, as I see it”. McDonald criticises a message sent out by the Taoiseach which she sees as “a bad message, by the way, so far as I am concerned”. It can be argued that these instances of accusation and criticism are used by McDonald in order to undermine the Taoiseach's actions and delegitimise his position. The Taoiseach responds to McDonald with criticism of her comment that he sent out a “bad message”, by stating “far from your interpretation of it, the message was very clear and very positive”. This appears to be a strategic move to portray McDonald as negative and uncooperative with the government in their effort to project a positive image of the

country, and also as fanciful in terms of making up her own “interpretation” of events. He may also be seeking to delegitimise McDonald’s position in this UI by saying that she was not present at the meeting she is referring to. This FTA thus excludes her from the decision-making process and could be an attempt to portray her as having a lack of knowledge on the issues discussed in that meeting.

15.

UI 78. 13.10.2011/05

Deputy Clare Daly (Ind): [...] The idea of selling a portion of these companies to raise funds to perhaps create jobs as the Minister stated is absolute nonsense. [...] We very much reject the *à la carte* menu offered to us by the Minister of what type of privatisation we would like to see in the ESB, whether to sell off parts of it or a percentage of the whole. We reject any of these options. What the Minister is peddling is upside down economics. He should be investing in these companies as a key driver of economic growth and recovery.

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): Any idea where I would get the money?

[...]

Deputy Clare Daly: Rather than selling off sections of these companies—

Deputy Brendan Howlin: Where would we get the money?

Deputy Clare Daly:—the Minister should be investing in the likes of the ESB. He should have a vision, like some of his predecessors—

Deputy Brendan Howlin: This is Darby O’Gill economics.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy is way over time.

Deputy Clare Daly:—to develop projects like Ardnacrusha and employ 500 extra engineers to develop wave and wind power. We could be leaders in energy creation which would drive the economy. Instead the Minister is a disgrace to his founding fathers—

In example 15, excerpted from UI 78, Daly is highly critical of Howlin, a government minister. Daly uses direct forms of criticism in describing his ideas on privatisation as “absolute nonsense” and in her critical comment that he is “peddling [...] upside down economics”. Also, Daly directly insults the minister when she states that he is “a disgrace” to his political party’s founders, which has the potential effect of delegitimising Howlin’s position. Howlin is also critical of Daly as he interjects to rebut her. His ripostes may be made in order to undermine Daly by ridiculing her, with his “Darby O’Gill” reference to leprechauns suggesting that Daly’s ideas on economics are fanciful.

16.

UI 79. 13.10.2011/17

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett (Ind): [...] Is the Minister aware — I am sure she is — that there were 2,000 winter related deaths among elderly people, most of them pneumonia, colds and other winter related ailments? Is it not a fact that these cuts mean more people will die? [...]

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): [...]

We employ 1,000 people to do that at very significant cost to the taxpayer and it surprises me that the Deputy would not acknowledge the work the community welfare officers do to assist very vulnerable people who may have exceptional needs. If an elderly person has an illness such as pneumonia and is hospitalised I would seriously hope that a Deputy like Deputy Boyd Barrett would be aware of the work of the community welfare officers at local level[...]

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett: How can the Minister use the work of community welfare officers as a smokescreen for the substantial question that is being asked of her? [...]

More elderly and vulnerable people will die if we continue to cut the fuel allowance and other vital allowance for electricity and gas. That is not acceptable and I do not know how the Minister can justify it.

In example 16, excerpted from UI 79, Boyd Barrett frames an accusatory question in emotive terms, which presupposes that the funding cuts Minister Joan Burton will make will cause deaths: “Is it not a fact that these cuts mean more people will die?”. Burton retaliates by addressing him using face-threatening and almost moralistic language, stating that she is surprised that he has not expressed support for the measures. Boyd Barrett accuses Burton of evading an answer to his questions, saying “How can the Minister use the work of community welfare officers as a smokescreen...?”. It criticises Burton for implementing cuts, stating that these are “not acceptable”. Boyd Barrett also uses presupposition to suggest that Burton is justifying the cuts: “I do not know how the Minister can justify it”. It can be suggested that the FTAs made by Boyd Barrett towards Burton in the excerpt above accuse her of a lack of empathy towards the public and hold her to account for her measures.

17.

UI 91. 15.12.2011/19

Deputy Charlie McConalogue (FF): [...] The position is stark and, unfortunately, is a very poor reflection on how the State is dealing with vulnerable children. The record has not been good.

[...] Does the Minister intend to continue sending children abroad to gain access to special care units and services? How many children will be in this category in the coming year? It is not acceptable.

Deputy Frances Fitzgerald (FG): It is unfortunate that the previous Government neglected special care. There is a great deal of work to be done to address the deficits I have inherited; that is the reality. [...]

In example 17, excerpted from UI 91, McConalogue performs an FTA, criticizing Fitzgerald, a government minister, by using presupposition in his question. He asks, “Does the Minister intend to continue sending children abroad [...]?” for treatment, thus implying that that is what Fitzgerald is already doing. He also states that the situation is “not acceptable”, perhaps to delegitimise Fitzgerald for her actions. Fitzgerald reacts with criticism in a way that may be undermining McConalogue, by stating that it is unfortunate that his party “neglected special care” while previously in government.

18.

UI 104. 21.04.2011/04

The Tánaiste (Lab): The previous occasion on which Deputy McDonald accused me of performing a U-turn was in respect of the national minimum wage. She was wrong about that. She is wrong on this occasion with regard to the many more U-turns she is imagining—

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): She is willingly wrong.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): Will Deputy Howlin indicate if I am wrong with regard to the sale of State assets?

The Tánaiste: —and attributing to the Government.

In example 18, excerpted from UI 104, the Tánaiste performs an FTA by referring to a previous occasion where McDonald accused him of a U-turn. He then states that she was wrong about that and likewise, that she is wrong in accusing him of a U-turn in the current debate: “She was wrong about that. She is wrong on this occasion with regard to the many more U-turns she is imagining”. Pointing out where McDonald was proved wrong before may be a strategy of delegitimation by the Tánaiste to cast doubt on her credibility. In addition, it can be said that by stating that she is “imagining” U-turns, he is undermining McDonald by suggesting that she is being unrealistic. Howlin interjects in support of the Tánaiste by repeating the Tánaiste’s assertion of McDonald being wrong, by accusing McDonald of being “willingly wrong”. Here, Howlin could be implying that McDonald knows that she is wrong but is making the accusation regardless, in order to oppose the government.

19.

UI 111. 15.06.2011/14

Deputy John Halligan (Ind): Is the Minister serious that people such as small farmers, who might work 70 to 90 hours per week, and shift workers, who might have been doing shift work for 20 to 40 years, want to work an extra year when they reach the age of 65? The Minister cannot seriously believe that. [...]

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The Deputy should ask a question.

Deputy John Halligan (Ind): Does the Minister really believe that? She will obviously say she does but is she seriously stating that when people at the lower and hardest end of the working scale, such as builders, labourers, small farmers and people on shift work, reach 65 years of age they do not wish to spend more time with their families? [...] Nobody in Ireland would believe that.

In example 19, excerpted from UI 111, during question to Burton, Halligan questions and criticises the minister for the proposed measures under discussion. He repeatedly queries whether she is serious in the statements she has made, which seems to imply that Burton is disingenuous in stating that people want to work for longer after retirement age: “The Minister cannot seriously believe that. [...] Nobody in Ireland would believe that”. This criticism may be used by Halligan to hold the minister to account for the measure she is introducing and undermine her credibility.

20.

UI 115. 20.07.2011/15

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh (SF): [...] In attempting to defend these indefensible cuts in recent days the Minister has repeatedly argued that 21% of those in receipt of the household benefits package do not use all the units included in the allowance. Will she acknowledge that neither she nor the Department knows anything about the circumstances of these 21% of recipients or, in fact, in many instances, the circumstances of the remaining 79%? Will she admit she does not know who they are, whether they are the ones sitting in the dark and the cold, scrimping and scraping and afraid to turn on the light and use up their allowance in case they exceed it?

Example 20, excerpted from UI 115, shows an FTA from O’Snodaigh towards Burton which is highly critical of her and accuses her of attempting “to defend these indefensible cuts”. Furthermore, O’Snodaigh repeats questions which contain built-in presuppositions of “Will she [...]?” as FTAs, possibly for the purposes of holding Burton to account and accusing her of “not knowing” about people’s circumstances in an attempt to undermine her: “Will she acknowledge that neither she nor the Department knows anything about the circumstances of these 21% [...]?”.

21.

UI 116. 21.09.2011/08

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): [...]

While some on the other side of the House may scoff at that, anybody who talks to retailers, particularly in the hospitality sector, including restaurants, pubs,

hotels and so on, will almost unanimously say it has made a profound impact on their trade, and they welcome the measures introduced by the Government earlier in the year. These have boosted trade, in particular tourism over the summer months, *whether Deputy Boyd Barrett likes to acknowledge it or not.

[...]

there now is almost unanimous positive editorial comment on the progress this small island has made in just six months. **It would be big of Deputy Boyd Barrett to even acknowledge this because the contrast is clear.

[...]It is clear that our recovery will not be painless and will not happen overnight. However, with a good deal of goodwill, skilled negotiation and realistic focus — not fanciful or fantastical demands — the Government will manage to improve the terms of its loan facility. It will continue to improve them and will ensure the burden on Irish people is lessened week by week and month by month. ***This is the Government's task, which it is achieving, and hopefully at some point in the future Deputy Boyd Barrett might acknowledge this.

* whether you like to acknowledge it or not.

**It would be big of you, Deputy, if you might even acknowledge this because the contrast is clear.

***That's our task, that's what we're achieving, and I hope, Deputy, at some point in the future, you might acknowledge that.

In example 21, excerpted from UI 116, Creighton targets her opponent Boyd Barrett for criticism at several stages of her contribution. She criticises him by implying that he does not acknowledge that government measures have had positive effects and is therefore mean-spirited: “These have boosted trade, in particular tourism over the summer months, whether you like to acknowledge it or not”. A further FTA from Creighton does not directly address Boyd Barrett but seems to imply that his “demands” are unrealistic: “with a good deal of goodwill, skilled negotiation and realistic focus – not fanciful or fantastical demands – the Government will manage to improve the terms of its loan facility”. As she finishes her contribution, she criticises him in what may be perceived as moralistic terms, for not supporting the government: “I hope, Deputy, at some point in the future, you might acknowledge that”. Through use of the pronoun “we”, in her description of the government’s prerogative and success “[t]hat’s our task, that’s what we’re achieving”, Creighton portrays Boyd Barrett as ‘other’, i.e. not part of the government, which she portrays as successful in achieving its goals.

22.

UI 119. 27.09.2011/14

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): It is not good enough for the Taoiseach to keep bringing that matter back to the surface just to cover up his own inadequacies and his lack of substance as regards health policy.

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan (FG): The Deputy abolished the health boards. He is blaming someone else.

Deputy Micheál Martin: I stand over my record in the Department of Health and Children fully, particularly in terms of the National Treatment Purchase Fund, heart disease, cancer and anything the Taoiseach would like to discuss.

[...]

The Taoiseach (FG): The Deputy stated on the public record that he took no responsibility for it.

An Ceann Comhairle: Could we get back to Question Time?

Deputy Micheál Martin: I apologise.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte (Lab): Deputy Martin commissioned 113 consultancy reports.

Deputy Micheál Martin: With the greatest of respect,—

Deputy Frances Fitzgerald (FG): The Deputy promised fundamental reform.

The Taoiseach: Entirely blameless. He took no responsibility.

In example 22, excerpted from UI 119, Martin accuses the Taoiseach of bringing up a matter “just to cover up his own inadequacies and his lack of substance as regards health policy” and criticises him by stating that “it is not good enough” to do so. It can be suggested that with this FTA, Martin seeks to undermine the Taoiseach by accusing him of diverting attention from the issue Martin wants to discuss. Interjections from government ministers Durkan, Rabbitte and Fitzgerald contain accusations which appear to accuse Martin of making contradictory statements and to delegitimise his position due to his previous portfolio as Minister for Health and Children; Durkan accuses Martin of shifting blame, and Fitzgerald accuses him of failing to deliver reform. The Taoiseach also interjects in a similar fashion to accuse Martin of evading responsibility and : “Entirely blameless. He took no responsibility”.

23.

UI 148. 22.02.2012/25

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall) (Lab): I would like to respond to the issues raised by Deputy Niall Collins regarding maternity services in Limerick. It has been pointed out to him in the House and in the media that the figures Dr. Gerry Burke used originally were not accurate. That has been accepted by most people and the Deputy should also be prepared to accept that the original figures were wrong. *In addition, he is being disingenuous because Dr. Burke was contacted earlier to find out what he thought about the arrangements and he replied, “Overall, I am happy with what is being planned but some further work will need to be done”. **The Deputy, therefore, is aware of the situation.

Deputy Niall Collins (FF): What about the 47.5 posts?

Acting Chairman (Deputy Michael McCarthy): The Minister of State without interruption.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: Those figures were not accurate. People locally who care about the service are happy with what is being proposed.

Deputy Niall Collins: What is being proposed?

Deputy Róisín Shortall: ***The Deputy should have disclosed that when he was throwing around allegations.

Deputy Niall Collins: What is the Minister of State going to do about the vacancies?

Acting Chairman (Deputy Michael McCarthy): The Minister of State without interruption. Deputy Collins should refrain.

*But in addition to that, I think you're being somewhat disingenuous, Deputy.

** So you know that, you know what the situation is.

***So you know, you might have disclosed that when you were throwing around those allegations.

In example 23, excerpted from UI 148, Shortall accuses Niall Collins of being “somewhat disingenuous” about quoting certain figures thus implying dishonesty and wilful misrepresentation on Collins’ part. This FTA has the strategic effect of delegitimising Collins’ position. When Collins interjects to challenge Shortall, she responds with a direct FTA, saying that despite Collins’ allegation, people are happy about the service under discussion: “So you know, you might have disclosed that when you were throwing around those allegations”. Shortall’s accusation that he is “throwing around allegations” is a particularly strong phrase that she uses to potentially undermine him for making those allegations.

24.

UI 155. 25.05.2011/18

Deputy Joanna Tuffy (Lab): I was glad to hear Deputy Joan Collins’s speech, where she said there should be no levy, and then argued in favour of a wealth tax. I am amazed at Deputies from the United Left Alliance opposing this levy. They are taking the same side as the right wing commentators, the managers and trustees of pension funds [...]

Deputy Joan Collins (Ind): I am taking the same side as my brother who works for Diageo.

Deputy Joanna Tuffy: [...] Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan said this is a tax on prudence but this is a tax on wealth that was put away at the expense of the taxpayer, the 50% of people who do not have a pension scheme, who are mainly low paid workers and whom Deputy Collins should support. [...]

Whatever criticism the Deputy has of the jobs initiative, that is fine but to argue against the pension levy leaves her with no credibility at all if she calls herself a socialist.

In example 24, excerpted from UI 155, Tuffy attacks opposition TD Collins on the issue of wealth tax. It appears that Tuffy is moving to delegitimise Collins' political position by stating that Collins and her fellow TDs "are taking the same side as the right wing commentators". Tuffy states that taking this stance against the government's initiative leaves Collins "with no credibility at all if she calls herself a socialist". This strategy appears to be used by Tuffy to undermine Collins and delegitimise Collins' socialist stance.

25.

UI 163. 16.06.2011/07

Deputy Joe Higgins (Soc): We noted that the restoration of the minimum wage could have already been done through the Dáil.

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): How?

Deputy Joe Higgins: It could have been done in an hour—

Deputy Jerry Buttimer (FG): It could not.

Deputy Joe Higgins:—by bringing a separate measure but the Government wanted to bring in the reactionary and regressive measure of increasing the pension age under a flag of convenience so that the Minister could hammer those Opposition Members who oppose it by pretending—

Deputy Joan Burton: Is that the amendment?

Deputy Joe Higgins:—to say we are also opposing the restoration of the minimum wage. Her intentions are obvious and we should move on.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: I call Deputy Wallace.

Deputy Joan Burton: On a point of order—

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Briefly.

Deputy Joan Burton: It is the Deputy who introduced the argument that the minimum wage should not have been addressed in this Bill. I repeat my opinion that he is far off the mark in trying to find specious arguments for not reinstating the minimum wage.

Deputy Joe Higgins: Rubbish.

Deputy Joan Burton: He wants to find specious arguments.

In example 25, excerpted from UI 163, Higgins performs an FTA to imply that Burton's castigating of opposition members who oppose the government's "reactionary and regressive measure" is a tactical move "to hammer [...] Opposition members", because she is "pretending" that those members are at the same time opposing the restoration of the minimum wage. He criticises this action by Burton by saying "Her intentions are obvious and we should move on", which appears to be a strategic move to undermine Burton by claiming that she is using tactics. Burton responds to Higgins' criticism by accusing him of wanting to find "specious arguments" for not reinstating the minimum

wage, in an apparent move to delegitimise his contribution. Higgins refutes this allegation as “rubbish”.

26.

UI 176. 26.10.2011/29

Deputy Mattie McGrath (Ind): [...]

The Minister of State proclaimed manna from heaven. [...] I am appalled by the change of attitude on the part of the Minister of State. I am appalled because we blocked these doors one night to try to get a meeting with her. She begrudgingly had a meeting with us afterwards but she just trotted out the line of the officials, which was outrageous. [...]

I am appalled also by the Minister, Deputy Reilly, but especially by the Minister of State, Deputy Lynch, because of the tirades we had to listen to in committee when she was a Deputy. She attacked the Ministers and was a champion of all the people who were depressed and downtrodden but the poacher has become the gamekeeper. [...]

The Minister of State, Deputy Lynch, should hang her head in shame [...]

[...]

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: *The Deputy needs to behave himself.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: That is rich coming from the Minister of State.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: He is no longer in the position he used to hold. **He should behave himself and have some manners.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: I never pinched the patients. I might visit them but I would never do that to them.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Please, Deputy.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: ***Have some manners.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: The Minister should have some manners too, with respect.

[...]

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: [...]

What matters is the number of patients treated and despite the reduction in funding, and I am glad to see Deputy McGrath has left the Chamber—

Deputy Mattie McGrath: Ta mé anseo.¹⁴

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The Deputy cannot speak unless he is in the chair.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: —that our current loss of sovereignty has forced on us, activity in areas such as day cases continues to increase this year. [...]

* Mattie, you need to behave yourself.

**You should behave yourself. A little bit of manners now. A little bit of manners now.

***Have a little bit of manners now.

In example 26, excerpted from UI 176, McGrath performs several FTAs towards Minister of State Kathleen Lynch throughout his contribution. He is highly critical of her closure of health facilities, repeating several times that he is “appalled” by what he

¹⁴ ‘I am here’ in the Irish language.

claims as her change in behaviour since she became minister, telling her moralistically “she should hang her head in shame” and accusing her of having “trotted out” the line of officials at meetings rather than engaging in discussion. He contrasts her behaviour in government with her previous role in opposition where she “was a champion of all the people who were depressed and downtrodden”; now, as minister, according to McGrath, “the poacher has become the gamekeeper”. This criticism of Lynch, particularly the reference to her previous role in opposition, could be seen as a strategy by McGrath aimed at delegitimising her position. After he names a person outside of the House under parliamentary privilege, Lynch responds that he should not have done that and responds to his heckling of her by telling him several times that he should “behave himself” and have “a little bit of manners”. This FTA implies that McGrath is impolite and has no manners. McGrath also responds that Lynch “should have manners too, with respect”, using the phrase “with respect” to mitigate the force of his response, in an attempt to show he is being polite towards her. In so doing, he too is implying that Lynch does not have manners either, but makes this accusation in a more deferent and perhaps chivalrous way towards her.

Lynch also uses language which could undermine McGrath’s position when he leaves his seat in the chamber as she nears the end of the closing statement to the debate. She draws attention to this by saying “I am glad to see Deputy McGrath has left us”, to imply that he is no longer interested in the debate after his earlier involvement.

27.

UI 184. 08.12.2011/17

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): The Deputy should withdraw that. It does not become him to tell lies in this House and attribute them to—

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh (SF): I do not believe—

Deputy Joan Burton: The Deputy should withdraw that.

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: If the Minister shut up for a second, I might do that.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Charlie McConalogue): Order, please. The speaker has the floor.

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: If the Minister was not so ignorant, so impolite—

Acting Chairman (Deputy Charlie McConalogue): Order, please.

Deputy Joan Burton: Is the Deputy man enough to withdraw it?

Acting Chairman (Deputy Charlie McConalogue): The speaker has the floor.

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh:—and insulting, she might give me an opportunity to let her know that I do not believe anybody on social welfare is wayward or a scrounger.

In example 27, excerpted from UI 184, O' Snodaigh is unable to continue his contribution because of interruptions by Burton. Burton begins her interruptions with a moralistic criticism of O'Snodaigh for telling lies: "It does not become him to tell lies in this House". O'Snodaigh responds to suggest that Burton should "shut up" in order to let him reply to her accusation. He criticises her for her interruptions, which are preventing him from responding: "If the Minister was not so ignorant, so impolite and insulting, she might give me an opportunity to let her know that I do not believe anybody on social welfare is wayward or a scrounger". These strong criticisms are made by O'Snodaigh as a means of self-preservation and a way of trying to regain the floor, and possibly also as an attempt to disempower Burton during her attack.

28.

UI 201. 31.03.2011/20

Deputy Pearse Doherty (SF): [...] How the hell do Labour Party Members sit on those benches listening to the Minister tell the Irish people that he is committed to looking at putting more money into Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide Building Society? It is a ridiculous situation, and he has not even said in this Chamber that he will burn the senior unguaranteed bondholders in those institutions? Why is there no outcry, Joan? What has happened?

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): Because you signed the guarantee.

Deputy Pearse Doherty: Who has gagged you?

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy, address your comments through the Chair.

Deputy Joan Burton: You were—

An Ceann Comhairle: Minister, refrain from encouraging him.

In example 28, excerpted from UI 201, Doherty is critical of the Labour party and directs his focus on Minister Joan Burton. He addresses her by her first name in very direct criticism which is in the form of a number of rhetorical questions: "Why is there no outcry, Joan? What has happened? Who has gagged you?". Doherty is breaking the rules by not addressing Burton through the chair, and he does so as a strategic move to criticise her directly and perhaps imply that she has lost her sense of judgement by supporting measures which she previously criticised while in opposition. He also criticises her for no longer being vocal on these issues, and implies that she has been "gagged" because she is now in government. In so doing, it can be suggested that he is undermining her for supporting the government's actions.

29.

UI 215. 20.10.2011/03

The Tánaiste (Lab): We are very appreciative of the fact that President Clinton, who was at that event, is willing to convene a meeting of corporate leaders in the United States.

Deputy Finian McGrath (Ind): He was brought here by Denis O'Brien.

The Tánaiste: We hope that will bring about increased investment in jobs in this country.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): That is all very laudable.

***Deputies:** Hear, hear.

Deputy Colm Keaveney (Lab): We thank the Deputy.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: The Government's response to the loss of jobs at TalkTalk and Aviva has been milk and water, to say the least.

[...]

The Tánaiste: I thank Deputy McDonald for her exceptional and unusual praise for the Government's efforts to bring about investment and jobs.

***Deputies:** Hear, hear.

[...]

The Tánaiste: [...] It is an unfortunate fact that from time to time, jobs will be lost in one company or another for a variety of reasons.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: **Is that the Tánaiste's message to the Aviva workers?

The Tánaiste: No. ***The Deputy should not be smart about it.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: I am not being smart. I am very angry about this.

Deputy Barry Cowen (FF): The Tánaiste was smart enough for 14 years.

The Tánaiste: People losing their jobs is a very serious matter.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: Absolutely.

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh (SF): Where is the task force?

The Tánaiste: People are very worried this morning about losing their jobs and the consequences for them.

Deputy Peadar Tóibín (SF): We need action, not engagement.

The Tánaiste: It needs to be taken a little more seriously than just the kind of political opportunism Deputy McDonald is engaged in.

* "Hear, Hear" from government TDs

** Is that your message...?

***Don't be smart about it.

In example 29, excerpted from UI 215, McDonald is briefly positive about the Tánaiste's outlining of government actions, saying that they are laudable, but then goes on to criticise the government. The Tánaiste sarcastically thanks her for her "exceptional and unusual praise", and this is echoed by a humorous show of support from his government colleagues. Their action in portraying McDonald's praise as "exceptional" is face-threatening and appears to be enacted to undermine McDonald and delegitimise her position by suggesting that she is usually negative towards and uncooperative with the government. Further on, McDonald is critical of the Tánaiste's message to workers whose jobs are under threat, when she interjects to ask "Is that your

message [...]?”. The Tánaiste rebukes McDonald with a retort accusing her of being “smart”, i.e. impertinent. He also accuses McDonald of engaging in “political opportunism” to claim that she is not taking the issue seriously, in a possible move to delegitimise her position.

30.

UI 224. 30.11.2011/05

Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Lucinda Creighton) (FG): At least the Chamber has been enlightened. We now understand that Deputy Ross does not believe in European solidarity or in any of the positive solutions that may be put on the table next week.

Deputy Shane Ross (Ind): None of them were mentioned in the Taoiseach’s speech.

Deputy Mattie McGrath (Ind): It was baloney.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: If I understand him correctly, he wants the Taoiseach to oppose everything when he represents the Government in Brussels next week and to return home with nothing.

Deputy Mattie McGrath: He wants the Taoiseach to stand up for the country.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: *That is Deputy Ross’s solution. I am sorry to disappoint him by saying the Government intends to engage far more constructively and find a common solution to this European crisis.

* That is your solution

In example 30, excerpted from UI 224, Creighton is critical of Ross, who made a contribution just previously in debate. She criticises him for what she perceives as his lack of constructive comments, saying that he “wants the Taoiseach to oppose everything [at the upcoming European Council meeting] and to return home with nothing”. She criticises him by saying “[t]hat is your solution” and that she is “sorry to disappoint” him, stating that the government will engage constructively at the European Council. Creighton’s action can be seen as undermining Ross for what she implies is a lack of cooperation on his part.

31.

UI 226. 07.12.2011/03

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): With the greatest of respect, it is time for the Taoiseach to stop blaming everyone for decisions he is taking. The Taoiseach’s answer this morning lacks credibility and is pathetic. This decision in respect of young people with disabilities has nothing to do with the troika. *(Interruptions).*

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): It is in the deal.

Deputy James Reilly (FG): Hypocrisy.

In example 31, excerpted from UI 226, the Taoiseach is criticised by Martin, who hedges the beginning of the FTA with “With the greatest of respect”, perhaps to soften the directness of the attack it precedes. Martin criticises the Taoiseach by stating: “it is time for the Taoiseach to stop blaming everyone for decisions he is taking”, which implies evasion of responsibility and that the Taoiseach is diverting attention from the issue. Martin also insults the Taoiseach, possibly to undermine and delegitimise him, saying that his answer earlier in the chamber “lacks credibility and is pathetic”.

32.

UI 229. 08.12.2011/17

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): How can Sinn Féin stand over paying the woman in Newry €67.70—

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh (SF): It just shows your ignorance; you do not even know where the money comes from and who sets the rates.

Deputy Joan Burton:—for her second child—

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: Ignorance is bliss. The problem is that you do not seem to understand.

Deputy Joan Burton:—while criticising this Government—

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: I am criticising you for ignorance.

Deputy Joan Burton:—for maintaining the rate at €140 for both the first and second children. Let me remind you that in 2012—

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: Who sets the rates and—

Deputy Joan Burton:—the monthly rate for the third child in the Republic will be €148.

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh:—raises taxes? It is Westminster.

Deputy Joan Burton: It will be €160 for the fourth and each subsequent child. How come your party can manage to extract only €67.70 for the second child—

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: You have absolutely no idea what goes on.

Deputy Joan Burton:—from your paymasters in Westminster, whereas this Republic can still manage €140 despite being in a bailout programme?

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: Good luck.

Deputy Joan Burton: *Answer me that.

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh: I have answered already but you will not listen. Your hearing aid is broken and you will not be able to get it replaced now.

* Well you answer me that.

In example 32, excerpted from UI 229, O’ Snodaigh performs several FTAs towards Burton, who is criticising his party for their role in imposing austerity in Northern Ireland. O’ Snodaigh insults Burton by saying she is showing her ignorance, with the comments: “I am criticising you for ignorance” and “You have absolutely no idea what

goes on”. He also accuses her of refusing to listen to him, and insults her while simultaneously criticising the government’s budget measure of cutting funding for hearing aids: “Your hearing aid is broken and you will not be able to get it replaced now”. By interjecting with the above criticism and insults, it can be argued that O’ Snodaigh is attempting to delegitimise Burton’s position as she attacks his party during her speech.

33.

UI 236. 24.01.2012/28

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): The Deputy has asked a number of questions and made a number of assertions again. She fundamentally misunderstands, maybe deliberately or maybe not, the Government intention in this regard. [...] The Deputy opposite in particular loves announcing the bad news such as that we were not going to be able to reduce the interest on our borrowings or maintain the minimum wage and that we would not be able to do anything, but we have done all these things.

In example 33, excerpted from UI 236, Howlin accuses McDonald of making “assertions”, and criticises her: “She fundamentally misunderstands, maybe deliberately or maybe not, the Government intention in this regard”. In stating that McDonald is wrong in her assertions, Howlin is also making the accusation that McDonald is dishonest and that she may or may not be wilfully misunderstanding the government’s intentions. He also criticises McDonald for negativity in order to undermine her, by adding that she “loves announcing the bad news”, implying that she is omitting to mention positive actions by the government.

34.

UI 250. 21.03.2012/16

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: [...] *It is also honest to say that the Tánaiste is standing over something which he knows, in his gut, is unfair. This charge has been delivered in a shambolic way and people have responded accordingly. It strikes me that the sensible and equitable thing for the Government to do at this juncture would be to admit — as it has done previously — that it made a mistake and withdraw this charge and the threats to the effect that people will be pursued, either through the courts or via attachment orders, in respect of the charge. **Such a move would be the stuff of honesty.

The Tánaiste: ***Deputy McDonald has a hard neck. The equivalent charge in Northern Ireland is ten to 15 times the equivalent of that which applies in this jurisdiction.

[...]

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: The systems are not comparable.

The Tánaiste: Of course.

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn (SF): Did the Tánaiste—
(*Interruptions*).

The Tánaiste: That is for sure. They certainly are not comparable. There is no comparison between the €1,500 charge which applies in Derry and the €100 charge which obtains in Donegal.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: That is pathetic.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: The only difference is that next year the Government will be charging people a property tax of €1,000.

The Tánaiste: ****It is the height of hypocrisy for the Deputy to come before the House and utter all sorts of hyperbole about hundreds of thousands of people being taken to court, coerced, etc.

*It is also the honest thing to say, Tánaiste, that you stand over something that you know full well in your gut is unfair.

**That would be the stuff of honesty, Tánaiste.

***Well, Deputy McDonald, you've a hard neck.

**** It is the height of hypocrisy for you to come in here and to go on with all of this hyperbole

In example 34, excerpted from UI 250, McDonald is critical of the government's introduction of property tax. She criticises the Tánaiste for being disingenuous and suggests that he “knows full well” that the charge is unfair, perhaps in order to delegitimise his position. The Tánaiste responds to her with a direct insult by telling McDonald that she has a “hard neck”. He appears to be contrasting her party's stance on the property tax with their position on property tax in the administration of Northern Ireland in order to delegitimise McDonald's argument and undermine her for criticising him: “It is the height of hypocrisy for you to come in here and to go on with all of this hyperbole”.

35.

UI 282. 09.12.2011/05

Deputy Michael Healy-Rae (Ind): The Minister is more ready for doom and gloom than was the case last year.

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): Deputy Healy-Rae should have a bit of manners.

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): There is no cut—

Deputy Mattie McGrath (Ind): It is dressed up.

Deputy Michael Healy-Rae: *I apologise to the Minister, Deputy Howlin, but she interrupted me.

Deputy Joan Burton:— in the primary rate and that is the important issue. The cumulative effect of the measures in the last two budgets were that, for instance, families lost €8 last year in respect of the basic weekly rate—

Deputy Robert Troy (FF): The Minister promised to reverse that measure.

Deputy Michael Healy-Rae: The Minister is here to discuss this year's budget.
Deputy Joan Burton:— last year and €8.30 the year before. This is the first time in three years—

Deputy Robert Troy: But the Minister promised to reverse it.

Deputy Joan Burton:— the basic rates have not been cut. I am proud to have achieved no cut in the basic rates—

Deputy Mattie McGrath: There have been heaps of cuts.

[...]

Deputy Michael Healy-Rae: Members are dealing with the Irish budget.

Deputy Joan Burton: May I state, in respect of Deputy Ó Snodaigh—

Deputy Mattie McGrath: This is the Irish budget, not the British budget.

Deputy Brendan Howlin: Deputy Mattie McGrath should have a bit of manners.

* Sorry Minister, she interrupted me, so she did.

In example 35, excerpted from UI 282, Burton is interrupted throughout her statement, and she also responds to those interrupting her. Independent TDs Healy-Rae and McGrath heckle her with criticisms such as “The Minister is more ready for doom and gloom than was the case last year” and “There have been heaps of cuts” to outline their disagreement and to disempower Burton by interrupting her. Burton's colleague, Howlin reacts to the hecklers by criticising them by telling each of them on separate occasions that they “should have a bit of manners”. Howlin's strategy in appealing for manners may be invoking the notion of chivalry to imply that, by heckling his female colleague, these TDs have no manners. It is suggested that this strategy has the effect of delegitimising his opponents' position and is an attempt to prevent them from heckling further.

36.

UI 284. 15.12.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: [...]

I find it deeply ironic that the Labour Party in government seeks to sabotage the work done by a previous Minister for Education of that party. I have to say, Eamon Gilmore, you are some piece of work to talk about equality.

(Interruptions).

A Deputy: You are not bad yourself, Mary.

An Ceann Comhairle: We normally address Members as either Minister or Deputy.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: It is a perverse logic articulated by the Tánaiste today that we must have an equality in deprivation.

[...]How can the Tánaiste, with any honour — how can he, as leader of the Labour Party, with any honour — say to the children of Sheriff Street, East Wall, or the Inishowen peninsula—

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy must put her question. We are not making statements. Does the Deputy hear me?

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald:—that these are legacy matters? That is some legacy for the Tánaiste.

An Ceann Comhairle: I do not know what the supplementary question is.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: The Tánaiste knows full well.

(Interruptions).

The Tánaiste: I think Deputy McDonald is either hard of hearing or is simply heedless.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: Pardon me?

A Deputy: We have the answer now.

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn: It is all a great laugh. Cuts in disadvantaged areas are all great fun.

The Tánaiste: It is fair enough of Deputy McDonald to raise the issue in the House—

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: I thank the Tánaiste.

The Tánaiste:—of the pupil-teacher ratio and the allocation of teachers in disadvantaged schools. However, it is a bit nonsensical that when I give an answer and explain what is being done, she then comes back at me with the same rant she would have given as if I had not given the answer in the first place.

In example 36, excerpted from UI 284, McDonald uses several FTAs in the course of her supplementary question, including the very direct insult “I have to say, Eamon Gilmore, you are some piece of work to talk about equality”. Interruptions and heckling in the chamber ensue in the chamber. She also accuses the Tánaiste of using “perverse logic” and asks him the rhetorical question “How can the Tánaiste, with any honour say [...] that these are legacy matters?” which presupposes that his actions towards deprived communities are heartless. Moreover, she criticises him by suggesting that his actions will not leave a positive legacy behind: “That is some legacy for the Tánaiste”. It is suggested that the effect of the insults and accusations from McDonald is to undermine the answer he has given and to portray him as lacking in empathy for the members of the public who will be affected by his actions. The Tánaiste responds by insulting McDonald: “Deputy McDonald is either hard of hearing or is simply heedless”. He makes the implication that McDonald’s attack is “a bit nonsensical” and is made for political opportunism, maintaining that she was not going to listen to him no matter what answer he gave: “she then comes back at me with the same rant she would have given as if I had not given the answer in the first place”. It can be argued that the purpose of this criticism from the Tánaiste is to delegitimise McDonald’s attack on him.

37.

UI 288. 12.01.2012/07

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: The Government deserves credit for what it did during that time under the stewardship, in particular, of Niamh Breathnach when she was Minister, but it must be said the Minister is prepared to undermine these very achievements. He said there were no cutbacks in the DEIS programme. He is dancing on the head of a pin.

Deputy Ruairí Quinn: The Deputy and her party would know all about that.

Example 37, excerpted from UI 288, shows McDonald directing an accusation towards Minister Ruairí Quinn, stating that he is “prepared to undermine” achievements made in the education sector. She uses a metaphor to describe Quinn as making a futile argument: “He is dancing on the head of a pin”. With this criticism of Quinn, she portrays him as confused and contradictory in terms of his measures. Quinn responds by countering her attack with the criticism that McDonald and her own party are themselves no strangers to making futile arguments: “The Deputy and her party would know all about that”. In performing this FTA he may be attempting to delegitimise McDonald’s position by suggesting that her accusation is hypocritical.

38.

UI 293. 26.01.2012/03

The Tánaiste (Lab): It is a pity that Deputy McDonald does not have the good grace, as Deputy Ó Cuív did, at least to acknowledge that the Government is dealing with a real issue that families are concerned about which is the problem of mortgage debt. Previously, she claimed the Government was doing nothing about the mortgage problem and on the day that we are doing just that, she does not have the good grace at least to acknowledge that. Instead, she has to spend the morning trying to find an issue on which she can criticise the Government.

In example 38, excerpted from UI 293, the Tánaiste is critical of Mary Lou McDonald for not acknowledging the government’s efforts to deal with an issue, stating that “it is a pity” that she will not do so. His criticism is moralistic in tone, which is made clear by his repetition of the phrase that McDonald “does not have the good grace” to acknowledge positive measures by the government. He claims that on the contrary, McDonald is attempting to find an issue on which to criticise the government. It can be suggested that this strategy thereby delegitimises McDonald’s position as it suggests that she is uncooperative and consistently negative about the government’s actions.

Summary of analysis in this category

The analysis showed various ways in which insulting/accusing/criticising as a strategy may be used to undermine opponents and delegitimise their positions in order to negotiate power dynamics in debate interaction. Instances of insults or criticism while addressing another TD by their first name showed how these were used to hold a minister or government member to account (No 28, UI 201; No 36, UI 284). Forms of criticism often had a moralistic approach. Criticising an opponent for a lack of cooperation with other parties in working towards an outcome was a moralistic way of undermining them (No 12, UI 53; No 14, UI 160; No 21, UI 116; No 29, UI 215; No 33, UI 236; No 38, UI 293). Insults, criticism and accusations often were used to make implications that another member was being disingenuous, or that they showed a lack of empathy towards the public (No 10, UI 48; No 16, UI 79; No 20, UI 115). Moreover, forms of criticism and accusation were used against an opponent to suggest that their actions were contradictory, in order to delegitimise their position (No 2, UI 12; No 5, UI 18; No 16, UI 79; No 22, UI 119; No 23, UI 148; No 24, UI 155; No 34, UI 250; No 37, UI 288). As has also been seen in the two previous categories of analysis, insults, accusation and criticism were used strategically both to regain control of the floor during a legitimate turn, when another TD was interrupting, as well as non-legitimately, to disrupt an opponent's turn. There were 30 instances of this strategy used by male TDs towards female speakers and 22 instances used by female TDs towards male speakers. Also, there were eight instances used by male TDs towards other male TDs, and two instances by female TDs towards other female TDs. Table 3 in Appendix F shows the gender of both the TD performing this type of linguistic strategy and the gender of the TD(s) on the receiving end of the linguistic strategy in each UI.

5.4.4 Metalinguage as a strategy

This section analyses instances from the corpus of UIs of metalinguage as a strategy. As outlined in Section 5.2, metalinguage is defined as language used in interaction where a TD make reference to another TD's use of language within the chamber or to the practices surrounding language use in the chamber.

1.

UI 5. 03.05.2011/13

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): [...] The Taoiseach said adjustments will be made. I discern from this that we face further cutbacks in order to give life to this jobs initiative. Can he confirm that? The Taoiseach appears to be hiding behind language.[...]

The Taoiseach (FG): I would not get carried away with what the Deputy discerns from my words. [...]

In example 1, excerpted from UI 5, McDonald's criticism of the Taoiseach is metalinguistic in nature, as she accuses the Taoiseach of "hiding behind language", suggesting that he is being intentionally unclear in his statement. He replies to her accusation with the metalinguistic comment "I would not get carried away with what the Deputy discerns from my words", which may be a strategic way of undermining McDonald by implying that she is over-interpreting his use of language.

2.

UI 8. 08.06.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): I am beginning to suspect that the ten years of the bailout agreement will have run out and the Taoiseach will still be coming in here telling us that he will do the business on the interest rate.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte (Lab): *Deputy McDonald will still be making the same speeches.

An Ceann Comhairle: A supplementary question, please Deputy.

* You'll still be making the same speeches

In example 2, excerpted from UI 8, after McDonald criticises the Taoiseach for evading action on an issue, one of the Taoiseach's ministerial colleagues, Rabbitte, heckles her. He makes a metalinguistic comment which could potentially delegitimise McDonald's contribution to debate by suggesting that she is repetitive: "Deputy McDonald will still be making the same speeches".

3.

UI 18. 20.09.2011/14

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: There the Taoiseach goes again. It happens on his watch but he is not accountable for it. [...]

The only conclusion at which we can arrive is that despite the rhetoric from him and his colleagues in Fine Gael and the Labour Party with regard to reform and change, they are, in fact, not serious about these matters.

In example 3, excerpted from UI 18, McDonald uses metalanguage in a response to an answer from the Taoiseach with the phrase “There the Taoiseach goes again”. This highlights that McDonald is targeting the Taoiseach by referring to the repetition of his answers in the Dáil to accuse him of a lack of accountability. Further on in her contribution, her metalinguistic comment towards both government parties, which accuses them of not taking issues seriously “despite the rhetoric from him and his colleagues”, can be seen as strategically undermining. The use of “rhetoric” in a negative sense portrays what these parties are saying as empty spin.

4.

UI 23. 12.10.2011/06

Deputy Clare Daly (Ind): [...] I would like to put on record my disappointment with the Taoiseach’s comments over the weekend that such a referendum would not be welcomed.

[...]

The Taoiseach (FG): On a matter of clarification—

Deputy Clare Daly: Can I make my comments?

The Taoiseach: The Deputy said an announcement was made today.

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): The Taoiseach knows how it works.

Deputy Clare Daly: Yes. It appeared in the national newspapers—

Deputy Peter Mathews (FG): Who knows where announcements may be?

The Taoiseach: Where was the announcement made?

Acting Chairman (Deputy Charlie McConalogue): Can we have some order, please?

Deputy Clare Daly: It appeared in today’s national newspapers. If the Taoiseach is denying it, I am delighted.

The Taoiseach: The Deputy is always very clear in her comments. Where was the announcement made?

Deputy Clare Daly: *The Irish Times.*

Acting Chairman (Deputy Charlie McConalogue): Can we have some order, please? The Deputy has the floor.

Deputy Clare Daly: I thank the Acting Chairman.

The Taoiseach: I thank the Deputy for her clarity.

Deputy Clare Daly: I like the Taoiseach’s diversionary tactics, but the reality is—

The Taoiseach: It was the Deputy who mentioned it.

In example 4, excerpted from UI 23, Daly is interrupted by the Taoiseach who may be seeking to undermine her by seeking to find out where she saw an announcement of cuts to social welfare. He is also sarcastic to her, with the metalinguistic remark “The Deputy is always very clear in her comments”, and when she tells him eventually the

name of the publication to which she refers, he comments “I thank the Deputy for her clarity”. Daly then responds with a metalinguistic comment to accuse the Taoiseach of “diversionary” tactics as: “I like the Taoiseach’s diversionary tactics, but the reality is”. This action by Daly draws attention to his strategic use of interruption and can be seen as a move to delegitimise his action in doing so.

5.

UI 41. 02.02.2012/03

The Tánaiste: I again repeat for Deputy McDonald what the Government has done for people on low incomes. In this year’s budget there was no cut in the basic rates of social welfare for the first time in a number of years. Some 330,000 people on the lowest incomes were taken out of the universal social charge—

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: There was a cut to the contributory pension.

The Tánaiste (Lab): *I ask the Deputy to listen.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy—

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: The Government has punished the single parents.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy McDonald was the very person who asked for silence. She should please let the Tánaiste reply.

The Tánaiste: I listened attentively to the Deputy’s question and all I ask is that she listens to the reply. The cut to the national minimum wage that was made by the previous Government was reversed by this Government, something Deputy McDonald said we would not do.

[...]

There are other cases where payments are being made in some parts of the country which I agree might be more appropriate where there is a greater level of need.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): It is a cutback.

An Ceann Comhairle: We are over time.

The Tánaiste: ***The Deputy should not constantly be saying “cutbacks”.

*Please listen

**No. Don’t be constantly saying “cutbacks”

When McDonald heckles the Tánaiste during his turn in example 5, excerpted from UI 41, the Tánaiste asks her to listen, which is a simultaneous act of preserving his own positive face and performing a subtle FTA in McDonald’s direction by asking her to reciprocate his behaviour: “I listened attentively to the Deputy’s question and all I ask is that she listens to the reply”. He also makes a metalinguistic reference to statements by McDonald, in a way that appears to delegitimise her position, as he talks about achievements by the government that McDonald “said we would not do”. McDonald is also criticised for her use of language by the Tánaiste, when he tells her not to

repeatedly use the term “cutbacks”. His remark on her use of negative language can be seen as a way of undermining her by positioning her in a negative light. He adopts an almost moralistic tone to tell her what she should not do, and implies that McDonald’s criticism of the government is non-constructive.

6.

UI 42. 09.02.2012/03

Deputy Michael McGrath (FF): That response is beyond belief.
(Interruptions).

Deputy Michael McGrath: The Minister was asked simple straightforward questions—

Deputy Alan Shatter (FG): The Deputy had a bad time on “Morning Ireland” and he is continuing it here.

Deputy Michael McGrath: —about what the savings will be arising from the retirements that will take place at the end of this month. She gave no answer to any of those questions. That pretty well sums up the way this Government has handled this issue over the last number of months. The fact is that there was no preparation—[...]

Deputy Tom Hayes (FG): Michael, you will be not brought on to sub again if you keep going like that.

Deputy Mattie McGrath (Ind): We will have to see Tom do it.

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan (FG): Mattie will have to take over.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Order, please.

Deputy Michael McGrath: The chorus is in fine form this morning.
[...]

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): I have discussed this with my Secretary General on a weekly basis and we have had a group of very senior civil servants—

Deputy Mattie McGrath: Did the Minister ask Big Phil?

Deputy Joan Burton: —in our Department. Can I just explain? In the Department of Social Protection we have taken in 1,700 new staff under the transformation programme, the former community welfare officers and the former FÁS employment staff.

Deputy Niall Collins (FF): Will the Minister give us the figures and stop the waffle?

Deputy Joan Burton: We are also losing—

Deputy Mattie McGrath: The Minister is going around the house now.

Deputy Charlie McConalogue (FF): Did the Minister forget the question?

Deputy Joan Burton: I am giving Deputy Michael McGrath a serious answer to what I thought was a serious question.

Example 6 excerpted from UI 42, where Minister Joan Burton is replying to TDs from the opposition benches, contains various metalinguistic strategies. At the beginning of the excerpt, McGrath is highly critical and demonstrates dissatisfaction by saying that Burton’s response to his question is “beyond belief” and that she has not answered any of the “simple straightforward questions” put to her. It can be argued that this is an

attempt by McGrath to delegitimise her position by suggesting she is evading the question. McGrath is unable to continue at one point due to heckling and makes the metalinguistic comment that the “chorus”, i.e. those heckling on the government benches, “is in fine form this morning”. Opposition deputies who are heckling Burton to discredit her response also use metalanguage. Her contribution is described as “waffle” and she is again criticised for not answering the question: “Did the Minister forget the question?”. Further on in the exchange, Burton responds to McGrath with a metalinguistic strategy to attempt to regain control of the floor and perhaps to attribute value to what she is saying: “I am giving Deputy Michael McGrath a serious answer to what I thought was a serious question”. In saying this she is implying that by heckling her and stating that her response is “waffle”, McGrath and his colleagues are not taking the issues seriously.

7.

UI 46. 28.02.2012/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): It will be news to virtually all the retiring public servants that the incentivised exit mechanism was not in fact an incentive but we will agree to differ on the semantics of it.

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): Is that a question?

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: The Minister stated that the objective is to downsize further. I ask him to explain what he means by that.

[...]

Deputy Brendan Howlin: That was more a speech than a question but I will deal with the two points raised.

In example 7, excerpted from UI 46, Minister Brendan Howlin interrupts McDonald’s supplementary question to comment on her language performance: “Is that a question?”. This metalinguistic reference can be seen as an attempt to undermine McDonald during her contribution by suggesting that her contribution is not taking the form of a question, as it should. In his turn, he begins by responding that her contribution was “more a speech than a question”, which implies that McDonald is time-wasting when asking him her supplementary question.

8.

UI 53. 04.05.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): [...] I must say it is getting a little tedious in this House that when a straight question is put to the Taoiseach, he runs for cover behind the record of his predecessors. That is not acceptable. His answer

in this House today will be cold comfort to those living in these Third World run-down conditions.

In example 8, excerpted from UI 53, McDonald makes a metalinguistic comment to criticise the Taoiseach on his response to questions by saying that she finds it “tedious” when he refuses to answer a “straight question” when it is put to him. It can be argued that she is portraying him as evading the question, and that this metalinguistic reference serves to delegitimise the Taoiseach’s position. She also comments that the Taoiseach’s answer to her question will be “cold comfort” to citizens, which criticises both his answer and the actions by his government.

9.

UI 63. 15.06.2011/03

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): The Taoiseach is accountable for his own promises and for the commitments he made. The assertion he has just made about Ministers in the former Government is a most reprehensible one. It is a low charge that has no substance, and he should withdraw it.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): Check the record.

Deputy Micheál Martin: The commitment of previous Ministers to Europe, during former Presidencies and over the past 12 months, has been extraordinary across the board.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: What about the attendance record at Council meetings?

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan (FG): That is the most ridiculous statement I have ever heard.

In example 9, excerpted from UI 63, the leader of the opposition party Fianna Fáil refutes a “most reprehensible” assertion that the government leader has just made. He is heckled in response by government TDs, with Durkan referring to what Martin has said as “the most ridiculous statement I have ever heard”. Durkan’s metalinguistic comment may be aimed at delegitimising Martin’s position and ridiculing him for the content of his statement.

10.

UI 71. 21.09.2011/12

Deputy Clare Daly (Ind): [...] Does the Minister not consider that in his role as Head of State of the Defence Forces he should use the opportunity presented by the visit to the region to attempt to make a visit to Gaza to extend solidarity? Will he respond specifically to this part of the question?

In example 10, excerpted from UI 71, Daly frames her question to Minister Alan Shatter to receive a specific response. She asks Shatter to respond “specifically to this part of the question”. This metalinguistic strategy by Daly implies that she is anticipating that Shatter will not answer her question directly and her question can be viewed as an attempt to pre-emptively hold him to account.

11.

UI 86. 30.11.2011/17

Deputy Phil Hogan (FG): I am not in favour of the present model of leasing.

* [Dialogue omitted from transcript]

Deputy Clare Daly (Ind): That is excellent.

Deputy Phil Hogan: I am pleased the Deputy and I agree. This is the first time
**she has said something positive.

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett (Ind): We are all on the same side now.

Deputy Phil Hogan: I welcome the Deputies to capitalism.

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett: The Minister is speaking of socialism.

* **Deputy Clare Daly:** You’re not in favour.

Deputy Phil Hogan: I’m not. [Dialogue omitted from transcript]

** you’ve said something positive

The video of example 11, excerpted from UI 86, depicts Hogan and his political opponents Daly and Boyd Barrett smiling and laughing upon realising that they are in agreement with each other on an issue.¹⁵ After Daly expresses positively that it is “excellent” that Hogan is not in favour of the present model of leasing, Hogan jokingly remarks, “I am pleased the Deputy and I agree”. He also makes a metalinguistic comment on Daly’s response: “It is the first time you’ve said something positive”. This comment reflects on Daly’s style of contribution to debates in general, implying that her contributions are usually negative. Although their interaction is light-hearted, as is apparent from the video of the interaction, Hogan’s comment nonetheless acts as a subtle criticism of Daly.

12.

UI 101. 06.04.2011/24

Deputy Paschal Donohoe (FG): The contribution from Deputy McDonald is notable in three ways. The first is in regard to what I thought was a somewhat sneering hope that everything the State is clinging to will collapse into chaos so we can then use that as some way of winning an argument. [...]

¹⁵ Video recording checked.

The second way in which the contribution was notable was that at no time during its eight to ten minutes did I hear a single statement regarding what Sinn Féin would do differently. Nowhere did I hear the course of action it would undertake if it ever found itself in a position of authority.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: I wish I had a few more minutes to do that.

Deputy Paschal Donohoe: That is a fact. In the eight to ten minute contribution, which I was happy to listen to, nowhere did I hear what Sinn Féin would do differently. As somebody from a party that had the misfortune to spend so long in Opposition, I can tell Sinn Féin that this kind of rhetoric will get it so far but it will not get it to where it needs to be, which is in a position to come up with a credible plan that people want to listen to and believe.

Prior to example 12, excerpted from UI 101, McDonald has criticised the Labour party. Donohue, who is speaking next, refers back to McDonald's contribution critically by saying it was "notable in three ways". He goes to outline the ways in which her contribution was negative, criticising her for not presenting an alternative in her statement, by saying that at no time during her contribution "did I hear a single statement regarding what Sinn Féin would do differently". He also dismisses McDonald and her party on metalinguistic terms by saying that their "kind of rhetoric" will not get them far.

13.

UI 104. 21.04.2011/04

Deputy Ray Butler (FG): We will be here for the next five years listening to waffle from Deputy McDonald.

Deputy Finian McGrath (Ind): The Deputy should get used to it.

Prior to example 13, excerpted from UI 104, Butler has begun to heckle McDonald for time-wasting by not asking a question. He describes her contributions as "waffle", which constitutes a direct attack on her by implying that her language use is meaningless. In attacking her credibility as a speaker in debate and portraying her contributions as repetitive by saying "We will here for the next five years" listening to her, Butler's strategy could be targeted at delegitimising McDonald's contributions to debate.

14.

UI 119. 27.09.2011/14

The Taoiseach (FG): I have rarely listened to such blather in all my life.

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan (FG): Hear, hear.

[...]

The Taoiseach: [...]It is completely irresponsible of the Deputy to say that there is neither depth nor substance in this—

Deputies: Hear, hear.

The Taoiseach: —when, speaking as Minister on this side of the House he said he had not read his brief and that he had no responsibility for taking €1 billion from geriatric people [...]

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): The Taoiseach should withdraw his remark. He cannot keep deceiving the House on this matter. It is rubbish.

Deputy Frances Fitzgerald (FG): Some 113 reports.

Deputy Micheál Martin: I implemented.

In the interaction in example 14, excerpted from UI 119, Martin and the Taoiseach both engage in pejorative metalinguistic commentary on each other's language. The Taoiseach describes Martin's contribution as "blather", a comment that could have the function of undermining Martin. Martin asks Taoiseach to withdraw a remark, saying that it is "rubbish", thus refuting what the Taoiseach has said.

15.

UI 132. 17.11.2011/17

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): I am unsure what the question is but I will tell the Deputy what happened. [...]

The Deputy referred to a percentage. We have decided on no percentage yet. We were discussing a quantum of money and it is invidious to start discussing the value of any percentage until we test the market. *I have no difficulty with the Deputy criticising me; I could get used to it. However, she should wait until we do something. The Deputy is inclined to criticise before the action. [...]

*I don't mind the Deputy criticising me. I could get used to that. But wait till we do something before... I mean, the Deputy is inclined to criticise before the action

In example 15, excerpted from UI 132, Howlin responds to criticism from McDonald by stating that he is "unsure what the question is". Suggesting that McDonald cannot pose a question clearly in debate could be seen as a strategy to undermine her. A further metalinguistic comment by Howlin states that McDonald often criticises pre-emptively: she "is inclined to criticise before the action". He mentions that he has no problem with McDonald criticising him, on the contrary, as he remarks, he "could get used to that". It can be argued that his comment on McDonald's linguistic behaviour is strategic in that it portrays her as critical and uncooperative towards government members in debate.

16.

UI 163. 16.06.2011/07

Deputy Joe Higgins (Soc): On a point of order, I am not sure which amendment was being addressed by the Minister.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: We are on amendment No. 3.

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): I was addressing the same amendment as the one in which Deputy Higgins called for a delay in reinstating the minimum wage.

Deputy Joe Higgins: The Minister was going completely off the wall with a diversionary tactic.

Deputy Arthur Spring (Lab): That is not fair.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer (FG): Withdraw that.

In example 16, excerpted from UI 163, Higgins uses what can be seen as a metalinguistic strategy to undermine Burton by suggesting she is using a “diversionary tactic” during her debate contribution. By portraying Burton as engaging in a tactic to deflect attention from the proposal he has raised, Higgins may be attempting to delegitimise her behaviour in debate.

17.

UI 164. 22.06.2011/28

The Taoiseach (FG): Not every person who goes for treatment or to attend at facilities travels by ambulance. I met a woman recently who had breast cancer treatment. She had to travel by bus at 5 a.m.—

Deputy Jonathan O’Brien (SF): Answer the question.

Deputy Sandra McLellan (SF): Answer the question.

An Ceann Comhairle: Please, Deputies.

In example 17, excerpted from UI 164, opposition TDs heckle the Taoiseach with the same use of the imperative form: “Answer the question” as a tactic to put pressure on the Taoiseach and suggest that he is delaying in answering the question. In this way, they are implying that he is delaying his response to them.

18.

UI 168. 14.07.2011/21

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): The Minister has dodged the issue. I do not doubt his commitment to recovery but we understand the most senior official in the Minister’s newly established Department has written to line Ministers—

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): Secretaries General.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald:—suggesting that they cook up different proposals beyond the Croke Park agreement. Does the Minister not find that alarming, because I do? Would the Minister publish that memorandum or letter?

Deputy Brendan Howlin: The Deputy uses nice pejorative terms like “cook up”. The letter was to Secretaries General asking people to engage in the process in an open way. In the spirit of transparency, the Deputy asked me if I would publish the letters. I will. I will arrange within the next few days to have them put on my website for the Deputy to examine.

In example 18, excerpted from UI 168, McDonald makes the accusation that Howlin has evaded answering her question. Howlin reacts to what he refers to as “nice pejorative” terminology from McDonald: “The Deputy uses nice pejorative terms like ‘cook up’”. It can be suggested that in this rebuttal, his metalinguistic comment is used to strategic effect, in that it makes the implication that McDonald is being negative and uncooperative by using pejorative language.

19.

UI 169. 21.09.2011/03

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: [...] The Taoiseach states that the unemployment figures are unacceptable; in that he is correct. What is even more unacceptable in the face of this unemployment crisis is to have a Government that sits on its hands. It talks big, it acts small.

Deputy Brendan Howlin: Remarkable.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: I do not accept the Taoiseach’s position [...]

If he is so appalled, so concerned to keep people in work and get them back to work, he should get cracking now and ensure those jobs in Aviva are secured. He should match his rhetoric with action.

A Deputy: What would you do?

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan: There is rhetoric in training here now.

The Taoiseach: The Government has been cracking since we were appointed and given a mandate by the people.

In example 19, excerpted from UI 169, McDonald makes the metalinguistic comment that the Taoiseach “should match his rhetoric with action”, which accuses him of inaction. McDonald uses the term “rhetoric” in a negative manner to refer to the use of insincere or empty words. Her metalinguistic comments are responded to in kind. Durkan, a government TD heckles her with a comment on her own language use: “There is rhetoric in training here now”. Durkan appropriates her words in what may be a strategy to undermine McDonald by suggesting that despite her criticism of the Taoiseach’s rhetoric, McDonald is using rhetoric herself. In his response, the Taoiseach echoes her suggestion that “he should get cracking”, by saying “The Government has been cracking since we were appointed”. This can be viewed as a strategy to undermine McDonald by using the same term she used towards him. The Taoiseach rebuts

McDonald with reference to metalanguage in this excerpt by appropriating the language that she has used to criticise him.

20.

UI 172. 12.10.2011/27

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): The challenge for Government, in addition to educating itself on the system of governance 100 miles up the road, is to put its money where its mouth is as regards this sector. The Minister of State said that he understands the sector and that he applauds it. He used the rhetoric but rhetoric will not cut it.

Deputy John Perry (FG): It is not rhetoric. We know it. The Deputy is full of rhetoric.

In example 20, excerpted from UI 172, McDonald uses metalanguage to criticise Minister of State John Perry's use of rhetoric, thus suggesting that he, and the government, are not fulfilling promises they have made. Perry rebuts by saying that his words are not rhetoric, and uses a metalinguistic strategy to criticise McDonald's language use: "The Deputy is full of rhetoric". It can be suggested that this is an attempt to disempower McDonald by implying that she is using empty words. Perry is counter-attacking McDonald with reference to metalanguage in this excerpt by appropriating the language that she has used to criticise him.

21.

UI 180. 24.11.2011/03

The Tánaiste: I am not quite sure which of the many accusations Deputy McDonald levelled is the question. I will not take any lecture on honesty from Sinn Féin.

[...]

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: If we are to understand the Tánaiste, despite his bluster and rhetoric—

(Interruptions).

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: If the Deputies do not mind—

Deputy Eric Byrne: We do mind.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: This is my opportunity to speak without interruption.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy McDonald without interruption, please.

In example 21, excerpted from UI 180, the Tánaiste use a metalinguistic strategy to criticise McDonald, commenting on her language use to state that he is unsure "which of the many accusations Deputy McDonald levelled is the question" in order to portray

her contribution as lacking in clarity. In McDonald's turn, her use of metalanguage to refer to the Tánaiste's "bluster and rhetoric" could be seen as a way of undermining him and portraying his words as empty. Interruptions to her contribution mean McDonald cannot continue, and she mentions her right to speak "without interruption" in the chamber in a strategic move to regain control of the floor.

22.

UI 183. 08.12.2011/17

Deputy Barry Cowen (FF): The budget and the Social Welfare Bill is not only anti-family, it is anti-women. Child benefits will be cut—

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab): He destroyed the country.

Deputy Barry Cowen: I am glad to see the Minister reciprocating the respect I showed by not interrupting her.

In example 22, excerpted from UI 183, Cowen uses a metalinguistic strategy by threatening the Minister's face by referring critically to her interruption in order to regain control of the floor and stop her from interrupting him. He sarcastically remarks, "I am glad to see the Minister reciprocating the respect I showed by not interrupting her", contrasting her interruption of his contribution with his own positive self-representation by stating that he did not interrupt her. This comment may be made in order to undermine Burton's actions, because Cowen draws on the rules of debate to portray her as lacking respect for other speakers in contrast with the respect that he "showed by not interrupting her".

23.

UI 194. 16.02.2012/03

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn (SF): The Tánaiste should withdraw that remark. The developer is a political opponent of Sinn Féin. We stood against him over the years.

An Ceann Comhairle: Can I have a reply to the Deputy's question, Tánaiste?

The Tánaiste (Lab): I will not withdraw. [...]

[...]

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): The Tánaiste should know dodging answering questions with the kind of inaccurate waffle he delivered at the beginning of his response is unedifying.

In example 23, excerpted from UI 194, Sinn Féin party members call on the Tánaiste to withdraw an allegation he has made about their party. McDonald responds to the allegation at the beginning of her turn by criticising the Tánaiste by saying that his

method of “dodging” questions is “unedifying”, which may be a way of undermining him. It can be argued that her reference to “inaccurate waffle” which she claims he used to avoid answering questions is a strategy to refute the allegations that he has made against her party. Use of the term “inaccurate” could also serve to delegitimise the Taoiseach’s authority by suggesting that he is mistaken in what he is saying.

24.

UI 205. 24.05.2011/26

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: [...] I find it rich to listen, not to Deputy Ó Caoláin, but to a Deputy who was a Minister of State when the Government allowed the Minister for Health and Children to distance herself so far from the Department that it was not merely at arm’s length but out of her control.

[...]

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: *I find it difficult to listen to that kind of rhetoric—

Deputy Billy Kelleher: We had to listen to it for 14 years.

Deputy Kathleen Lynch: —putting elderly people and their families under such pressure.

* I find, I just find it difficult to listen to that kind of rhetoric

In example 24, excerpted from UI 205, Lynch criticises Kelleher, the Deputy to whom she finds it “rich to listen”, with a metalinguistic reference to his “rhetoric”: “I just find it difficult to listen to that kind of rhetoric”. In so doing, she is highlighting her frustration at Kelleher’s party’s own role in the problems under debate, and suggesting that his words are meaningless. This strategy of weakening Kelleher’s attack may be seen a way of delegitimising his position.

25.

UI 210. 20.09.2011/18

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): The Taoiseach could have added to his list—

An Ceann Comhairle: A supplementary question, please, Deputy.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte (Lab): She should ask a question as these are questions to the Taoiseach.

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): She should propose a question for answer by the Taoiseach.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): I will move to use the interrogative case — the Taoiseach could have outlined that his comprehensive spending review is like a sword of Damocles hanging over the population headed up by the cutback Minister, Deputy Howlin.

[...]

An Ceann Comhairle: Can I have a question from the Deputy?)

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald:—and then points across the Chamber at Fianna Fáil.

Deputy Brendan Howlin: This is a political speech.

In example 25, excerpted from UI 210, McDonald is interrupted by government ministers at the beginning of her contribution to jokingly point out to her that the function of Leaders' Questions is to ask the Taoiseach a question. It can be argued that this is a strategy of undermining McDonald as it pre-emptively suggests that she is time-wasting in her contribution by delaying to pose a question. McDonald replies by stating she she will “use the interrogative case” to ask a question. Howlin further makes a metalinguistic comment on McDonald's language by stating that her contribution is “a political speech” rather than a supplementary question. This can be seen as an additional way of delegitimising McDonald's contribution.

26.

UI 215. 20.10.2011/03

The Tánaiste (Lab): I went on a trade mission to Japan and Korea last week. We will meet officials from India this week. We are pursuing a strategy of attracting investment from Asia.

Deputy Barry Cowen (FF): This is waffle.

In example 26, excerpted from UI 215, Cowen insults the Tánaiste with a metalinguistic comment by interjecting to refer pejoratively to what the Tánaiste says as waffle. It can be suggested that this is a strategy of undermining the Taoiseach by criticising the content of his contribution.

27.

UI 224. 30.11.2011/05

Deputy Lucinda Creighton (FG): A very good meeting of the Joint Committee on European Affairs took place yesterday. Less than 20 minutes ago, Deputy Martin referred to the committee as “nonsense”.

Deputy Micheál Martin (FF): I did not.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: I would like to make an important point.

Deputy Micheál Martin: I certainly did not.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: You did.

Deputy Micheál Martin: The Minister of State is playing politics.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: He said it was “nonsense”.

Deputy Micheál Martin: I said the Government's articulation of what happened was “nonsense”.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: That is precisely what the Deputy said on the record of this House.

Deputy Micheál Martin: This is pathetic.

[...]

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: Deputy Martin likes to fling accusations across the floor of the House when he thinks somebody from the media might be present. He prefers to play to the gallery, rather than getting down to the nitty-gritty of working on constructive engagement—

Deputy Micheál Martin: We are trying to engage.

[...]

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: I ask the Minister of State to conclude her reply.

Deputy Micheál Martin: The Minister of State is giving us this kind of pathetic nonsense.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: Here we go again with “pathetic nonsense”.

Deputy Micheál Martin: That is what it is.

In example 27, excerpted from UI 224, Creighton makes several references to the language used by Martin, the leader of Fianna Fáil, and there is disagreement between the two with regard to use of the term “nonsense” and his repeated criticism of what she is saying as “pathetic”. These accusations relate closely to metalanguage in that Creighton is accusing Martin of dishonesty in terms of his debate performance and is suggesting that he prefers to “play to the gallery” and to the media rather than engage cooperatively. Martin states that Creighton is “playing politics” rather than engaging in debate, which may be seen as a way of delegitimising Creighton’s contribution. He also states that Creighton is talking “pathetic nonsense”. Creighton responds by echoing him in a way which could be undermining him for his repetition: “Here we go again with “pathetic nonsense”, with Martin replying to counter her contribution with: “That is what it is”. These two opponents constantly refer critically to each other’s language use, possibly as a strategy to disempower the other speaker.

28.

UI 225. 01.12.2011/10

Deputy Luke ‘Ming’ Flanagan (Ind): [...] I always understood that the Labour Party was a socialist party and the idea of socialism was that everyone is treated equally. [...]

Deputy Róisín Shortall (Lab): The Deputy should read the programme for Government.

Deputy Luke ‘Ming’ Flanagan: The programme for Government is not socialist.

An Ceann Comhairle: We are using up time now.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: Never let facts get in the way of a good line.

In example 28, excerpted from UI 225, Shortall makes a metalinguistic comment on Flanagan's statement "The programme for Government is not socialist" in response to Flanagan's criticism of her party. Shortall claims that he is using that phrase as a sound bite and is ignoring the facts. By stating "Never let facts get in the way of a good line" she may be attempting to delegitimise his contribution by implying that it is lacking in substance.

29.

UI 250. 21.03.2012/16

The Tánaiste (Lab): *It is the height of hypocrisy for the Deputy to come before the House and utter all sorts of hyperbole about hundreds of thousands of people being taken to court, coerced, etc.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: The Tánaiste should tell me that I am wrong. He should indicate that people will not be taken to court.

* It is the height of hypocrisy for you to come in here and to go on with all of this hyperbole

In example 29, excerpted from UI 250, the Tánaiste makes metalinguistic reference to McDonald's language use, as he states that it is hypocritical for her to come into the chamber and "go on with all of this hyperbole". This may be an attempt to undermine McDonald's contribution by attacking her language use, with the Tánaiste implying that she is exaggerating by using hyperbolic language.

30.

UI 281. 09.12.2011/05

Deputy Catherine Byrne (FG): [...] Earlier, Deputy Ó Cuív referred to getting things wrong. Many things were got wrong in the past number of years. He told us we should go home and clear our consciences. I have a clear conscience and I will face into the Christmas season with a clear conscience. There is only one person to whom I need to confess, and that person is not in this Chamber or on this earth.

Deputy Barry Cowen (FF): Deputy Byrne is a brave woman.

Deputy John Halligan (Ind): Children's allowance to 140,000 families has been cut. Will the Deputy confess to them?

Deputy Catherine Byrne: I have not interrupted anyone in the Chamber on any occasion.

Deputy John Halligan: The Deputy is welcome to interrupt me when I am speaking.

Deputy Catherine Byrne: I do not need to.

In example 30, excerpted from UI 281, Byrne is interrupted and criticised for her party's policies as part of government. She responds to the act of being interrupted by stating that she has "not interrupted anyone in the Chamber on any occasion", in a strategy to regain the floor and threaten her opponents' face by criticising them for interrupting her. Byrne's motive here might be to imply that the metalinguistic practice of interrupting is impolite, and when Halligan welcomes her to interrupt him, she rebuts that she does not need to, which is a face-saving measure on her behalf.

31.

UI 288. 12.01.2012/07

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): The Minister tells us that he wants to address the issue of posts pre the DEIS programme. He also told us last night that the retention of pre-DEIS programme posts was a concessionary measure. His language in the course of the debate in recent weeks has been extremely revealing in the sense that there are legacy issues at play.

[...]

The term "concessionary" is most illuminating. I say to the Minister and his colleagues: we seek no concessions for children. The Minister is offering them no concessions. [...]

The Minister of State, Deputy Sherlock, commended his Labour Party colleagues on the backbenches for educating him on the realities of the cutbacks proposed in DEIS schools. I do not know how one should take this, but it seems strange.

Deputy Sean Sherlock (Lab): The Deputy is talking about the use of language, but she has played around with it herself.

McDonald makes metalinguistic reference to language used in the course of debate to criticise the government and the Labour party members in particular, stating that Minister Ruairí Quinn's "language in the course of the debate in recent weeks has been extremely revealing". Further, McDonald is critical of a phrase that the minister has used, saying "[t]he term "concessionary" is most illuminating", before suggesting that the government has not actually offered concessions. After McDonald targets Minister of State Sherlock's support for the actions, Sherlock responds by interjecting with a critical face-threatening comment on her language use: "The Deputy is talking about the use of language, but she has played around with it herself". Sherlock's interjection suggests a move to delegitimise McDonald's contribution by criticising her for having "played around" with language, which suggests that her contribution is stylised.

32.

UI 291. 24.01.2012/09

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): The Deputy obviously believes there is political capital in touting out the notion of I somehow defend top level pay when the truth by any objective criterion, is that nobody has reduced top level pay more than I have in one year. No Minister with responsibility for the public service has ever reduced top level pay across the public service more than I have. The Deputy knows she is talking poppycock in relation to that. [...]

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): I do not accept the Minister's L'Oreal defence of overpaid public servants that somehow they are worth it.

Deputy Brendan Howlin: That is another sound bite.

Example 32, excerpted from UI 291, shows Howlin's criticism of McDonald's language use. He states that McDonald thinks there is political capital in criticising him on a topic, when she "knows she is talking poppycock", thus suggesting that she is talking nonsense. He also criticises her comment on what she refers to as his "L'Oreal defence" of public servants, and implies that McDonald uses and repeats sound bites in her contributions: "That is another sound bite". Howlin mentions the issue of creating sound bites possibly as a method of undermining McDonald and attempting to damage her profile, as he suggests that McDonald's debate contributions lack meaningful content, or are aimed at attracting media attention.

33.

UI 299. 28.02.2012/06

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald (SF): [...]

The Minister repeatedly made a claim today that the sell-off of these assets is somehow a pathway to enhanced competitiveness and reduced prices. [...] It probably makes a good sound bite for the Minister in selling this fire sale but I do not think it is an argument he can substantiate. [...]

Deputy Brendan Howlin (Lab): It is very hard to take lectures about sound bites from Deputy McDonald. She is the master.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: I take that as it is intended.

Deputy Brendan Howlin: I say that as a compliment. She used four sound bites in the question, including representing it all as a fire sale when not only the decision but the memorandum of understanding with the troika makes it crystal clear there will not be a fire sale.

Example 33, excerpted from UI 299, is similar to that in example No. 32 above, as the interaction features the same two TDs and exhibits similar metalinguistic comments on the use of sound bites. It can be suggested that McDonald undermines Howlin by

stating that although selling off state assets “probably makes a good sound bite” it is not a good reason for selling them off. Thus, she implies that Howlin has not thought the decision through. Howlin is extremely critical of this comment by stating that he finds it difficult to take lectures from McDonald about sound bites, as “She is the master” of making them. This metalinguistic comment by Howlin may be aimed at delegitimising McDonald’s reference to sound bites, because he alleges that she regularly uses sound bites in her own contributions. He goes on to comment “I say that as a compliment”, and outlines that he counted four sound bites in her contribution in order to depict her as being a “master” of sound bites. As in the previous UI analysed in this category, Howlin is presumably suggesting that McDonald’s contributions are lacking as they are based around quotes aimed at attracting media attention.

Summary of analysis in this category

The analysis of metalanguage as a strategy pointed to its use to signify disapproval of and criticise an opponent’s language in various ways. TDs commented on the diversionary tactics of other members (No 4, UI 23; No 16, UI 163), such as interrupting another speaker to ask for the source of an allegation. Also, the strategy was used to suggest that other TDs were avoiding answering questions (No 1, UI 5; No 6, UI 42; No 8, UI 53; No 17, UI 164; No 18, UI 168; No 23, UI 194). In addition, metalinguistic comments were often used to delegitimise another TD’s contribution by describing it as waffle (No 6, UI 42; No 13, UI 104; No 23, UI 194; No 26, UI 215) or rhetoric (No 3, UI 18; No 19, UI 169; No 20, UI 172; No 21, UI 180; No 24, UI 205). From the analysis in this category, there were many instances of metalinguistic criticism which appeared to be directed in particular towards strong speakers who engaged in vocal criticism frequently or were in the process of making potentially powerful contributions (No 2, UI 8; No 7, UI 46; No 13, UI 104; No 25, UI 210, No 28, UI 225; No 31, UI 288; No 32, UI 291; No 33, UI 299). There were 26 instances of this strategy used by male TDs towards female speakers and 18 instances used by female TDs towards male speakers. Also, there were seven instances used by male TDs towards other male TDs, but no instances by female TDs towards other female TDs. Table 4 in Appendix F shows the gender of both the TD performing this type of linguistic strategy and the gender of the TD(s) on the receiving end of the linguistic strategy in each UI.

5.5 Conclusion

The current study has set out to investigate the ways in which linguistic strategies are used to negotiate power dynamics in debate. This chapter has analysed the corpus of UIs and suggested ways in which linguistic strategies may be used to undermine other speakers in debate interaction and delegitimise their positions. A wide range of linguistic strategies was found in the data and it can be suggested that these strategies are used to negotiate power dynamics in the chamber. In addition, the corpus of UIs was explored under the topic of gender and certain linguistic strategies used to invoke gender were identified.

The main observations from the analysis of the categories of patronising as a strategy, invoking gender as a strategy, insulting/accusing/criticising as a strategy and metalanguage as a strategy are outlined in bullet points below. The observations foregrounded here are developed, along with data from Chapter 6 on interviews, into findings for the study in Chapter 7.

Patronising as a strategy

- One type of patronising strategy identified in this category was language used strategically to depict an opponent as lacking in understanding or capability (in terms of political responsibilities or experience). These strategies may be used by TDs order to undermine an opponent.
- Several instances of patronising as a strategy show how these may be used to delegitimise another speaker's position by suggesting that the other speaker has lost emotional control or is overreacting during debate.
- The use of 'I know...' at the beginning of statements signalled a particular form of patronising strategy where patronising language is used in pretence, possibly to feign a sense of sincerity and understanding of another TD's situation in order to mock and undermine them.

- Three examples from the corpus show patronising language being used strategically to disempower an opponent.
- This category showed 12 instances of patronising language used by female TDs toward male TDs and five instances used by male TDs towards female TDs.

Invoking gender as a strategy

- Instances from the corpus showed ways in which gender may be invoked in the strategic use of language to undermine another speaker. More specifically, there were four instances of gendered language being used by female TDs towards male speakers to potentially emasculate them and call the expectations of their gender into question.
- The description for this category in Chapter 4 outlined how emasculation was defined. For the sake of gender equality, defeminisation, the binary opposite of emasculation, was also defined and included in the category of gendered strategies. Analysis of the corpus of UIs has not uncovered any occurrences of defeminisation.
- There was also one instance where gender appeared to be invoked as a strategic means of reclaiming the floor of debate.
- This category showed seven instances of invoking gender as a strategy used by female TDs toward male TDs and zero instances used by male TDs towards female TDs.

Insulting/Accusing/Criticising as a strategy

- Forms of insults, accusations and criticism were used to hold individuals to account for their actions and to undermine them and delegitimise their position.
- Criticising an opponent for a lack of cooperation with other parties in working towards an outcome was a moralistic way of undermining them. As the

summary of analysis in Section 5.4.3 shows, there were a number of instances of this strategy.

- Directly using another member's first name was a strong FTA, particularly as this is a rule-breaking move. Two examples of this were seen in analysis.
- Forms of accusation and criticism were often used to suggest that another TD had a lack of empathy towards the public.
- One common strategy using implication was the suggestion of disingenuousness on another member's part, for instance: "He knows full well that [...]". Moreover, there were many examples of forms of criticism and accusation used toward opponents to suggest that their actions or debate contributions were contradictory.
- With 22 instances of insulting/accusing/criticising as a strategy used by female TDs toward male TDs and 30 instances used by male TDs towards female TDs, it is suggested that the gender difference in the use of the strategy was not striking.

Metalanguage as a strategy

- Forms of metalanguage which accused other TDs of avoiding questions were frequently used to hold an opponent to account. It is suggested that this strategy was used to indicate a lack of clarity or accountability on another TD's behalf.
- There were many instances identified in analysis where members made reference during their contribution to the diversionary tactics of other TDs in order to criticise their language use and thus delegitimise their position.
- Metalanguage was also used as a strategy to undermine another speaker by pointing out repetition in terms of their comments, phrases or style of language, or accusing a TD of making a speech rather than asking a question. It is suggested in the summary of analysis for this category in Section 5.4.4 that this

strategy was used in particular to delegitimise the contributions of strong speakers in debate.

- A frequent strategy used to delegitimise an opponent's contribution was to refer to it in dismissive terms using words such as “waffle”, “blather”, “poppycock” etc. Similarly, the word “rhetoric” was frequently used in a negative manner to refer to a speaker as using empty words or language which lacked content.

- This category showed 18 instances of metalanguage as a strategy used by female TDs toward male TDs and 26 instances used by male TDs towards female TDs. As a result, it can be suggested that the gender difference in the use of this strategy was not particularly striking.

Chapter 6 Interview Analysis

6.1 Introduction

The 12 semi-structured interviews with practising parliamentarians that were outlined in the methodology are analysed in this chapter. After outlining how the interview data is categorised and structured, the chapter moves to the main analysis section, where the interview data is divided into categories related to the main themes of the questionnaire, and the data is discussed under headings for these categories. The chapter concludes by foregrounding how relevant findings from the interview data will be linked with findings from Chapter 5, the analysis of the UIs, in the next chapter.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the interview questionnaire was designed to relate to the study's central concepts of power, strategic language use and gender in the context of Dáil debate. The classification for the analysis of the UIs (i.e. the categories of invoking gender as a strategy, patronising as a strategy, insulting/accusing/criticising as a strategy, and metalanguage as a strategy) had not yet been concretely outlined at the interviewing stage of the study. As outlined in the methodology in Section 3.4.3, the questionnaire was thus designed to source a wide range of information from interviewees on topics relevant to language use and the realities of interaction in the Dáil chamber, rather than on specific linguistic strategies they used. Along with the essential questions, which are aimed at eliciting specific information (Berg 2004), such as whether a TD felt there was an aspect of performance in debate, or whether they responded to heckling during their contribution, a wide-ranging set of questions on other topics related to language use in interaction in the Dáil are included in the questionnaire.

A detailed description of the methods for the interviews is located in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.

6.2 Categorising the interview data

For clarity, the data from the 12 semi-structured interviews is discussed under four main

themes of analysis: performance in debate, heckling and its political function, power as a factor in debate, and gender as a factor in debate. While the themes of power as a factor in debate and gender as a factor in debate helped inform the drafting of the questionnaire, the theme of performance in debate emerged in the course of conducting the interviews. As discussed in Section 3.4.6, despite the topic being unsolicited, the concept of performance in debate was alluded to in pilot interviews. It was subsequently decided to make the topic more prominent given that the concept of performance could help the researcher towards a greater understanding of the processes of negotiating power in interaction. The theme of heckling and its political function emerged as the result of the way in which the questionnaire was designed. As mentioned in Section 3.4.3, the categorisation of linguistic strategies for analysis in Chapter 5 had not been concretely outlined at the stage when the questionnaire was designed. Therefore, the questionnaire included a number of questions on adversarial interaction and heckling in the chamber to align with the concept of strategic language use.

In this chapter, the analysis under these themes appears in the same order that the questions appeared in the questionnaire. The interviewer attempted to be consistent with the order of the questions, but this was not always possible. As the interviews were semi-structured in nature, respondents occasionally referred to a specific topic while answering a question on a different one. For instance, if an interviewee brought up the issue of heckling in response to a different question, the running order of the questions was changed to ask them a question on whether they thought heckling had a political function (Question 9, Appendix B).

The interview questionnaire contained 16 questions, and appears in Appendix B. The main topics of these questions are outlined in Table 6.1, which illustrates which questions were asked of which interviewees or, as indicated by brackets (X), which question topics emerged in responses even when the question had not been asked.

Table 6.1 Interview question topics

Question Topic	A ¹⁶	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Significance of debating	(X) ₁₇		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Conscious choice of language	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Broadcasting and public visibility	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Expectations of language use ¹⁸				X							X	X
Element of performance		(X)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rule adherence/Rule breaking	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X
Script or extemporise	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Good or effective speech	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Power aspect	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Heckling/adversarial nature	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Heckling as political function	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Adaptation for newer TDs		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Cooperative interaction	X	(X)	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Gender as a role in language use	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gender playing a part for negative or positive effect	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Prejudiced language	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
Equal balance of genders: effect on debate	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advice for new TDs	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X

Certain interview questions and responses are not included in the discussion of the interview data in this chapter, as some interview questions are more relevant to the four themes of analysis than others. Examples of interview questions that are less relevant

¹⁶ Letters A to L in the top row of the table refer to the 12 interviewees.

¹⁷ Note: Brackets (X) indicate that a question on the topic has not been asked, but the topic is nonetheless brought up by the interviewee.

¹⁸ The interview question “What would you describe as being expected of language use in the Dáil?” was put to only three interviewees. As the interviews with TDs were generally quite time-restricted, this question was omitted in other interviews in order to ask questions that are more central to the research questions of the study.

are: “What is a good or effective speech in the Dáil?” and “How significant is debating in terms of Dáil activities?”. As these questions did not relate closely to the four themes of performance in debate, heckling and its political function, power as a factor in debate and gender as a a factor in debate, they are not discussed in-depth in this chapter. However, some responses to these questions are included in the analysis, as due to the semi-structured nature of the interview, interviewees made comments in response to some questions that were relevant for other themes.

Each theme in Section 6.3 below begins with the background questions, which solicited the responses discussed under the theme. The interview data is analysed with reference to the study’s theoretical concerns of power, strategic language use and gender, and also with reference to the analysis of the Corpus of UIs in Chapter 5. For reasons of size, when several interviewees respond in similar ways on a point, one or two representative quotes were given instead of producing every relevant quote. Appendix C includes additional relevant responses that do not appear in the body of the thesis.

The number of interviewees who gave a similar response was counted in order to make stronger cases for arguments. This was particularly pertinent when the arguments had similarities with or differences from the findings of Chapter 5.

In order to ensure anonymity, the 12 interviewees are referred to by the first 12 letters of the alphabet as Interviewee A through to Interviewee L. Table 3.2 in Section 3.4.7 contains a breakdown of the gender of each of the 12 candidates, and also states whether they are in government (Gov) or in opposition (Opp). They are referred to as Interviewee X or (X, gender, Gov/Opp status) throughout the chapter. The political affiliation of each interviewee has been concealed for reasons of anonymity. Also, the full-length transcripts of the interviews are not included in the appendices in order to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees.

6.3 Interview Themes

6.3.1 Theme A: Performance in debate

As discussed in Chapter 2, performance is considered in this study, as reflecting on the concept of performance helps to contextualise why parliamentarians use language

strategically in debate and how this could affect the power dynamics of debate interaction. An issue related to performance which has also been foregrounded in Chapter 2 is Wodak's (2009) concept of 'frontstage' and 'backstage'. This study has thus far focused on the 'frontstage' of the debating chamber by analysing the transcripts of 'frontstage' debate interaction in Chapter 5. Although interviewees were not asked directly if they felt there was a 'frontstage' and 'backstage' aspect to political debate, the concept was alluded to in two interviewee responses and is therefore included in this category due to its connection with performance.

Interviewees were asked: "Would you say there is an element of performance in debates?". This question was asked in order to gain insights into the realities of speaking in parliament, to learn more about the perceptions of language use by politicians and to highlight what makes the parliamentary chamber different from other sites of discourse.

Out of 11 interviewees, nine had a negative interpretation of the term 'performance'.¹⁹ These nine interviewees seemed to interpret this term in a negative light, by referring to some members as using debate to put on a show, or play to an audience. One interviewee expressed her distaste with this style of behaviour and described her experiences of curbing this kind of behaviour when chairing a debate:

I mean some of the antics down in the chamber, you see yourself, with some people you know jumping up and down, carrying on and making a circus out of the place...I mean I think that's wrong. [...] We're not here to perform. (K, female, Gov)²⁰

Interviewee K also felt that gender played a role to this form of performance, stating that she felt that male TDs engaged in the practice more. Her response on the topic of performance was the only one from the interviews where gender emerged as playing a

¹⁹ As stated in the description of the methodology in Chapter 3, the question on performance was not asked in the pilots, but emerged unsolicited as a topic in one pilot interview.

²⁰ Interview transcription key: **Bold**: interviewer utterance; *Italics*: emphasis in interviewee utterance; [...]: part of longer quote omitted; ...: hesitation or short pause.

role, which suggests that the majority of respondents did not connect gender with the role of performance.

Four interviewees discussed the aspect of members playing to the gallery during debate, and brought up that specific term when responding to the question on performance, but also to the interview's first question, which solicited general views on the significance of debate. Two relevant quotes are below (see additional quotes in Appendix C):

it *can* be [significant] on certain issues, but sometimes there is some playing to the public gallery or, I presume if you're on camera you know you may play around. (H, female, Opp)

a lot of debate is kind of playing to the gallery, em and a lot of the debate is sort of agenda led, what I mean by that is you know the issues raised on that day might be in the front page of the Irish Times or the Irish Independent. (D, male, Gov)

Only two interviewees admitted that they engage, or had engaged in the practice of performing in this way. One said there was a huge amount of “mock-horror and all that sort of stuff” in relation to performance, and reflecting on her own contribution, added:

Obviously I'd want to say I don't do it – I'd imagine everybody says that.
(L, female, Opp)

In saying this, Interviewee L seemed to suggest that she did not think that the other TDs the researcher was interviewing would admit to performing in this way.

The other TD who said she had engaged in this behaviour spoke about performance as something most people “might do some of the time”, and also admitted that she had performed in this way and regretted it:

I don't really like it so sometimes even when I do it, I don't like it, you know what I mean looking back I wish I was more em, less doing that, less performing or whatever. (F, female, Gov)

The fact that debates are televised and that there is greater media presence during the more public segments of debate was a point made in responses. Interviewee G (male, Opp) was of the opinion that the behaviour of government and party leaders during Leaders' Questions was a type of performance for the media. He stated that he observed this from the body language of the speakers, when party leaders looked up to the press gallery in the chamber at times when they had made a good point. Similarly, another interviewee was of the opinion that "set piece occasions" such as Leaders' Questions lent themselves to the element of performing for the media, particularly from higher-ranking speakers such as party leaders:

There is a hierarchy of speakers [...] so in their case there is a bit of theatrics, there is a bit of, you know, performance in terms of looking to outside. (I, male, Gov)

Another interviewee gave an example of a politician performing in terms of "doing a set piece for her voters", i.e. being aware of how she was perceived by the public, when she used hard language in criticising a bill by her own party:

I was in my office and turned it up,²¹ it was *so* hard that I thought, "she's jumping".²² She's not; she ended it by saying, "of course, I'll vote for this Bill". So what's the point? So why stand up and say there's going to be a revolution in Ireland if you pass this piece of legislation *and I'm going to vote for it?* Because she will show the first bit of that to her constituents. So it's a performance. (E, male, Opp)

In contrast to the above views on performance as an act, three interviewees made reference to the value of a good performance during their contribution to debate and how this could have impact. One pilot interviewee who had not been asked the question on performance made this point. In describing how she felt that experienced politicians know how to use debate to their advantage she described performance as a necessary skill to get points across to other TDs or ministers effectively:

²¹ Each TD has a TV showing rolling Dáil coverage in their Leinster House office.

²² Voting against her party.

But you see the Dáil chamber is very much like being on stage, now it's – I don't mean we're *acting* but it is a performance that you need to give and sometimes the point that you want to make albeit based on words and argument and legality and legislation *does* depend on how you can perform. So if you perform very well, naturally your stuff is going to be taken in a more positive manner. (B, female, Gov)

Similarly, Interviewee C (female, Opp) mentioned performance in the context of their personal aim of getting their point across and reaching a resolution:

I don't want to go in and talk for the sake of talking, and clocking up the miles, I will want something out of everything that I contribute [...] the performance from me is to get the attention of the Minister – it is to focus on getting a resolution or getting attention. (C, female, Opp)

Also, Interviewee J (male, Opp) felt that being able to perform as well “or better” than a minister was important if one had “a particularly pertinent point to make”. It was interesting to note that only three interviewees responded to the general question on performance with a comment reflecting on performance as a means of getting a point across to another TD and reaching some sort of successful outcome where possible.

In response to the question on performance, the majority of responses viewed performance as negative or performance as an act, in the sense that they saw certain TDs performing for political reasons, or for getting attention in the media rather than having anything meaningful to contribute to debate. In respect of the analysis of the corpus of UIs in Chapter 5, the opinions of these interviewees on performance as negative or performance as an act relates to metalanguage as a category. A strong pattern of behaviour from Chapter 5, where metalanguage as a category is analysed, shows how TDs make reference to perceived diversionary tactics used by other members. By doing so, these TDs are undermining other members for engaging in performance as an act. The prevalence of opinions from interviewees on the negative aspect of performance suggests that they are highly aware that performance can be used strategically by TDs.

The concept of ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’ was discussed in Chapter 2 as being relevant for the study in that it could provide insights into and contextualise the workings of politics that are not visible on the ‘frontstage’ of the Dáil debate chamber. The interviews in themselves provide information to the ‘backstage’ of the workings of Dáil debate. A contrast between the ‘frontstage’ of the chamber and a ‘backstage’ in Leinster House was referred to indirectly by two interviewees, and their comments below are particularly interesting in describing how relations between TDs in the Dáil may seem more acrimonious in the chamber than they are in reality. One interviewee gave a description of how members can argue heatedly in debate, but be amicable behind the scenes afterwards, thus drawing attention to what she saw as the negative “show-making” side to performance:

there’s certainly an element of lack of genuine eh emotion I suppose in it yeah, and show-making you know. (L, female, Opp)

At that point, the researcher opined that there was an aspect of ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’ to the performance in the Dáil chamber, with which Interviewee L agreed:

Interviewer: And I’ve often found that there’s a ‘frontstage’ and a ‘backstage’ to the chamber – like you were saying, TDs would be the best of friends afterwards.

(L): Yeah, 100 per cent. (L, female, Opp)

Regardless of how heated debate interaction became, according to the other interviewee, relationships in the Dáil outside of the chamber were very amicable:

when you walk out of the chamber there is nothing personal like we’re all, we all speak to each other. (H, female, Opp)

She gave an example of how another TD had attacked her during debate but apologised to her after leaving the chamber:

another TD came down and disagreed with the points I made and was speaking afterwards and kind of got stuck on me a little bit on it, but I mean I was able to

take it he kind of looked at me a few times and said it, and the Ceann Comhairle said “you don't speak to the person, speak to the chair”, and the first thing he said to me when he came outside of the chamber “I'm so sorry, I hope I didn't upset you”. And I said, “not at all”.

Directly after Interviewee H provided this example, she also agreed with the researcher's suggestion that there was a ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’ to the chamber:

Interviewer: Yeah – there is kind of a ‘frontstage’ and a ‘backstage’.

(H): There is, yeah. And the minute he went out “I hope you know, you didn't take offence”–“*Not* at all” I said to him you know, but he made sure that he okayed it with me, leaving the chamber!

The comments by these two interviewees contrasting ‘frontstage’ Dáil interaction with the behaviour between TDs ‘backstage’ suggest that the Dáil chamber, the ‘frontstage’ part of politics which is accessible to the public, is used for performative elements in debate. Furthermore, their comments regarding the ‘backstage’ to the chamber, where relations between TDs can be more amicable than what is portrayed in debate, suggest that there are complex levels of interaction within the CoP that are not always visible to the public.

6.3.2 Theme B: Heckling and its political function

The practice of heckling and the adversarial aspects of debate formed the background to the questions below. Interviewees were first introduced to the topic of heckling with the following questions: “Do you think that the interactions between politicians in the Dáil chamber are sometimes adversarial?” or “What is your take on heckling?”. A follow-on question, “Is there a political function to heckling?”, was asked in order to explore the impact of heckling. A further rationale for asking this more specific question was to bring the issue of strategic language use into the frame, in respect of the research question which aims to examine the ways in which language is used strategically by TDs to negotiate power dynamics in the parliamentary chamber.

In response to the question which introduced the topic, the majority of respondents had a negative view of heckling. However, nine of the 12 interviewees admitted to having heckled, stating that they had heckled when they felt it was necessary. One rationale given by the interviewees for heckling had to do with getting a point across to an opponent or holding the government to account. The following interviewee described how she had heckled with other opposition members to get a point across to the Taoiseach, on an occasion where he was focusing on an individual case but not acknowledging that there was a system failure:

I tend not to [heckle], occasionally I will if it's outrageous. If a point needs to be pressed home [...] So I remember heckling that day, because it was *necessary* for the opposition to get it across, and I wouldn't say there was anybody in the opposition that didn't heckle on that particular point. (C, female, Opp)

Another rationale given by the interviewees for heckling was to rebut an accusation made during a contribution. Another TD who did heckle demonstrated self-awareness of the public visibility of debate. When mentioning that heckling “comes out terrible” he was presumably talking about the live broadcast of debate. Despite this comment, he felt that heckling was necessary:

it comes out terrible, you know fine well it comes out bad, but what do you do, do you allow [a Government minister] to make the claim as if it's a valid claim? (G, male, Opp)

Interviewee G's comment reflected the perceived need for parliamentarians to heckle as a means of protecting their political reputation, and thus their face. This rationale for heckling as a protective function shows the effect that FTAs can have on debate participants. It may explain why the UI analysis in Chapter 5 has shown many examples of TDs responding immediately to counter insults, accusation or criticism from other members.

Heckling is used in debate to attack a politician and threaten their face. Even interviewees who stated that they rarely heckled – and chose to use the more innocuous

terms of “interject” or “retort” rather than “heckle” to describe their own behaviour – explained that they found it difficult not to react to some statements by other TDs:

I...*don't* heckle, I interject at times if I feel somebody's kind of misconstruing a situation or an item, or not being totally – or being a wee bit too economical with the truth. (D, male, Gov)

speaking from a personal point of view- I don't do much heckling myself. Now sometimes you get quite annoyed with the things people say in the Dáil so you retort to what they're saying. (B, female, Gov)

In general, respondents spoke negatively about the practice of heckling, for instance, describing it as “damn bad manners” (J, male, Opp), or spoke about how they “hate that” (L, female, Opp). Four of the 12 interviewees demonstrated awareness of how adversarial interaction “looks bad” (F, female, Gov) to the public, and that it was damaging to politics:

I think that the whole adversarial approach has been *enormously* detrimental...This approach that has been adopted, whereby people try, they go to the ends of the Earth to damage the people on the other side, without, I think, realising that they're damaging the entirety of the body politic. (J, male, Opp)

I think the public are a bit sick of [heckling], to be quite honest. (D, male, Gov)

In response to the question “Is there a political function to heckling?” many interviewees commented in a negative light on the strategic use of heckling. One said she felt TDs on both sides of the chamber, used heckling for posturing or for diverting attention from the real issues. She explained that heckling by her fellow members in opposition impeded other opposition members:

some on our side who are great at shouting and roaring, they even shout and roar down their *own* side just to get heard. (L, female, Opp)

This comment links to the discussion of performance under Theme A in the chapter. Interviewee L also mentioned that when other TDs in her own group of Independents coordinated heckling to disrupt the Dáil, she did not find that this was of benefit, as it reduced the availability of time left to debate. In total, four of the 12 interviewees mentioned that there was an element of unofficial ‘coordination’ of heckling as a strategic move by groups of TDs in debate. Responses from these interviewees outlined that they felt that heckling was orchestrated by some members as a tactical move to undermine a powerful speaker by disrupting the flow of their speech:

if somebody is on their feet from a particular party and they’re doing really really well and they have an issue that another party is having a bad time with then you may find that they would see it coming and it would be coordinated to best effect. (H, female, Opp)

if heckling starts, it interrupts your flow, it's impossible to—not impossible, it’s very difficult either to continue over that there or if you have to stop, they've disrupted your flow, so you’re, you know you're not building up, you have to start back again. (G, male, Opp)

In contrast to the negative aspects of heckling, six of the 12 interviewees alluded to heckling as having a useful function given the rules of the institution. As described in Section 2.3.4, the Dáil does not have a formal function for a member to ‘give way’, unlike some parliamentary chambers. One interviewee felt that the opportunity for a TD to interject, whether through heckling or through making a formal point of order, was described as important because of the lack of a function to give way. He also described heckling as useful for allowing an immediate rebuttal of the point being made:

I wouldn’t like to see a world where no one was allowed heckle [...] I think it’s important, you know, if someone is talking nonsense, or making provocative points, that you should be able to say, you know, “I disagree” or “You’re being disingenuous” or “You’re not considering the following” or “We’ve already done all of that...” (E, male, Opp)

This view was shared by Interviewee F (female, Gov), who saw heckling as “a bit of a valve” because she felt debate was not conducive to sharing of information or dialogue, due to the restriction of turn-taking. Interviewee C also described how useful points could be made through heckling and that it had a useful function in terms of giving way (see additional quote in Appendix C).

Gender emerged as a significant factor in interviewee responses on the topic of heckling, with nine of the 12 interviewees stating that in general, male TDs partook more in heckling than female. Two female TDs felt very strongly that male TDs enjoyed engaging in heckling:

I have *no* doubt in my mind that it's a men's thing. I couldn't see women heckling in the chamber I really couldn't. **[Interviewer: Have you seen instances of women heckling?]** Not really, [...] there may have been, but I haven't actually seen them, but I just think that this heckling thing is a macho thing. (K, female, Gov)

The men seem to like it alright – they seem to be very good at it and seem to enjoy it and it's kind of their...*banter*, I suppose; it seems to be a difference between the women TDs in the Dáil and the men as well but – the men seem to really like where they can catch out an opponent. (B, female, Gov)

When one male interviewee who also felt men heckled more was probed further with the follow-on question: “Women do heckle as well, don't you think?”, they responded that they felt there was a gender distinction to heckling:

Yeah, [women] do, but I think it's in a constructive way, it's more constructive than just trying to – one-upmanship. [...] Now there's stereotypes, so sorry about that! (D, male, Gov)

Another point made about the role of gender in heckling regarded the direction of heckling towards other TDs, with four of the 12 interviewees, two male and two female interviewees, mentioning that male TDs typically heckled female TDs less, although there were exceptions.

I think there is typically less heckling of female politicians, with the exception of [female opposition TD], who gets it as much of the rest of us get it, you know; she's better able to deal with it than the rest of us as well. (E, male, Opp)

One male respondent felt that men heckled women less because that was the “mannerly” thing to do, but it also depended on whether the speaker was “orderly” in their contribution and in their tone:

generally you would be a little bit, it would be more gentlemanly I think with female speakers than male speakers. To an extent. **[Okay, to an extent.]** Only – if the person that has the floor whether they're male or female, is gentlemanly or lady-...you know, is orderly in their contribution, it's going to be pretty – you're going to be ungentlemanly in terms of interrupting or taking a different ah taking a different...*tone* to the way you approach it. **[So it depends on the style of their speaking?]** Yeah, it does. (A, male, Opp)

One female interviewee, Interviewee H (female, Opp), mentioned how she felt that the opposition would “treat her with a bit more respect” and heckle her less in comparison with a more prominent female TD in her party. She felt that personality was the key factor in being targeted for heckling, and said that ‘moderate’ speakers, as she described herself, were heckled less. This demonstrates that while gender is one factor in whether a member is heckled, their status as frontbencher or backbencher may come into play. Interviewee H made a comparison between herself and another female member of the Dáil who frequently received heckling, and attributed this heckling to the other TD's speaking style:

Maybe it's because she has a lot of ‘oomph’ in what she says. (H, female, Opp)

However, as has been pointed out, a third of interviewees did feel that gender played a role, as they said that women were heckled less.

Three interviewees mentioned a function of heckling that was unrelated to adversarial relations. They reasoned that TDs often heckled to entertain themselves and to make the

debate more engaging and a “bit of fun” (J, male, Opp). Heckling also was said to have a “mischief-making” function, as seen in this quote:

in some cases it's just a means of being mischief-making. **[Mmhm, I suppose that's a function too ((laughs))]** It is yeah, it is yeah. And it also brings a level – a note of brevity (sic) and a light-hearted note as well to it. (I, male, Gov)

Another interviewee discussed the function of light relief provided by heckling:

the heckling also can be quite funny as well [...] a little bit of humour or a little bit of heckling can release a little bit of tension as well because there is a lot of tension in the Dáil chamber. (B, female, Gov)

The third interviewee who outlined a non-adversarial function of heckling was an opposition interviewee who felt that frustration and boredom due to the restrictions of debate was the reason behind why so many government backbenchers heckled, giving an example of a government backbencher who heckles frequently:

He's bored! He's a guy with a lot to say, [...] he's an experienced, *passionate* politician. And it's frustration [...] the only time they can say anything provocative is when they heckle. Whereas in opposition we can say provocative things all the time, because you're in opposition. (E, male, Opp)

The responses to the questions on heckling show that it is used strategically in debate in various ways. Half of the participants felt that it had a very important function in rebuttal, which suggests that heckling is used as a face-saving measure in debate, in that parliamentarians may heckle as a means of protecting their political reputation, and thus their face. Participants also said that they heckled to get their points across or hold the government to account. In contrast, though, it was clear that interviewees were aware of the negative public perception of heckling. This may be the reason why the majority of interviewees expressed negative feelings about the practice. The fact that half of the interviewees did not mention any positive aspects to heckling perhaps indicates that any positive functions they felt it may possess are outweighed by what they see as a negative perception of heckling by the public.

6.3.3 Theme C: Power as a factor in debate

Given that the research questions of the study focus on the ways in which linguistic strategies are used to negotiate the power dynamics of parliamentary debate, it was important to obtain responses from interviewees on how they felt aspects of power were at play in debate interaction.

In response to the question “Do you see a link between how some people use language and how they have access to power?” several interviewees asked for the question to be clarified. Perhaps due to the fact that aspects of power exist on several levels in debate, the question was not phrased clearly enough. The researcher therefore clarified the question further to ask for interviewees’ insights on powerful language in terms of the choice of words that TDs use, and on the aspect of power in terms of a TD’s visibility in debate.

There was a limitation to the interview questionnaire in that this question on the issue of power was not clear and could have been worded in a different way. The question had not posed problems in comprehension during the pilot interview stage, and so was not changed when the original questionnaire was re-evaluated. However, it posed comprehension difficulties for some of the post-pilot interviewees, perhaps due to the abstract nature of the concept of power. While several interviewees gave thought-provoking answers to this question, some did not fully engage with the question.

The most significant view held by interviewees in response to the question on power in debate was that power is needed to deliver a good argument and communicate well. Five of the 12 interviewees made the observation that a TD had power in terms of giving a good speech and holding people’s attention. The ability to deliver a speech well was mentioned as important (see additional quotes in Appendix C):

certainly the words we use and the way we construct and the way we picture our remarks is equally as important. (I, male, Gov)

I would think all right, depending on the person you are – personality has a lot to do it as well, you know – power language and personality, and it depends on

how you deliver the speech. Two people could deliver the same speech completely differently, you know? So I think sometimes power and boisterousness and loudness em – can go hand in hand. (H, female, Opp)

Another interviewee expressed doubt about a direct link between language and power, but also felt that the ability to construct a good argument was powerful:

I'm not sure if there is a direct correlation between language and power. However, for somebody who can speak extremely well in the Dáil and who can construct very good arguments round the point that they try to make, well that *is* power if you're setting out your argument and you have everything to back it up and you can deliver that in an extremely good way, then I would say you *are* gaining power. (B, female, Gov)

However, three interviewees indicated that they did not look so favourably on seemingly eloquent speakers who received media attention. These TDs' responses relate to Theme A (Performance in debate), in that they also reflect negatively on the aspect of performance:

sometimes people who are very eloquent in terms of their pattern of speech get picked up [by the media] and sometimes I wonder why they do because when I look at the content it would be a little bit deficient. (C, female, Opp)

Interviewee J (male, Opp) felt that some members “are not beloved by the media because they perhaps don't have the type of language that lends itself readily towards catchphrases”, but suggested that those TDs who appeared in the media more often had power in some respect, because they would be contacted by journalists more frequently for comment. Also, in response to a later question in the questionnaire on advice for new TDs entering the Dáil, another interviewee made a relevant point on the importance of being able to “package” what they say:

Like you'll have some greater orators who just talk shite, like the content of it is crap but it sounds great [...] Whereas you could have someone else who'd be stuttering and stumbling and brutal, but they might have a genuinely held view

and I think you do need to package – there’s a responsibility to package; there’s people in here who have stuff to say who don’t deliver it well and it loses all impact as a result of it, and that is a problem. (L, female, Opp)

Interviewee L’s comment on TDs having a “responsibility” to package a contribution suggests that participants feel the need to be able to give a powerful performance in the Dáil. In response to a question on advice for new members, another female interviewee (H, female, Opp) stated that she would have liked to have had some training in public speaking skills before entering Leinster House to learn how to deal with having to speak in front of cameras.

Two interviewees alluded to the notion of a debate contribution being used to put political pressure on another member as powerful. One of these, Interviewee F (female, Gov) said that while there were different forms of power at play in debate, using questions to hold a minister to account was a type of power which was particularly valuable:

So you're getting stuff out again in the public domain from the opposition's point of view, you're holding the minister to account. And that's actually good power as well. (F, female, Gov)

This view may be linked with findings of the analysis of the UIs in Chapter 5, where FTAs have been seen to be used by members of the opposition to hold government TDs to account.

Two interviewees discussed that they felt they had a greater chance of engagement and connection with a minister by going off-script during their contribution, or by getting the minister themselves to go off-script (F, female, Gov; see quote in Appendix C under ‘Getting media coverage’). This form of direct, off-script engagement with a minister was also seen as powerful by another interviewee, because by purposefully “putting the script down” a TD could speak directly to a government member who held a high position of power:

The other time you would go off-script, I would go off-script is when you're really trying to get a message to a minister or the Taoiseach. [...] you might have them for 5 minutes, like that's an *incredibly* valuable thing to be used with care and respect, you know. (E, male, Opp)

The act of going off-script, as mentioned by these interviewees, could be seen as a direct and powerful strategy for contributing in debate. The analysis of the corpus of UIs in Chapter 5 indicates that linguistic strategies are often used in parts of contributions that are unscripted. This could suggest that TDs may have more freedom to use linguistic strategies, or are more likely to use them, when they extemporise rather than when they keep closely to a script. It could be that experience may play a role as well as gender, as three interviewees made mention of the fact that their speaking confidence had increased since first entering the Dáil and as they had become used to the environment. One, comparing her current performance to her performance when elected previously to the Dáil, said she did not keep to notes as frequently as she had before:

certainly the last time I used scripts much more than I do now, em and I'm much more comfortable without a script [...] maybe if there's a piece of research, I'll bring in that piece of research and I'll quote from it. (C, female, Opp)

Three interviewees of the 10 who were asked the question on using a script in debate (Question 2, Appendix B) indicated that they kept to a script or notes for at least the beginning of their contribution. One interviewee commented that they felt that women tended to use their notes more than men, for the reason that women spoke more briefly and preferred to keep to the point more than men. When probed further by the interviewer as to why she thought that might be the case, she commented:

em I think we just, I think it's just the way we, we're made up I think ah we much prefer to be succinct, to the point, get up, do the business and get back down again. (B, female, Gov)

One final point, despite being mentioned by only one interviewee, is included due to its relevance to the theme of power as a factor in debate. Interviewee G (male, Opp) spoke

about power as related to visibility and prominence in the chamber, saying that he would be less critical of backbenchers because of their relative ‘powerless’ status in the chamber. He described an incident where he did not respond when a government backbencher was criticising him, because he viewed that particular backbencher as lacking in status within the chamber:

Now if that was a minister, you'd be putting out a press release on it, or if it was a senior person in government. But because it was a backbencher and because, look, they just didn't know or they didn't understand or what they were saying was foolish, you know, it would have actually damaged them and damaged their support – you just let it go because it would be a bit cruel.

No interviewees referred directly to a strategic use of language being used in relation to power in responses to the question on the topic of power, or related questions which provided relevant responses to the topic. As has been outlined in this section, interviewees seemed to be more aware of power in the terms of being able to make a good contribution in debate. In light of the analysis of the corpus of UIs in the previous chapter, which suggests that powerful speakers are targeted during their contribution by opponents, it is interesting that TDs in the interviews demonstrated awareness of how a speaker’s language can constitute power in debate interaction.

6.3.4 Theme D: Gender as a factor in debate

As one of the research questions of the study asks whether TDs use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate, it was necessary to gain views from interviewees on how the aspects of language and gender might relate. This category focuses on responses to questions which asked interviewees to reflect on whether they thought gender played a role in terms of language use and in terms of contribution to debate. One of the questions put to interviewees was: “Do you think the gender of a speaker plays a role in how TDs contribute to debate?”. A further question asked: “Would a more equal balance in gender on the chamber benches have an effect on the nature of debate, in your opinion?”. The rationale behind this question was to pose a hypothetical situation, by asking interviewees whether they thought greater equality in terms of women’s representation on parliamentary level would affect debate interaction.

Four participants, three female and one male, described the Dáil as a male environment or a men's club – with one of the four also mentioning that there was “an awful lot of testosterone” present in the chamber (B, female, Gov). According to Interviewee D (male, Gov), because of the heavily dominated male environment, “there's no female bravado in there – it's all male bravado”. Another male interviewee (G, male, Opp) opined that some female TDs were uncomfortable participating in debate because of its aggressive nature, but also said that in terms of participation in debate, some other female TDs would “show the men *up*”.

One interviewee (H, female, Opp) foregrounded personality and “DNA and makeup” as factors which played a part in language use, but she did feel that gender also played a part:

I think in general em most men holler and its water off a duck's back really. I think that they don't get bothered about things as much as women. Am I right in saying that, do you think? **[Well, it's an opinion]** Hmm. I think that we dwell over issues for a little longer I think. (H, female, Opp)

Her response suggested some uncertainty, as she sought the interviewer's opinion on whether the interviewer thought she was correct in this statement.

While one respondent, Interviewee J (male, Opp), stated initially that he felt gender did not play a role in debate, he went on to give an interesting example of how a former female colleague of his who had been a minister was denigrated outside of the chamber in the media, but also during debate (see quote in Appendix C under ‘Unfair treatment of women TDs’).

In terms of the language used by TDs, as in word choice or argument style, most interviewees did not feel that gender played a role. Eight out of 12 responded that there was no difference between male and female TDs in terms of the language they used, or that factors other than gender, such as politics or personality of the speaker were more relevant.

Also, in responses from three male interviewees it seemed that they were drawn to stereotypes on male or female language, but were wary of committing to them. A male interviewee mentioned that he thought that “maybe women stick to the point”, but was reluctant to make generalisations: “I think men can digress...no, this is too much of a generalisation” (D, male, Gov). Two other responses from male interviewees were in a similar vein:

you could argue that in some cases the empathy that a female colleague brings is much better...but no, that would be unfair to them because each of us comes to the parliament in our own right, in our own identity, with our own credibility on an issue and no, so I don't think gender has a place – for me it doesn't. (I, male, Gov)

I don't think so; maybe to some extent women have more focused on the emotional aspects of, of...no, I don't really think so. Overall I don't think so. (J, male, Opp)

One female interviewee alluded to stereotypes about male and female language, when she stated that she thought men broke the rules of debate more:

I think men do. I think it's a more macho kind of thing, [mmhm] I don't see it much with the women. (K, female, Gov)

Another female interviewee, in response to a question asking whether more women in the chamber would have an effect on rule-breaking and other aspects of debate, strongly rejected stereotypes:

it's not like you know women would come in and all be soft, and everybody would speak in turn [mm] and everything would be by consensus. (F, female, Gov)

Interestingly, one female respondent subverted a stereotype about women's language being flowery by stating that she felt there was a gender difference in the language that TDs use in that women were “less flowery” than men in their debate contributions:

yeah, I actually do. I think that the women would tend to be a lot less flowery, a lot more em, issue-based... tending not to meander about things. (B, female, Gov)

A male interviewee also echoed this point about women digressing less in debate. At the same time, he was wary of making generalisations:

I think men can digress...no, this is too much of a generalisation [...] there can be more of a seanachai²³ element to male contributions ((laughs)) and maybe women stick to the point and ah obviously try to get across the message that they wanted to get across. I'm probably generalising there, but that's probably from my own experience. (D, male, Gov)

These observations were very different to the views on women having different language and style of speaking held by a female interviewee, who made certain assumptions about language used by women TDs in debate:

I think [women's] language is less agitated and less personal [...] I might disagree with what [other TDs] say but I wouldn't go out of my way to kind of insult them, you know that kind of way. I suppose, I find, maybe it's just the nature of women. (K, female, Gov)

As described under Theme B above, the majority of interviewees felt that men heckled more than women:

And probably women tend to less shout and roar for sure, I think they do, yeah. (L, female, Opp)

A similar opinion was also held by one interviewee who stated elsewhere that gender did not play a role in debate contribution:

predominantly more male members tend to heckle them female, which is...I can't answer why that is but that seems to be the way. (I, male, Gov)

²³ 'Storyteller' in the Irish language.

Two interviewees suggested that there was a physiological difference between men and women, in that men's voices are louder:

[men] have obviously the ability to throw their voices which I certainly don't have myself. (F, female, Gov)

so it is *easier* for men to project over heckling, for example, so it's easier to shout down a female politician than it is a male politician because men can just go louder. (E, male, Opp)

In terms of language use, however, Interviewee E compared female TDs who were less active in adversarial interaction in debate to those who were frequently adversarial. He suggested that the question of gender playing a role in debate was complex, and said that he could not answer that question accurately.

Several interviewees thought that gender played a role in affecting the linguistic interaction of other speakers. Four interviewees felt that male TDs, in general, heckled women less. Interviewee A (male, Opp) stated he would act "more mannerly if it was a female speaker" and Interviewee L (female, Opp) felt that men would "find it harder to shout down a woman". One female interviewee more explicitly mentioned chivalry as a relevant concept. She also commented that the unequal gender representation in the Dáil may play a part in why men heckled women less.

I also think the women tend to have it possibly a little bit easier in the Dáil because the Dáil is mainly three-quarters men and I don't think the men like to attack the women insofar...I don't think – I don't think it's the done thing, I think there's chivalry in the Dáil. (B, female, Gov)

The suggestion from four interviewees that men would heckle women less in debate, and the views of other TDs on notions of chivalry and manners affecting language use and debate interaction can be discussed in light of the analysis of the corpus of UIs in Chapter 5. As discussed in Section 4.3, the study did not specifically analyse heckling. However, many examples of male TDs heckling female TDs appear in examples from

the UIs in analysis in the previous chapter. This contradicts the views of those interviewees who felt that, in general, women were heckled less.

One interviewee (D, male, Gov) mentioned instances of women using gendered language in council meetings and the Dáil “to dominate, maybe overpower *men*”. He described how it had the effect of making a joke of a male colleague. What he described as the “gender defence” could be used effectively by female TDs, in his opinion:

even while maybe women are in the minority in politics, I think some women could use it very effectively and I remember [a female government minister]²⁴ being attacked and she responded by saying, “you’re just saying that because I’m a woman” so you know, used the fact that women are a minority in terms of representation...you know, the gender defence. (D, male, Gov)

A female interviewee also reflected on TDs using gender to their advantage, and said she disagreed with the stereotypes that only men heckled in the chamber:

I’ve heard women TDs even say that here, and it’s not true, because the women can do just as much of it as the men, and in a way that’s a bit of a tactic, you know, “don’t heckle me, because you’re heckling a woman”, well you know, in a way that can kind of put them on in the defensive. (F, female, Gov)

Although interviewees were not asked directly to comment on linguistic strategies, there was a one link with the category of patronising as a strategy. Interviewee L mentioned in a response to a question on whether they had witnessed patronising or sexist remarks in debate that patronising comments might emerge indirectly in debate:

In the Dáil? No. No in fairness I’d say people would be fairly well clued in like you know. I’m sure there’s been *some* patronising remarks on occasion. (L, female, Opp)

²⁴ Names of politicians who are mentioned by interviewees have been redacted and replaced with generic titles, e.g. [male government minister] or [female opposition TD].

In this interviewee's opinion, sexist remarks are not used in debate, because TDs are careful not to make sexist remarks.

One question from the questionnaire asked interviewees to indicate whether they felt that "Would a more equal balance in gender on the chamber benches have an effect on the nature of debate, in your opinion?". The majority of interviewees, 10 of the 12 asked, both male and female, felt that a more equal balance of gender would have a positive influence on debating, making it more constructive in various ways:

I think there would be less... *unhelpful* heckling. I think things would be a lot calmer, I think there would be more reciprocity. (E, male, Opp)

I think it would be a more serious environment and you wouldn't have as much of the male bravado. (D, male, Gov)

Two interviewees felt strongly that increased gender on the benches would not make a difference to the nature of debate, with one of the interviewees suggesting that the traditions in the Dáil were "coming down through the men". Interviewee F (female, Gov) felt that such traditions, for instance the use of put-downs in interaction, were not necessarily a reflection of men in general, but "it's just that that's the way things have been done [in the Dáil], and men fit into that." She thus indirectly alluded to the fact that there are traditions of parliamentary behaviour and that these may be influenced by the fact that the chamber has historically been male-dominated. Despite the fact that this interviewee felt that the nature of debate would not change were there a greater number of women in the Dáil, she admitted later in the interview that a more equal balance in gender might lead to "new traditions" in terms of "how you deal with things".

In another observation on the theme of gender as a factor in debate, Interviewee F's point that male traditions may exist can be linked to the suggestion made in Chapter 2 that women may have to adapt to male institutional practices, where these have become normalised. The concept of "men's rules" existing in the Dáil was also mentioned by Interviewee J (male, opp). He stated that he felt that debate would be more "reasonable", with better outcomes, if incoming women TDs did not perform "according to the men's rules".

A female interviewee felt that the “combative” nature of debate was a “turn-off” for new women TDs:

there’s some women who are very good at combat. [...] But I think it puts women going into it off, em that you have to turn yourself into that. (C, female, opp)

Interviewee C’s view that a woman TD may have to “turn” into a more combative participant in debate relates to the suggestion from Interviewee H (female, Opp) that new women TDs have to learn to adapt to the traditions and norms of the “men’s club” in the Dáil:

It’s very much a kind of a men’s club and I can only speak for myself, I think myself that it takes a little bit of time for women to adapt to the kind of norm. (H, female, Opp)

6.4 Conclusion

Aside from the obvious benefit of gaining greater insights into the realities of participating in Dáil debate, the analysis of the interviews with politicians showed recurring themes and stimulated new insights into the strategic use of language in the Dáil. Furthermore, the analysis of the interviews related to several observations on strategic language that had been identified in the analysis of the corpus of UIs in Chapter 5.

The issue of performance emerged under the different themes of the questionnaire, not only Theme A, Performance in debate. For instance, it was highly relevant under the theme of power as a factor in debate in that respondents discussed the power of a strong performance in debate as being important. However, under Theme A, the majority of responses featured negative opinions on the separate aspect of performance as a means of seeking media attention, rather than having anything meaningful to contribute to debate. An explanation for interviewee responses on this aspect of performance could be that TDs are highly aware that members use performance strategically in debate.

Interviewees discussed their concerns that media-seeking performances in the Dáil would be perceived negatively by the public. In other words, interviewees viewed performance as an important element in debate but were also aware that it could be misused by TDs. These points suggest that parliamentarians are highly conscious of the public nature of debate.

Heckling was seen to have a very important function in debates in terms of rebutting what another member had said. Most participants also said that they heckled to get their points across and hold other TDs to account during debate. However, half of the interviewees expressed negative feelings about heckling and were conscious that the practice was perceived negatively by the public.

In terms of the theme of power as a factor in debate, two interviewees suggested that while different forms of power existed in debate interaction, using questions to hold a minister to account was a type of power which was particularly valuable. In light of the analysis of the corpus of UIs in the previous chapter, which suggests that powerful speakers may be targeted during their contribution by opponents, it is interesting that TDs in the interviews demonstrated awareness of how a speaker's language can constitute power in debate interaction.

Participants oriented very strongly to gender as a significant category. Gender emerged as a factor in all four themes under which the analysis of the interview data was discussed, although this could stem from the interviewees' awareness that the topic of research was language and gender. 10 of the 12 interviewees felt that a more equal balance of gender in the chamber would have a positive influence on debate. While two respondents felt that notions of chivalry existed in debate, other TDs rejected gender stereotypes and gave examples of strong female speakers in the Dáil. At the same time, a third of respondents discussed the implications of the male-dominated Dáil environment upon debate and several interviewees suggested that there were male norms and traditions in place. Also, a third of respondents felt that women TDs were heckled less than men. Given the variety of opinions stated during the interviews on the topic, it can be argued that gender could be a factor that directs the behaviour of TDs in debate.

As the questionnaire was designed to cover the theoretical conceptions of power, strategic language use and gender, links could therefore be made with prior analysis of the corpus of UIs. In the next chapter, Chapter 7, the results from both stages of analysis are evaluated and tied together to provide findings.

Chapter 7 Findings and Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, findings from the analysis of the corpus of UIs are linked with findings from the interviews to demonstrate commonalities, differences and contradictions between them.

The study set out to address the following research questions:

- *In what ways is language used strategically by participants in Irish parliamentary debate to negotiate the power dynamics of the chamber?*
- *Do debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate? If so, in what ways?*

As discussed in Chapter 3, the methodology drew on a close linguistic analytical approach to conduct a systematic analysis of excerpts of linguistic strategies in Dáil debate. The choice of methods was informed by the assumption that parliamentary discourse is goal-directed and power-laden and that power relations in parliamentary debate may be strategically violated through use of language (Ilie 2013) (see Section 2.2.4). A typology of linguistic strategies was developed in order to analyse the corpus of UIs and examine how power dynamics were negotiated in the Dáil chamber. The subsequent analysis of the corpus of UIs pointed to ways in which power dynamics were negotiated in debate through linguistic strategies, and to the possible effects of the strategies upon other participants. Findings are detailed here with reference to the research questions.

In addition, the use of semi-structured interviews with practising TDs provided a rich source of data in relation to the central concerns of the research, and were carried out to gain insights into the realities of taking part in chamber debate. As discussed in Section 3.2.2, mixed methods helps provide a better understanding of research problems. Moreover, as the study draws on notions of performance, and ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’, this supported the use of interviews alongside a linguistic micro-level analysis of the corpus of UIs.

Findings from the analyses are discussed together under two headings adopted from the study's research questions to show what the analysis has discovered about how language is used strategically to negotiate power dynamics in Irish parliamentary debate.

7.2 Strategic ways of negotiating the power dynamics of Dáil debate

In the study thus far, it has been suggested that language is used strategically in political debate in order to achieve political goals. In following this suggestion, the study intended to show the ways in which power dynamics can be negotiated in Irish parliamentary debate through the language used in debate.

As outlined in Chapter 2, the theoretical principles that guided the work included an understanding of power that drew on Foucault's (1982) assertion that a power relationship implies a strategy of struggle or resistance and Mills' (2003) definition of interactional power. Interactional power in linguistic exchanges relates to an individual's ability to map out their "position in relation to the power relations within communities of practice and within the society as a whole" (Mills 2003, p. 175). Also, the study drew on the view of power as a set of resources available to speakers in discourse (Thornborrow 2002) to suggest that using language strategically is a way of employing power as a resource in the CoP of the Dáil. There may be constraints upon participants in terms of what they say because of the rules of their *habitus* and because interactional strategies used in debate are embedded in a complex hierarchy of social and political structures (Harris 1991).

Patterns outlined in the summary of Chapter 5 pointed to specific ways in which each linguistic strategy may be used to undermine an opponent, delegitimise their position and have a potential impact on the power dynamics of the interactional context. There were many instances of criticism were used to suggest that another TD lacked empathy, or was not cooperating with other Dáil members on an issue. Analysis also suggested that participants use linguistic strategies to delegitimise an opponent's position in subtle ways. For example, patronising language appeared to be frequently used to infer an opponent's lack of competence or ability. TDs also used patronising

language to suggest that an opponent had lost emotional control (which is discussed further in Section 7.3).

The analysis of the corpus of UIs suggested that an effect of negotiating the power dynamics through strategic linguistic use was the undermining of a political opponent in debate. For instance, using strategic language to hold an individual to account for their actions, for instance through questions, can be said to have a direct impact on the power dynamics of debate. Interviewees also referred to the value of holding an opponent to account as a form of power in debate (see Section 6.3.3). Another finding common to all categories in the UI analysis was that linguistic strategies, such as the use of metalinguistic comments to criticise another TD's language use, may be used by a TD to regain control of the floor during a legitimate turn. These findings suggest that power is a resource that can be dynamically constructed in interaction by TDs.

Findings from UI analysis substantiate Harris' (2001) suggestion that metalanguage (like other strategies, as discussed above) can be used to hold a political opponent to account. But also, analysis found that TDs often used metalanguage in order to target speakers who can be said to possess interactional power (Mills 2003) in the Dáil. For instance, many of the instances of metalanguage that appeared to be used to strategically undermine the deputy leader of an opposition party are critical comments on her language use. Examples from the data show this parliamentarian's political opponents commenting that she uses "nice pejorative terms like 'cook up'", or that her contribution is "waffle". The use of this strategy towards this parliamentarian could be attributed to her prominent position as deputy leader of an opposition party and to her skill at public speaking. Findings from analysis may indicate that speakers who are powerful in terms of linguistic performance may be strategically targeted by their opponents in order to delegitimise the powerful speaker's position. Another function of metalanguage as a strategy may be to comment on a TD's language use rather than engaging with them on the topic of discussion, which could suggest that the strategy is used to divert attention from issues.

Observations from interview data on the theme of performance consolidate the finding from the UI analysis that TDs use metalanguage as a strategy to target speakers who are powerful in terms of their interactional power. Analysis of interviewee responses

indicate that TDs are aware of the aspect of performance in the Dáil, which demonstrates their awareness of the unofficial and official rules of their *habitus* within the institution of the Dáil. During debates, parliamentarians compete for linguistic authority, but they must do so within the constraints of the formal and informal rules and rituals of the parliamentary chamber. It can be suggested that newcomers to the Dáil must learn to adapt to these rituals and ways of performing.

In response to questions on the aspect of performance, most interviewees interpreted performance as in the sense of a pantomime performance or disruptive behaviour in the chamber. The majority of responses featured negative opinions on performance as a means of seeking media attention, rather than having anything meaningful to contribute to debate. Interviewees were critical of this style of attention-seeking performance, noting that it was detrimental to the image of politics as well as to the workings of politics in the chamber. This negative perception of performance from the interviewees can be linked to the frequent use of metalanguage to criticise another TD's linguistic behaviour. While findings from interviews indicate that TDs may be critical of the practice of performance in the sense of playacting, observations made in the analysis of the corpus of UIs suggest that playacting nonetheless appears to be a prominent aspect of the institutional context of the Dáil. Some interviewees who interpreted the term performance as making a strong speech or contribution made a link to the concept of power. They viewed a good performance as important for taking part in debate and helpful both in terms of gaining public attention and in terms of direct engagement with ministers and other Dáil members who hold political power. This indicates that language and the way in which it is used in interaction can have strategic value in debate, particularly when used to negotiate power dynamics in terms of directly engaging TDs who hold political power.

In the analysis of the UIs, it was found that there was sometimes a moralistic approach in responses to accusation, criticisms and insults. Most of the moralistic comments were face-threatening by claiming that an opponent was not cooperating with the government, or by inferring that the opponent was unmannerly. This finding supports the work of Ilie (2013), who indicates that insults in parliamentary debate are often responded to in a strategic manner with moralistic comments. Whereas Ilie's (2013) findings had more of a gender dimension, in that she found that women MPs in the UK

context used moralising responses more than men, this study did not find any great difference in the data with regard to gender. UI analysis demonstrated that both male and females TDs used moralising language as a potential way of delegitimising their opponents.

The research questions sought to examine the ways in which power dynamics in parliamentary debate are strategically negotiated through use of language. Heckling was not analysed as a linguistic strategy, but nonetheless appeared in much of the transcribed data for analysis due to its frequent use as a means of interruption in debate. It is addressed in the findings because interviewees mentioned heckling as having a tactical or strategic value. Some interviewees described certain continued bouts of heckling as coordinated by parties in order to disrupt Dáil proceedings. There are many instances of heckling seen in the UI analysis. Whether the claim by interviewees that parties coordinate heckling was true was not a focus of analysis, but is of relevance for discussion, because it draws attention to the theoretical principle that parliamentary debate is a site of struggle for power. Also, this claim can be linked to the notion of the 'frontstage' and 'backstage' of debate (Wodak 2009). A coordinated effort to disrupt debate proceedings, organised by party members 'backstage' to the chamber, and carried out on the Dáil 'frontstage', can hugely affect the power dynamics in the Dáil by cutting down on an opponent's turn and therefore have an impact on their interactional power. The suggestion that such tactical moves exist in debate is in line with the theoretical assumption that power relations in parliamentary debate may be strategically violated through use of language to achieve political goals (Ilie 2013).

Finally, a finding that emerged as a result of the methodological framework adopted by the study was that there were occasional differences between claims that interviewees made in interviews and what the researcher observed in the transcribed data analysis. For instance, although many TDs had strong opinions on the negative impacts of heckling, and said that they did not or rarely heckled, data analysis showed that they did in fact engage in heckling. The finding of the discrepancies between the two sets of analyses supports Burkhardt's (1992) study into the contributions by women politicians in German parliamentary debate, which found that there were differences between interviewee accounts of debate interaction and Burkhardt's own observations from debate.

7.3 Strategic ways of negotiating the power dynamics of Dáil debate by invoking gender

The literature review discussed how gender can also be drawn upon as a linguistic resource by participants in interaction (Baxter 2012; Ochs 1992). Turning to the study's focus on gender, the research questions asked: '*Do debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate?*' and '*If so, in what ways?*'

Preliminary analysis of the corpus data at the stage of categorising the linguistic strategies (see Chapter 4) showed that gender did appear to be invoked by participants, because gender was seen to feature in the linguistic strategies used in debate. As a result, the study focused on the specific ways in which gender was invoked and one of the four categories of analysis was developed in order to analyse instances where gender was invoked in interaction. In the UI analysis in Chapter 5 it was observed that gendered strategies are used by female TDs in positions of relative power (e.g. ministers, or deputy party leaders) to potentially undermine their male opponents by calling the expectations of their gender into question. Moreover, there were some instances of women TDs emasculating their male opponents through language use. This was an interesting finding, because no corresponding examples of male TDs invoking gender in linguistic strategies towards female speakers were observed in the data.

Of the 18 UIs that instantiated patronising language, there was a higher number of women using patronising language towards men than vice versa. 12 instances of patronising language were used by female TDs towards male TDs and five examples were used by male TDs towards female TDs. Within this category of linguistic strategy, findings from analysis pointed to the use of this strategy to suggest that an opponent had lost emotional control or was overreacting during debate. There were some examples of female TDs implying that a male TD had lost emotional control, but no such suggestions were made by male TDs to suggest that a female TD had a loss of emotional control. This could suggest that male TDs are wary about using comments which could potentially be construed as gendered towards female TDs.

As has been seen in interview analysis, TDs are conscious of how their language is perceived by the public. Some TDs were cautious about making generalisations about

whether gender played a role in debate, and several stated that politicians are highly conscious of being, literally, ‘politically correct’, and were therefore unlikely to make sexist comments. Given the suggestion that politicians are conscious about language use, it is of interest to briefly reflect upon why female TDs invoked gender in a strategic use of language as a potential delegitimising strategy towards male TDs, while male TDs were not seen to. UI analysis did not show any instances of a male TD calling the expectations of a female TD’s gender into question. Given that women TDs are at a minority in parliament, it could be that male TDs are less willing to invoke the gender of a female opponent for fear of seeming sexist. The study therefore suggests that the minority representation of women may have a bearing on language use in debate, while acknowledging that other factors such as the public nature of debate and the level of a TD’s speaking experience may also be at play. In the analysis of the corpus of UIs, certain female TDs were seen to engage in gendered remarks towards political opponents in a way that their male colleagues did not seem to reciprocate. Using language strategically to invoke gender in this manner could signal a way of challenging male authority and/or male linguistic practices (Ilie 2013), thus testing the boundaries of what is “appropriately gendered behaviour” (Holmes 2005, p. 56).

Findings from the interviews indicated that interviewees had strong views on the role of gender in debate. As described in Chapter 6, while most interviewees seemed wary of generalising about how men and women used language, the majority felt that the unequal representation of gender in the Dáil had an effect on debate. The majority of interviewees felt that women took part in heckling less than men, and also maintained that a more equal balance of gender in the parliamentary chamber would lead to more constructive debate. This finding is in accordance with Walsh’s (2001, p. 204) proposition that there is a general expectation that female parliamentarians can ‘civilise’ male public spaces in which “traditional fraternal networks [...] are often productively competitive, rather than purely cooperative, in terms of their mode of operation”.

One other interesting suggestion from two interviewees on the topic of gender was that an aspect of chivalry existed in the Dáil. A third of interviewees felt that men would heckle women less in debate, with the exception of one or two prominent female TDs, who the same interviewees said would be heckled to the same extent as male TDs. Several interviewees, both male and female, felt that chivalry was a factor in affecting

participants' behaviour towards women TDs in debate interaction. Both analyses suggest that an aspect of chivalry is present in debate. Two instances from the corpus of UIs showed male government TDs telling opponents who were heckling their female colleagues that they should have some manners, in what appeared to be a method of defending their colleague. This observation is comparable with findings from the interviews which show that several respondents felt that male TDs behaved with greater chivalry towards female TDs. It is necessary, however, for the researcher to take a critical view on the aspect of chivalry. Chivalry is a patriarchal notion that relates to a historical power differential between men and women. It is a reminder that men have traditionally held power in the debating chamber, a point which is particularly relevant considering the study's focus on power relations and gender. The claim by a small number of interviewees that male TDs act in a chivalrous manner sits uncomfortably with the fact that the Dáil is a site of gender inequality, because as Walsh (2001) asserts, in reality, women are often positioned as outsiders in the fraternal networks in such male-dominated institutions. The suggestion that chivalry can affect interaction in the Dáil indicates that some TDs may orient towards stereotypical representations of gender and gender relations. At the same time, it should be mentioned that several interviewees of both gender strongly rejected stereotypical views on gender and demonstrated awareness that making such generalisations about men and women in linguistic interaction can be problematic.

The next chapter readdresses the research questions by summarising the findings to formulate conclusions for the study. It will also outline the study's contributions and limitations and highlight possibilities for follow-on research.

Chapter 8 Conclusions

8.1 Overall conclusions

This study has set out to examine whether language is used strategically to negotiate power dynamics in Irish parliamentary debates. It has also sought to examine whether strategic language use in the Dáil invokes gender, and if so, in what ways. This concluding chapter addresses the research questions by referring to the findings of the study. After outlining the main contributions that the study has made on theoretical and methodological levels, it addresses a number of limitations to the study and provides suggestions for further research.

The first research question that the study aimed to answer was:

- *In what ways is language used strategically by participants in Irish parliamentary debate to negotiate the power dynamics of the chamber?*

The study has provided new insights into the previously unexplored field of the language of Irish parliamentary debate. More specifically, it sheds light on ways in which language may be used strategically in debate, and the possible effects of such strategic use of language on debate interaction. Findings which have emerged in the course of the study have provided new perspectives on the dynamics of interaction in the Dáil chamber.

Having conducted a systematic analysis of a corpus of UIs from Dáil debates, the study argues that TDs can draw upon language as a resource in order to negotiate power dynamics in the Dáil. Previous studies such as that of Ilie (2013) have suggested that power relations in parliamentary debate may be strategically violated through the use of language to achieve political goals. The study has furthered this suggestion by detailing a number of ways in which language can be strategically used by TDs to potentially challenge and delimit the authority of other speakers, undermine them, and delegitimise their contribution in debate. A wide variety of linguistic strategies featured frequently in the corpus of UIs constructed for analysis. Analysis of the corpus of UIs has emphasised that TDs may use linguistic strategies in both indirect and direct ways. For

instance, one pattern of linguistic strategy that was explored was the use of patronising language to suggest that an opponent had lost emotional control, which was a subtle way of undermining an opponent in debate. In contrast, a more direct strategy was the use of a direct form of address to call another TD by their first name, rather than “Deputy [surname]”, which constitutes a very direct threat to face and transgresses the rules of debate.

The study has adopted the Foucauldian view that power relations exist and are negotiated in interaction through a struggle or resistance. By drawing on this notion, it proposed the concept of a linguistic strategy that can be used to negotiate power dynamics in parliamentary debate. The study has shown the merits of discussing interactional power (Mills 2003) and power as a set of resources in interaction (Thornborrow 2002) in the framework of parliamentary discourse. These concepts provided a useful theoretical backdrop for suggesting that a strategic use of language is a way of employing power as a resource in interaction, and for analysing on a close linguistic level how power dynamics in parliamentary contexts are negotiated.

The study designed a typology of linguistic strategies for analysis of debate interaction. Previous studies (e.g. Ilie 2004; Harris 2001) in the field of parliamentary discourse focus on the use of specific adversarial strategies such as FTAs and insults, but do not analyse debates using a typology of a range of linguistic strategies. The design of a typology for analysis of strategic language in debate can be considered as a contribution of the study towards potential further research on strategic language use in other parliamentary contexts. This typology has shown the variety of strategies that participants in debate can draw upon and the complexities of negotiating the linguistic CoP of the Dáil.

As a result of the close linguistic analysis that has been undertaken in the course of the study, it can be suggested that the strategic language used in the Dáil chamber is highly context dependent and is influenced by its *habitus*. The study showed how the *habitus* of the Dáil directs linguistic behaviour in interaction, in that TDs compete for linguistic authority and interactional power but must do so within the rules and regulations of debate. Moreover, the high frequency of linguistic strategies found in the corpus of UIs could suggest that the use of strategic language is part of interaction in the Dáil *habitus*.

In following, newcomers to the debate may have to learn to adopt informal rules of the *habitus*, such as using linguistic strategies.

Strategic language used in Dáil debate may also be influenced by the aspect of performance. As discussed in the previous chapter on findings, performance has been a theme in this study which is linked to power in several ways. Analysis has indicated that strong speakers in debate who could be considered as powerful linguistic performers were targeted by other TDs in debate. For instance, it was suggested that TDs used forms of metalanguage to comment pejoratively on the language of a strong speaker in order to undermine them. Furthermore, interviewees also viewed a good linguistic performance as a powerful way of engaging Dáil members who hold legislation-making power in debate. The study suggests that TDs view performance as an important element in debate. This could indicate that TDs are highly conscious of the strategic value of performance in the Dáil and how it can affect the power dynamics of debate interaction. This point lends support to Bayley's (2004) suggestion that performance is an important consideration for participants in parliamentary debate.

Combining two forms of analytical method was of value to the study, in that the multi-method analytical framework provided some different perspectives between the two sets of analysis. For example, some differences emerged between observations from the analysis of the debate transcripts and the stated intentions of several interviewees on the topic of disruptive behaviour such as heckling in debate. Most interviewees were highly critical of heckling, noting that it was detrimental to the image of politics as well as to the workings of politics in the chamber. As the analysis of the UIs showed, however, heckling is nonetheless a common feature of the institutional context of the Dáil, and some interviewees who claimed not to heckle were seen to engage in heckling in debate. The previous chapter on findings has indicated that TDs are of the opinion that the public had a negative perception of heckling, which could be a possible explanation for the interviewees' reluctance to state that they heckle.

Another set of differences that emerged between interviewee responses and the analysis of the debate transcripts relates to the role of gender in heckling. Many examples of male TDs heckling both prominent female speakers and female backbenchers are instantiated in the UI analysis. However, several of the interviewees reported than male

TDs did not heckle female TDs, or that they heckled female TDs less than other male TDs. Some qualified this statement by saying that only prominent female speakers were primarily targeted for heckling. The findings that have emerged from the differences between interviewee answers and data analysis show that the use of a multi-method framework to explore the topic of parliamentary debate interaction can assist in gaining greater insights into the area of parliamentary discourse.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, debate transcripts are edited and are not a verbatim record of Dáil interaction. While this initially posed a methodological problem for conducting analysis, it was of added value to the research to compare the official debate transcripts with the video recording of debates to ensure that interactive elements could also be taken into consideration. While in general, the editing of the transcriptions did not affect the analysis, it was illuminating to discover that the official transcripts were not a verbatim record of the actual utterances made in debate. The differences between the transcripts and the actual utterances showed the variety of language used in debate, and has supported the method of cross-checking the formats. The study has thus highlighted the importance of comparing parliamentary debate transcripts with video recordings of debates when using these as source material for research.

The role of gender has been mentioned already in this chapter, but at this stage the second research question on the topic of gender will be directly addressed. Specifically, the second research question asks:

- *Do debate participants use linguistic strategies to invoke gender in the context of debate? If so, in what ways?*

The current study shows evidence to suggest that gender can affect linguistic interaction in the Dáil, as the topic of gender was found to be oriented to by participants in debate interaction and in interviews with TDs.

Analysis of selected UIs from Dáil debates has shown that gender can be drawn upon as a linguistic resource by women TDs when using strategic language towards male TDs in order to call the expectations of an opponent's gender into question. For instance, several examples were found of female TDs emasculating male TDs through language

use, in a way that appeared to undermine them. Interestingly, no corresponding instances of male TDs calling the expectations of a female TD's gender into question emerged. Analysis also pointed to female TDs using patronising language to imply a loss of emotional control on a male TD's part, but no such suggestions were made by male TDs towards female TDs. As argued in the previous chapter on findings, it could be that male TDs are less willing to invoke the gender of a female opponent for fear of seeming sexist. This concern may be further heightened in a debate chamber where women parliamentarians are very much in a minority.

Viewing the language used by TDs used in the Dáil in a CoP framework has pointed to some possible explanations for why female TDs might use linguistic strategies to invoke gender. It can be suggested that gender plays a role within the CoP of the Dáil because the rules of behaviour have evolved in a chamber that has traditionally been dominated by men. As per Mills' (2003, p. 194) suggestion, in an environment where masculine speech norms "have been prevalent over a period of time, it is likely that women who work within the environment will adopt those norms if they are to be seen as professional". While there is the need for both male and female newcomers to adapt to the rules of the CoP, this may pose a greater challenge for new female TDs. They may have to adopt the male-influenced norms that exist in the Dáil such as adversarial styles of interaction in order to fit in. However, it may be the case that some prominent female TDs draw on gender as a resource to negotiate the power dynamics of debate as a means of challenging male authority, and testing the boundaries of what is "appropriately gendered behaviour" (Holmes 2005, p. 56). In doing so, they may consequently be challenging the practices which have emerged over time. The study's finding that female TDs invoke gender in strategic language in debate also supports Baxter's (2012) suggestion that female speakers draw upon gender as a linguistic resource where they are a minority in an institutional setting. Regardless of the reason(s) behind this use of linguistic strategies to invoke gender, the study tentatively suggests that because of their minority status, women TDs may have more freedom to use gendered linguistic strategies in a way that their male TDs counterparts cannot.

Additionally, the study has provided insights into the opinions of male and female TDs on the role of gender in Irish parliamentary debate. For instance, it has outlined that interviewees feel that women TDs heckle other members less in debate than men, and

also maintain that the nature of debate would be more constructive were there a more equal balance of gender in the parliamentary chamber. The latter point is in accordance with Walsh's (2001) proposition that there is an expectation that female parliamentarians can 'civilise' male public spaces. While a quantitative investigation of heckling was not the focus of the analysis of the UI data, and the study is not equipped to make a conclusion on whether women heckle less than men, the analysis showed some examples of women TDs heckling. However, not all TDs, whether female or male, engage in this practice. One explanation for why some women TDs do not heckle could be that they may not feel comfortable engaging in the disruptive behaviour that is traditional of the debate chamber. Alternatively, the indication from many female interviewees that they strongly disliked heckling could lend support to Shaw's (2000) suggestion that female parliamentarians may refuse to take part in the practice of heckling as a way of challenging the traditional patriarchal practices of debate.

8.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research

As outlined in Section 3.3.4, the corpus used in this study was constructed to provide instances where female TDs were taking part in parliamentary debate. It was constructed in this way due to the focus on gender as addressed by the second research question. The corpus comprised extracts of exchanges between male and female TDs and exchanges between two female TDs. TDs who spoke more frequently in debate featured more prominently in the corpus. Therefore, contributions from prominent female TDs, for instance government ministers, feature more frequently than those from backbenchers. As a result, the corpus cannot be considered as representative of female Dáil members, and the study is therefore restricted in terms of making general claims about how female TDs used linguistic strategies. Thus, the way in which the corpus was constructed is noted as a potential limitation to the study.

This limitation points to a possible direction for future research leading from this study. Enlarging the corpus to include exchanges between two male TDs as well as those exchanges between female and male and two female TDs would provide a broader variety of linguistic exchanges for analysis. This larger-scale corpus could then be explored for new forms of linguistic strategies, which could added to the typology of linguistic strategies used in the current study.

In addition, a larger-scale corpus could be used for further exploration of some of the findings of the current study. For instance, were more instances of strategic language use invoking gender from a wider range of TDs to be found, this could allow for further exploration of the suggestion that women TDs may have more freedom to use gendered linguistic strategies towards their male colleagues than vice versa.

Furthermore, a larger-scale corpus could also be used by future research to explore the impact of other factors which could play a part in strategic language use in the Dáil but which have not been studied here. These factors could for example include political affiliation, a speaker's level of experience and relations between political parties. Further research that considers factors such as these could complement the current study by drawing further on the links between strategic language use and power to provide additional insights into the dynamics of parliamentary debates.

It was observed during analysis that linguistic strategies were frequently used towards strong individual speakers in parliamentary debate. The study does not aim to make categorical statements about individual speakers in Dáil debate and thus did not analyse the use of linguistic strategies by individual speakers. However, a possible area for further investigation would be a case study approach focusing on strong individual speakers in debate and on how these speakers use language strategically, or are the recipient of strategic language use from other TDs. Research such as this could complement the current study by examining factors other than gender that may be relevant to the use of linguistic strategies in the Dáil.

As outlined in Chapter 4, the typology of linguistic strategies developed for analysis in the study focused on four types of linguistic strategy, but other linguistic strategies that were identified could also have been analysed. Some instances of humour being used strategically in debate were found.²⁵ The strategic use of humour has been described as a mitigating technique by recipients of FTAs in the UK parliamentary context (Harris 2001). By applying Harris' (2001) focus to a corpus of Dáil debates, an exploration of humour as a linguistic strategy could examine whether there are commonalities and/or differences in the use of humour in debate in the Irish and UK parliamentary contexts.

²⁵ For instance, two government ministers were mocked by being called "Laurel and Hardy" by a member of the opposition.

Such a study could contribute to literature on parliamentary discourse by providing an understanding of the ways in which humour can be used strategically in parliamentary debates.

On a final note, it is hoped that the current study has provided insights not only into the previously unexplored field of language use in Irish parliamentary debate but also into types of strategic language use which could pertain to interaction in parliamentary chambers other than the Dáil. To that end, the study could serve as a point of comparison with other studies in the field of parliamentary discourse, particularly those which explore the topic(s) of adversarial interaction, power and/or the aspect of gender in parliamentary debates.

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Appendices

Appendix A on CD

Appendix B

Interview Questionnaire

1. General question on debates: how significant is debating in terms of Dáil activities?
2. During your contributions to Dáil debates, or beforehand in your preparation for contribution, do you make a conscious choice about the language you use?

Do you find it useful to have notes, and do you keep to these?

3. Debates are broadcast – does the fact that proceedings in the chamber are so accessible to the public have any effect on your contributions? How about its effect on other TDs?
4. Would you say there is an element of performance in debates?
5. What would you describe as being expected of language use in the Dáil?

How closely do TDs keep to rules set out by Standing Orders, and are they conscious of upholding them?

Do they consciously break them, in your opinion?

Are there negative or positive consequences to rule- breaking?

6. How would you define the characteristics of good or successful/effective speeches?
7. Do you see a link between how some people use language and how they have access to power?
8. Do you think that the interactions between politicians in the Dáil chamber are sometimes adversarial? In what way?

To switch that around: do you feel that politicians are sometimes cooperative in debate interactions? Would they make interjections in support of what somebody is saying?

How do these interactions have an effect on the workings of politics, in your opinion?

9. It is said that heckling, grandstanding etc. are set methods of engaging in the Dáil. What is your take on heckling – is there is a political function to heckling during debates? Is it useful, even?

Do you think newer TDs have to adapt to heckling to fit in, to some extent at least?

10. Can you think of a time you responded to hecklers during your contribution? Would you say you have ever engaged in heckling during another TD's contribution? The impact of heckling on your own contributions?
11. I want to ask your opinion on whether gender of a speaker plays a role in debate. Do you think a TD's gender plays a role in how they use language? Some contributors have said women use language differently, while others believe there's no difference. What's your view?
12. Can you think of an example of a time where you felt gender played a part in a debate- either for negative or positive effect – e.g. did it affect a response of another TD, was the TD heckled or interrupted more or less?

Can you discern any difference in the reaction to male and female TDs when their contribution doesn't fit the normal pattern?

How about in relation to age: older/newer TDs?

13. Can you think of any examples of biased or prejudiced language? Have you witnessed sexism in debates? (How about examples from previous Dáileanna?)
14. Would a more equal balance in gender on the chamber benches have an effect on the nature of debate, in your opinion?
Do you see any ways in which language use might change?
15. Experience: To what extent are public speaking and debating skills important in Dáil Éireann? What advice would you give new TDs on taking part in debate?
16. Based on our discussion, would you like to discuss anything else of relevance to research such as mine (that is examining the use of language in Dáil debates)?

Appendix C

Additional interview quotes

Theme A: Performance in debate

- ‘Playing to the gallery’

– so I question why would I – I think you’ve got to eh you know...I mean you’re not getting a whole lot out – people, people can play to the gallery. There’s particular positions for example, the positions of Leader [in Leaders’ Questions] – and we rotate our Leaders- and you can see the difference in the treatment by the media of people when they’re put in that position, and that’s part of the reason why we would rotate it. (Interviewee C, female, Opp)

At committee level, em there is less of the grandstanding I find and more...collegiality is the wrong word, but more about willingness to work as a group of members—to seek a solution and reach a conclusion; as opposed to playing to the gallery, if you like. (Interviewee I, male, Gov)

Theme B: Heckling and its political function

- Heckling as having a useful function

Eh yeah we were debating something the other day, myself and some others. [Government minister] was there...I can’t remember what the piece of legislation was, but anyway, he had a go back at me, and I had a go back at him, and he had a go back at me and I had a go back at him – but we were kind of giving way on it, that was you know, and the chair allowed that- and I thought there were some useful points made you know by doing that, you know. (Interviewee C, female, Opp)

Theme C: Power as a factor in debate

- Power in delivering a good argument

Well I think yeah if you can communicate well and if you can hold people’s attention then you’re going to have power in the sense that people will be listening to you and what you’re saying will have an impact and it will actually hit the mark. Like I mean if you’re waffling away and nobody’s paying any attention to you, regardless of whether you have office or if you have political power there’s no actual power by virtue of what you’re saying because people...you’re just using time. Em whereas if, regardless of your office, the office you might hold or the political power you may have, if, in your speech and your contribution you’re holding people, you’re making valid points then, you know, your speech is going to have as much...carriage and ah weight as is possible depending on the environment and the stakes involved. (Interviewee A, male, Opp)

And I think it’s more – not necessarily just the language, it’s the delivery. Speaking slowly, the confidence, the confidence in themselves to say yeah I’m okay to speak slowly here, whereas the rest of us are all, we’re maybe not as

comfortable as some of the key orators there, but yeah I think it gives them a platform because if you read between the lines of what they're saying – they're not really saying anything different than the rest of us you know. (Interviewee D, male, Gov)

- Getting media coverage

I decided like to take it to another level and raise it in person with the minister. So the minister came down and he actually gave a speech that was very favourable to me. I think he had departed from the script a bit but of course that was great for me but em, but the thing about it is that it got covered in the papers and I kind of feel that I am making progress for the [constituents], it looks like I'm making progress for them. So there is that kind of power and maybe that's, probably, an area that people don't appreciate you know. (Interviewee F, female, Gov)

Theme D: Gender as a factor in debate

- Unfair treatment of women TDs

We wouldn't have got into the mess that we're in today, *I think*, if we had enough good women. But, you see, as well is that then, we're we're *inordinately cruel* to women who *do* become involved. [Female TD] was denigrated by many people. I mean nobody would ever have made remarks about her that were made, if she were a man. Not in a million years. (Interviewee J, male, Opp)

- Less heckling of women

I would imagine in some ways that men find it harder to shout down a woman, in some ways, [...] I know you could say, Jesus, there's some evidence that would kind of contradict that like you know, if I was up at a few of the Leaders' Questions or if [female opposition TD] was! But generally speaking, I would say that they'd be a little bit more careful, in terms of their shouting, em...but...maybe not, I don't know. (Interviewee L, female, Opp)

- Effect of greater female representation on debate?

Maybe language might be more moderate
(Interviewee J, male, Opp)

I think we might get through our business much quicker (Interviewee B, female, Gov)

Appendix D

Plain Language Statement

This research study is entitled *(En)gendering debate: an analysis of women TDs' contributions with emphasis on linguistic and argumentative strategy in Irish Dáil debates*.

It is concerned with how women contribute to parliamentary debates, and how they use language. The transcripts of Dáil debates (available online) from March 2011 to March 2012 are being compiled into an electronic corpus and analysed using linguistic analysis techniques so that norms and patterns can be identified. In addition, the research will involve interviews with a small number of practising TDs. Discussion of results and recommendations will follow the analysis.

The principal investigator is Gráinne Toomey who is a PhD candidate in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies (SALIS) in Dublin City University.

The interviewer may be contacted at any time by email (*Redacted*) or phone (*Redacted*).

Your involvement in this research study will be in the form of an interview, which will be recorded. The anticipated duration of the interview is 20-30 minutes.

Your confidentiality will be respected and you will not be alluded to by name in the research findings. Names of political parties will be kept generic to avoid identification – your political affiliation will be referred to as either ‘in government’ or ‘in opposition’. You can decline to answer questions if you wish and have the opportunity to do so on the informed consent form. If in the interview you refer to Dáil debates in which you are engaged, you could link yourself to a transcript that is a public record. If you perceive this as a potential risk to your privacy, the transcript in question will be referred to in general terms to ensure your protection.

The interviews will be recorded using a recording device which will be kept securely by the interviewer. Data from the interviews will be stored securely on a password protected PC.

Your contribution to this study will moreover be greatly appreciated, as it will shed light into the realities of working political life from a language perspective. It is hoped that findings from the research will aid grassroots campaigns aiming to increase women’s representation at political level.

The data from this research study will be used for my PhD. It may be used for further potential academic research and/or academic publications, provided you consent to this. Please refer to the informed consent form for the opportunity to do so.

Participation in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any point.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

The research study is entitled *(En)gendering debate: an analysis of women TDs' contributions with emphasis on linguistic and argumentative strategy in Irish Dáil debates*.

The principal investigator is Gráinne Toomey who is a PhD candidate in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies (SALIS) in Dublin City University.

Clarification of the purpose of research

This research, a PhD dissertation, is concerned with how women politicians contribute to parliamentary debates. As part of the research, the researcher is interviewing politicians of the current Dáil in order to seek their views with regards to language use in the Dáil. Their responses will be examined along with a corpus of language compiled of Dáil debates from March 2011 to March 2012 in order to identify and categorise linguistic norms and discuss their usage.

Confirmation of particular requirements

(Please read the following statements and circle Yes/No for each)

<i>I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I understand the information provided</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware of the anticipated timeframe of the interview</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware that my interview will be audio recorded</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware that I may decline to answer any question I wish</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware that I can receive a copy of the research on completion</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware that I may have access to the data I have provided</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware that participation in the study is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any point</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>

I consent to my contributions being used for the purpose of:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| <i>a) the PhD study outlined above and in the Plain Language Statement only</i> | <i>Yes/No</i> |
| <i>b) any potential follow-on academic projects and/or academic publications</i> | <i>Yes/No</i> |

The data from this research study will be stored securely on a password protected PC. Further details on confidentiality of data can be found in the Plain Language Statement.

Implications for privacy

During the interview, the interviewee could refer to Dáil debates in which they are engaged, and thereby link themselves to a transcript that is a public record. If this is perceived as a problem by the interviewer or interviewee, the transcript will be referred to in general terms to ensure protection of the participant.

Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participant's Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix F

Direction of linguistic strategies towards individual participants in terms of gender (Male to Female; Female to Male; Male to Male; Female to Female).

Numbers in (No.) column are the numbers of the excerpts that are analysed under each category in Chapter 5. Numbers in (UI) column are numbers of the UIs as they appear in Appendix A.

Table 1.

Patronising as a strategy				
No.	UI	User(s) of Strategy	Recipient(s) of Strategy	Direction of Strategy (Gender)
1	5	Taoiseach	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
2	8	Mary Lou McDonald	Taoiseach	F to M
3	26	Brian Hayes	Éamon O' Cúiv	M to M
4	42	Joan Burton	Timmy Dooley	F to M
5	71	Alan Shatter	Clare Daly	M to F
6	78	Clare Daly	Brendan Howlin	F to M
7	82	Mary Lou McDonald	Tánaiste	F to M
8	116	Lucinda Creighton	Richard Boyd Barrett	F to M
9	126	Lucinda Creighton	Micheál Martin	F to M
10	142	Lucinda Creighton	Micheál Martin	F to M
11	165	Alan Shatter	Clare Daly	M to F
12	176	Kathleen Lynch	Mattie McGrath	F to M
13	180	Tánaiste	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
14	187	Lucinda Creighton	Richard Boyd Barrett	F to M
15	194	Pádraig MacLochlainn	Jerry Buttimer	M to M
16	224	Lucinda Creighton Micheál Martin	Micheál Martin Lucinda Creighton	F to M M to F
17	240	Joan Burton	Pádraig MacLochlainn	F to M
18	274	Richard Boyd Barrett Lucinda Creighton Taoiseach	Taoiseach Richard Boyd Barrett Richard Boyd Barrett	M to M F to M M to M
Total M to F				5
Total F to M				12
Total M to M				4
Total F to F				0

Table 2.

Invoking gender as a strategy				
No.	UI	User(s) of Strategy	Recipient(s) of Strategy	Direction of Strategy (Gender)
1	53	Mary Lou McDonald	Male members of FF & Gov	F to M
2	60	Mary Lou McDonald	Taoiseach	F to M
3	105	Caoimhghín O' Caoiláin	James Reilly	M to M
4	180	Mary Lou McDonald	Tánaiste	F to M
5	184	Joan Burton	Aengus O'Snodaigh	F to M
6	206	Mary Lou McDonald	Tánaiste	F to M
7	250	Mary Lou McDonald	Government ministers	F to M
8	273	Mary Lou McDonald	Male members of both sides of the House	F to M
Total M to F				0
Total F to M				7
Total M to M				1
Total F to F				0

Table 3.

Insulting/Accusing/Criticising as a strategy				
No.	UI	User(s) of Strategy	Recipient(s) of Strategy	Direction of Strategy (Gender)
1	8	Mary Lou McDonald	Taoiseach and Michael Noonan	F to M
2	12	Niall Collins Phil Hogan Olivia Mitchell	Phil Hogan Niall Collins Niall Collins	M to M M to M F to M
3	15	Mary Lou McDonald Brendan Howlin	Brendan Howlin Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
4	17	Phil Hogan	Catherine Murphy	M to F
5	18	Mary Lou McDonald Taoiseach	Taoiseach Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
6	25	Kathleen Lynch Willie O'Dea	Willie O'Dea Kathleen Lynch	F to M M to F
7	37	James Bannon	Catherine Murphy	M to F
8	43	Richard Boyd Barrett	Frances Fitzgerald	M to F
9	46	Brendan Howlin Mary Lou McDonald	Mary Lou McDonald Brendan Howlin	M to F F to M
10	48	Barry Cowen Clare Daly	Joan Burton Joan Burton	M to F F to F
11	52	Clare Daly	Brendan Howlin	F to M
12	53	Taoiseach	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
13	55	Mary Lou McDonald	Michael Noonan	F to M
14	60	Mary Lou McDonald Taoiseach	Taoiseach Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
15	78	Clare Daly Brendan Howlin	Brendan Howlin Clare Daly	F to M M to F
16	79	Richard Boyd Barrett	Joan Burton	M to F
17	91	Charlie McConalogue Frances Fitzgerald	Frances Fitzgerald Charlie McConalogue	M to F F to M
18	104	Tánaiste Brendan Howlin	Mary Lou McDonald Mary Lou McDonald	M to F M to F
19	111	John Halligan	Joan Burton	M to F
20	115	Aengus Ó Snodaigh	Joan Burton	M to F
21	116	Lucinda Creighton	Richard Boyd Barrett	F to M
22	119	Micheál Martin Bernard J. Durkan Frances Fitzgerald Taoiseach	Taoiseach Micheál Martin Micheál Martin Micheál Martin	M to M M to M F to M M to M
23	148	Róisín Shortall	Niall Collins	F to M
24	155	Joanna Tuffy	Joan Collins	F to F
25	163	Joe Higgins Joan Burton	Joan Burton Joe Higgins	M to F F to M
26	176	Mattie McGrath	Kathleen Lynch	M to F

		Kathleen Lynch	Mattie McGrath	F to M
27	184	Joan Burton Aengus Ó Snodaigh	Aengus Ó Snodaigh Joan Burton	F to M M to F
28	201	Pearse Doherty	Joan Burton	M to F
29	215	Tánaiste Mary Lou McDonald	Mary Lou McDonald Tánaiste	M to F F to M
30	224	Lucinda Creighton	Shane Ross	F to M
31	226	Micheál Martin	Taoiseach	M to M
32	229	Aengus Ó Snodaigh	Joan Burton	M to F
33	236	Brendan Howlin	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
34	250	Mary Lou McDonald Tánaiste	Tánaiste Mary McDonald	F to M M to F
35	282	Michael Healy-Rae Mattie McGrath Brendan Howlin Brendan Howlin	Joan Burton Joan Burton Michael Healy-Rae Mattie McGrath	M to F M to F M to M M to M
36	284	Mary Lou McDonald Tánaiste	Tánaiste Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
37	288	Mary Lou McDonald Ruairí Quinn	Ruairí Quinn Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
38	293	Taoiseach	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
Total M to F				30
Total F to M				22
Total M to M				8
Total F to F				2

Table 4.

Metalanguage as a strategy				
No.	UI	User(s) of Strategy	Recipient(s) of Strategy	Direction of Strategy (Gender)
1	5	Mary Lou McDonald Taoiseach	Taoiseach Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
2	8	Pat Rabbitte	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
3	18	Mary Lou McDonald	Taoiseach	F to M
4	23	Taoiseach Clare Daly	Clare Daly Taoiseach	M to F F to M
5	41	Tánaiste	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
6	42	Michael McGrath Niall Collins Charlie McConalogue Joan Burton	Joan Burton Joan Burton Joan Burton Michael McGrath	M to F M to F M to F F to M
7	46	Brendan Howlin	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
8	53	Mary Lou McDonald	Taoiseach	F to M
9	63	Micheál Martin Bernard J. Durkan	Taoiseach Micheál Martin	M to M M to M
10	71	Clare Daly	Alan Shatter	F to M
11	86	Phil Hogan	Clare Daly	M to F
12	101	Paschal Donohoe	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
13	104	Ray Butler	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
14	119	Taoiseach Micheál Martin	Micheál Martin Taoiseach	M to M M to M
15	132	Brendan Howlin	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
16	163	Joe Higgins	Joan Burton	M to F
17	164	Jonathan O'Brien Sandra McLellan	Taoiseach Taoiseach	M to M F to M
18	168	Mary Lou McDonald Brendan Howlin	Brendan Howlin Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
19	169	Mary Lou McDonald Bernard J. Durkan Taoiseach	Taoiseach Mary Lou McDonald Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F M to F
20	172	Mary Lou McDonald John Perry	John Perry Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
21	180	Tánaiste Mary Lou McDonald	Mary Lou McDonald Tánaiste	M to F F to M
22	183	Barry Cowen	Joan Burton	M to F

23	194	Pádraig Mac Lochlainn Mary Lou McDonald	Tánaiste Tánaiste	M to M F to M
24	105	Kathleen Lynch	Billy Kelleher	F to M
25	210	Pat Rabbitte Brendan Howlin	Mary Lou McDonald Mary Lou McDonald	M to F M to F
26	215	Barry Cowen	Tánaiste	M to M
27	224	Lucinda Creighton Micheál Martin	Micheál Martin Lucinda Creighton	F to M M to F
28	225	Róisín Shortall	Luke 'Ming' Flanagan	F to M
29	250	Tánaiste	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
30	281	Catherine Byrne	John Halligan	F to M
31	288	Mary Lou McDonald Sean Sherlock	Ruairí Quinn Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
32	291	Brendan Howlin	Mary Lou McDonald	M to F
33	299	Mary Lou McDonald Brendan Howlin	Brendan Howlin Mary Lou McDonald	F to M M to F
Total M to F				26
Total F to M				18
Total M to M				7
Total F to F				0

