

Conditions for Reflexive Practices in Leadership Learning

The Regulating Role of a Socio-moral Order of Peer Interactions

Larsson, Magnus; Knudsen, Morten

Document Version

Accepted author manuscript

Published in:

Management Learning

DOI:

[10.1177/1350507621998859](https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507621998859)

Publication date:

2022

License

Unspecified

Citation for published version (APA):

Larsson, M., & Knudsen, M. (2022). Conditions for Reflexive Practices in Leadership Learning: The Regulating Role of a Socio-moral Order of Peer Interactions. *Management Learning*, 53(2), 291-309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507621998859>

[Link to publication in CBS Research Portal](#)

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us (research.lib@cbs.dk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 12. Jun. 2024



Conditions for reflexive practices in leadership learning: The regulating role of a socio-moral order of peer interactions

Abstract

Peer interaction is a standard aspect of most leadership development programmes and is seen to be conducive to learning. Realizing deeper and critical reflexivity in peer interaction is, however, challenging. This study employs conversation analysis to empirically explore peer interactions in a leadership development programme for first-line managers in the public sector in Denmark. The analysis shows that a socio-moral order, i.e. normative expectations inherent in interactions, guide peer discussions and shape the conditions for reflection and deeper reflexivity. The socio-moral order was based on a central principle of treating each other as experts on one's own practice. This principle allowed for reflection but turned attention away from critical reflexive practices. As a result, peer discussions took a more conservative rather than a transformational orientation. The study extends the theoretical understanding of the conditions for critical reflexivity as it demonstrates how the socio-moral order of interaction regulates engagement in critically reflexive practices.

Introduction

Despite significant developments in both pedagogy and our theoretical understanding of leadership learning, widespread disappointment still appears to exist with what management and leadership development programmes (MLDPs) deliver (Ardichvili et al., 2016; Bolden, 2016; Fernández-Aráoz et al., 2017; Gurdjian et al., 2014; Larsson et al., 2020). In this article we wish to engage with this challenge through a detailed analysis of an element that plays a significant role in most MLDPs, namely peer interactions. We explore what peer interaction offers in terms of opportunities for leadership learning and development.

Peer interaction is almost universally accepted as both positive and effective for leadership learning. Learning from peers has repeatedly been emphasised as one of the most important aspects of MLDPs (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2008; Iles and Preece, 2006). Peer interaction is also typically portrayed as important for developing capacities for reflection and reflexivity (Cunliffe, 2002; Hahn and Vignon, 2019; Hibbert, 2013; Raelin, 2001; Reynolds, 1998; Yip and Raelin, 2012), which are central to management and leadership development. Learning and development of reflexivity is enabled by adequate pedagogical designs (Gray, 2007; Hahn and Vignon, 2019; Holton and Grandy, 2016) and relevant conceptual resources (Irving et al., 2019; Schaupp and Virkkunen, 2017). However, engaging in reflexive practices still seems to be a challenge for participants, as echoed in the emphasis researchers put on the need for facilitation (Holton and Grandy, 2016; Schedlitzki et al., 2014) of participant discussions,

Our specific interest in this paper is this challenge. We show that what we call a socio-moral order of peer interactions regulates participant conduct, shaping the conditions for reflexivity beyond pedagogical designs and access to conceptual resources. Drawing on ethnomethodology, we take socio-moral order (Fox, 2008; Garfinkel, 1967; Jayyusi, 1984) to refer to an immanent regulatory

aspect of interaction. That is to say, that actors adhere to implicit normative expectations in the situation; acting in ways that are perceived as appropriate. To be able to explore this phenomenon empirically, we draw on the ethnomethodologically oriented tradition of conversation analysis, consisting in a detailed examination of the dynamics and machinery of spoken interaction (Heritage and Clayman, 2010; Sacks, 1992). We analyse peer interactions in an MLDP, identifying a social-moral order in discussions of practical leadership challenges and investigate the ways in which it both enabled and constrained engagement, questioning and reflexivity. Although we found elements of reflection, critical reflexivity turned out to be more constrained. Our study thus contributes to the field of management learning by critically questioning the efficacy of peer interaction for developing reflexivity. We extend the theoretical understanding of the conditions for critical reflexivity by showing that the situated socio-moral order of interaction work as a centrally important, though hitherto unaccounted for, constraining element for learning and reflexivity.

Peer interaction and reflexivity as social practices

Research has linked peer interaction in leadership development to a variety of MLDP outcomes, such as learning about the practices of others (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2008; Iles and Preece, 2006) and identity construction and re-construction (Carroll and Levy, 2010; Nicholson and Carroll, 2013). Peer interaction, a central aspect of approaches such as action learning (Gray, 2007; Raelin and Raelin, 2006), is generally seen to facilitate participant involvement and emotional engagement in learning activities (Reynolds, 1998; Schedlitzki et al., 2014). In discussing learning through threshold concepts, Yip and Raelin (2012) see peer discussions and action research as “most pivotal” (p. 337), arguing that learning occurs “through a community of practice” (p. 343), that is, among peers.

Of particular importance, and of interest for this study, is the development of deeper levels of reflection, or what Reynolds (1998) calls critical reflection and Cunliffe (2002) critical reflexivity. Critical reflexivity concerns critiquing and challenging assumptions about one's own practice and oneself (Cunliffe, 2002; Reynolds, 1998). In contrast, reflection is defined as "a systematic thought process concerned with simplifying experience by searching for patterns, logic, and order" (Cunliffe, 2002: 38) to solve problems at hand, without any deeper critique or challenge of underlying assumptions (Hibbert, 2013; Reynolds, 1998). While critical reflexivity clearly involves an element of individual introspection, there is broad consensus among scholars of leadership learning that interaction is not only pivotal to triggering critical reflection (Corlett, 2012; Holton and Grandy, 2016), but that reflexivity is also performed and accomplished at least partly in and through interaction and conversation (Barge, 2004). For instance, Cunliffe (2002) portrays management learning as a "reflexive dialogical practice" (p. 36), where students and teachers together "question and surface taken-for-granted aspects of everyday experience" (p. 46). Similarly, Corlett (2012: 455) argues that "to facilitate critical self-reflexivity, management educators are urged to provide dialogic opportunities for learners", for instance by critically discussing problematic aspects of their own leadership practice (Hahn and Vignon, 2019).

Despite being an important learning process, realizing reflexive practices in the context of an MLDP is far from straightforward. Schedlitzki (2019: 243) notes that "engaging learners in critical reflection processes is not easy", and both Hibbert (2013) and Iszatt-White et al. (2017) point out that drawing attention to the power relations in the teacher-student relationship might cause discomfort in students and teachers alike. In the face of such challenges, educators work to foster an interactional atmosphere and a "community feel" (Hibbert, 2013: 808) conducive of deeper questioning, as well as to provide group sessions with "careful facilitation to encourage participants

to critically reflect” (Schedlitzki et al., 2014: 416).

However, the more precise interactional practices through which reflexivity is realized are less explored in the literature on MLDPs. Coaching studies are helpful in showing how particular actions by coaches influence the development process. For instance Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) show that actions focusing on agreement about goals and tasks impacted the coaching process, and Will et al. (2016) find empathic statements to be similarly important. This suggests that how contributions to interactions are crafted, not only in coaching relationships but also among peers, might help enable (or constrain) reflexivity. In one of the few studies focusing peer interaction in an MLDP, Carroll and Nicholson (2014) used online conversation to explore the emergence of participant resistance practices. Extending their focus, we analyse the interactional “artful practices” (Garfinkel, 1967: 10) through which co-authorship (Cunliffe, 2002) is realized (or not) in peer interaction. We particularly investigate how the immanent socio-moral order of interaction (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks, 1992) regulates these possibilities.

The socio-moral order of interaction

Critical studies have explored the normative environment of MLDPs, mainly in terms of identity norms and identity regulation. Such norms relate to preferred identities (Ford and Harding, 2007; Gagnon and Collinson, 2014; Hay, 2014) or identity construction and deconstruction processes (such as confessional practices, identity experimentation and even letting go of identities (Nicholson and Carroll, 2013)). However, the environment also contains norms on how to act in relation to each other, as demonstrated for instance in a study by Nicholson and Carroll (2013) where participants either refrain from shaking each other up and wait for facilitators to do this (p. 1234) or “feel forced to pursue a [particular] insight” (p. 1238).

Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis offer the concept of a socio-moral order for such regulation of interactional conduct (Garfinkel, 1967; Jayyusi, 1984; Sacks, 1992).

Ethnomethodology sees social order as produced and maintained through social interaction (Garfinkel, 1967; for a fuller presentation of ethnomethodology see, e.g. Heritage, 1984) and, consequently, the socio-moral order as an aspect of interaction maintained by the participants themselves. Social action proceeds sequentially, where a contribution (an utterance or a gesture) simultaneously demonstrates the actor's understanding of the current situation and projects an expectation of what is to come next (Heritage and Clayman, 2010; Sacks et al., 1974). For instance, a question projects the expectation of an answer, and an invitation an acceptance or rejection. All social action and interaction are thus situated, in that each new contribution builds on how the actor makes sense of the previous step (Garfinkel, 1967).

Within this perspective, social interaction always has a moral dimension. Since people are capable of choosing their actions, they are also accountable for them: "Once the others are equipped with this capability of choice, they may be held responsible for their doings. Also, this is reciprocated; because the same principle will be extended to ourselves, others will hold us responsible for what we do" (Bergmann, 1998: 284). From an ethnomethodological perspective, the normative dimensions are thus more of a practical, rather than philosophical, matter for actors (Jayyusi, 1984). Actions are designed to be seen as appropriate by other participants in the interaction. As a consequence this orientation towards the moral appropriateness of actions is visible in the design of the contributions, observable to participants in the interaction as well as to researchers (Sacks, 1992). One of the hallmarks of ethnomethodologically informed conversation analysis is thus a highly detailed analysis of how utterances and contributions to an ongoing interaction are crafted.

The normative nature of the social order is visible in various ways, for instance: in the actors'

reactions to violations of social expectations (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks, 1992); in the evaluative nature of descriptions and categorisations (Jayyusi, 1984); and in the way preferences operate in sequential discourse (Pomerantz and Heritage, 2012; Schegloff, 2007). This study mainly focuses on the last mentioned, where the notion of preferences refers to how “participants follow principles, often implicit, when they act and react in a variety of interactional situations” (Pomerantz and Heritage, 2012: 210). For instance, offers are often preferred over requests, and agreement over disagreement. Preferences are visible through the sequential design of interaction; that is, how utterances are designed as responses to the previous turn and project an appropriate next turn (Heritage and Clayman, 2010). Dispreferred alternatives are typically placed later in turns, prefaced by various mitigating factors, and often accompanied by accounts of why the dispreferred alternative was chosen (Pomerantz and Heritage, 2012; Schegloff, 2007). It is important to note that we follow the conversation analytical notion of bracketing cognitive processes to instead focus on the actions performed through talk (Sacks, 1992). Thus the notion of preferences does not refer to psychological processes, such as whether an individual would want to accept an invitation or not, but to how actions are crafted in relation to an implicit social and moral framework. As pointed out by Heritage (1984), the dispreferred refusal of an invitation might be carried out even though the individual is happy not to accept it.

In summary, we see regulation of conduct within an MLDP as potentially influenced by, but not reducible to, pedagogical strategies and tactics or to normative discourses of leadership and management. Beyond these, participants develop their own community with a socio-moral order that shapes participant conduct, experiences and potential learning. It is to this socio-moral order as an implicit aspect of interaction among peers and its consequences for learning that we direct our attention.

The aim of this paper is thus to conduct a study, inspired by conversation analysis, of the interactions between participants in an MLDP. Our study is guided by the following research questions: what characterises the socio-moral order in an MLDP as developed and maintained in the interactions among participants? And, how does this socio-moral order shape the practices of reflection and critical reflexivity and, thus, learning?

Method

The empirical data were collected during a study of an in-house leadership development programme in the regional administration of the Capital Region of Denmark (Region). The programme, called “Leading subordinates”, was an ongoing programme targeting first-line managers (typically 30 to 45 years of age), with new cohorts starting twice a year. A public tender based on specifications drawn up by the Region’s administration was used to hire a consortium of external consultancy firms to provide the programme, which lasted 14.5 days divided into six modules conducted over a period of about eight months. The programme covered themes such as self-insight, change management, strategy implementation, personnel law, innovation and performance management, making it a mix of management and leadership development (Larsson et al., 2019; McGurk, 2010). Three modules involved overnight stays. The modules contained a mix of plenary work and group exercises, including reflective teams focusing on own leadership challenges; group discussions on strategy implementation in own work units; feedback on own leadership (based on other participants interviewing subordinates); an innovation simulation game; personality and individual preference tests and discussions based on these; and an organization simulation.

About 20 participants were in each programme group and followed the full programme as a cohort. Each group was led by two consultants, one from the Region’s administration and one from the consortium that had designed the programme. Participants came from a variety of the Region’s

organizations, most of them (e.g. nurses, medical doctors, secretaries and bioanalysts) from hospitals owned by the Region. There were also participants from primary care organizations and schools operated by the Region for people with, e.g. psychiatric disorders and disabilities.

The authors studied this programme as independent, university-based researchers, not involved in design or delivery of the programme. Each author observed one programme group to collect the empirical data, which consisted of fieldnotes and audio recordings of various activities. This approach provided first-hand experience of the content and how the programme was structured, as well as assorted opportunities to have informal conversations with participants about their experiences. Our role as researchers and our research project were clearly presented on the first day, just as all participants consented to our presence and audio recordings. Participants had the option of withdrawing from the study at any time. Consent was also always obtained prior to recording group sessions.

The fieldnotes and audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and read through several times to establish an overview of the empirical material. This resulted in empirical data comprising 11 hours of recorded interaction (some of which also included discussions in the whole programme group). For this study, exercises involving participant discussion of their own practices were chosen for closer analysis since these offered an opportunity to link the programme to their everyday practice and to receiving work-oriented support from their peers. Fieldnotes and informal conversations served to provide background information and to focus attention on the analysis of the interactions. However, following the principles of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, interactions were analysed on their own terms in the search for evidence of relevance for participants (Heritage and Clayman, 2010; Sacks, 1992). We thus aimed to investigate the socio-moral order as it emerged in interactions, rather than by how it was perceived and later described by participants, for instance

in interviews.

The analysis proceeded as follows. As our initial research interest was how participants engaged with each other's practice fields, we started out by focusing on segments where participants commented on each other's leadership practices. These segments were then subjected to a more detailed transcription and analysis that focused on how comments were crafted. This close analysis drew on several analytical resources. First, we focused on the sequential organization of interaction, including the already discussed preference organization, as evidenced in the crafting of contributions in the interaction. The notion of interactional projects, which refers to the "course of action" (Schegloff, 2007: 244) that participants pursue over the course of several turns, was used to provide a deeper understanding of how different interests were focused on or marginalised during the interaction. Next, we analysed categorisation in the interaction (Jayyusi, 1984) to deepen understanding of how various interactional projects and interests were pursued. Note that even though the concepts of categories and categorisation sometimes are understood as individual cognitive phenomena, the analytical gaze in this instance focused on how ongoing interaction was managed and produced. Our study is in that way intentionally disinterested in what might go on in the minds of the individuals (Fairhurst, 2011; Sacks, 1992).

Further, resources from the recently developed subfield of socioepistemics (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b) were used to analyse how knowledge and expertise are handled in interaction. The concepts of epistemic status, stance and domain (Heritage, 2012a) refer to someone's relationship to a particular piece of information. Epistemic status concerns the "relative epistemic access to a domain or territory of information" (p. 4). For instance, a participant might have exclusive access to information on some topic (about e.g. their department, family and thoughts), or access might be more or less equal, such as publicly available information, the daily news and the weather.

Epistemic status concerns the overall positioning, while stance relates to “the moment-by-moment expression of these relationships” (p. 6). Someone with high epistemic status might, for instance, momentarily assume a different position (i.e. stance) by asking for information that the others know the person already possesses (such as with rhetorical questions). Finally, epistemic primacy (Stivers et al., 2011) refers to how superior knowledge is treated as a right and an obligation in the interaction.

The analysis of participant discussions revealed a pattern of crafting contributions so as to respect each other’s domains of practice. We particularly focused on the way participants specified and tuned their epistemic stance in relation to each other’s practice field, and the preference structure (Pomerantz and Heritage, 2012) in their way of doing this. This pattern of epistemic stances and preferences was identified across the whole dataset and was understood as a basic principle of the socio-moral order of peer interactions in this programme. Although unusual in conversation analytic studies, we validated the pattern by coding various types of utterances in different contexts in Nvivo. In an abductive manner (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013), our analysis thus sharpened our analytical interest in focusing on the socio-moral order of interaction.

More rarely, the way that the basic principle of the socio-moral order shaped and constrained engagement with leadership challenges became clearly visible in the interaction. In such situations, this basic principle was somewhat challenged, leading to visible interactional work (such as repair (Schegloff, 2007) or change of conversational trajectory) to maintain the socio-moral order. These instances are thus a form of deviant cases (Heritage and Clayman, 2010; Schegloff, 1968) in that the dominant pattern of smooth adherence to the norms of the socio-moral order is seemingly disrupted. Such deviant cases are analytically important in three ways. First, to the extent that we can show that the socio-moral order is maintained, even in more complex cases, they support and bring more

depth to our argument underpinning a socio-moral order. Second, they show that the order is actively maintained rather than a mechanical repetition of a way of expressing oneself. Third, they make the interactional consequences of this socio-moral order more visible by indicating what is constrained or avoided. In the results section, we present two such longer sequences accompanied by a detailed analysis.

Our analysis did thus not rely on thematic coding of the type that readers might be more familiar with. Instead we rely on detailed analysis of interactional sequences, the identification of mechanisms and tactics employed and, subsequently, an analysis of the interactional consequences of these, in accordance with the conventions of conversation analysis (Hutchby and Woofit, 2008). After each excerpt, we provide a commentary where our analysis of the interaction is presented in detail and thus possible for the reader to validate against the excerpts. We wish to emphasize that our focus in the interaction analysis is on how the participants visibly treat and in action make sense of the evolving interaction (Schegloff, 2007), thereby collaboratively constructing their interactional environment (Heritage and Clayman, 2010).

Results

During the programme, the participants engaged in various kinds of interactions and were given a variety of tasks by the consultants, such as solving riddles or producing a fictitious invention in groups to illustrate group or innovation processes. However, the majority of the exercises concerned participants talking about their own work situations because the task directly focused on either discussing those situations or using their experiences to exemplify and discuss concepts and models taught in the programme. In the following, we will focus on these interactions and begin by presenting the main principle of the emerging socio-moral order in the community of participants, after which we present two examples of how this principle was pivotal in regulating conduct.

Treating each other as experts

The basic principle of the socio-moral order of the participant community was perhaps most clearly visible in their treatment of stories and descriptions of their own practice. These discussions constitute a central aspect of any MLDP (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2008; Iles and Preece, 2006) in that they offer and were presented to the participants in terms of opportunities to apply concepts from the programme to their own practice, but also to rethink and change their way of doing leadership. In principle, such conversations should offer opportunities for participants to critique and question their own practices and the underlying assumptions sustaining them (Hahn and Vignon, 2019; Reynolds, 1998). Our first excerpt is therefore from an exercise that asked participants to talk about an ongoing challenge in their daily work and to try to help each other with it. We present a somewhat longer excerpt to give readers a sense of the conversational style, focusing our attention on how the participants navigated in relation to each other's organizational context.

In this exercise, the participants took turns presenting a leadership challenge from their own work context, after which the other participants were to reflect on and try to give advice in relation to the challenge. The exercise utilised the format of a reflecting team (Andersen, 1987), a design intended to facilitate reflexivity. In the reflecting team, a case owner presented a problem before facing away from the other three participants on the reflecting team, who then talked about and tried to suggest possible solutions to the challenge for ten minutes. In this part of the exercise, the case owner listened but did not participate. Finally, the case owner faced the group again to comment on what was said that was helpful or thought provoking. The participants then took turns presenting their case and going through the same process.

Typically, this approach is somewhat challenging for groups (as seen in the following transcript, where the presenter fails to be silent while the team discusses the challenge (lines (ll) 28, 33, 35-37 and 41). In the following sequence, A, C and D share thoughts and reflections on the situation presented by B on cross-disciplinary collaboration in a psychiatric unit. Appendix 1 contains a list defining the transcription symbols used.

Excerpt 1

23 D: ·hhh so I can see the dilemma
24 that is that you have been given
25 the formal leadership authorization over a
26 .hh (0.7)
27 group of employees or [part]
28 B: [mm]
29 D: of a group of employees
30 which means you have not been (.)
31 concerning what we heard this morning ((in a lecture))
32 you do not have the authorisation from below
33 B: no
34 D: and [you]
35 B: [I do] have
36 I do have that
37 in the nursing [group and (.) in informally yes]
38 D: [yes yes but for a part] of:
39 C: the group of [doc]tors
40 D: [of]
41 B: mm yes=
42 D: =yes the group of doctors and that's due to the history
43 and and as we heard before
44 then it's like
45 you need to

46 she should
47 she needs to want to win this
48 one way or the other
49 she needs to
50 one way or another get
51 the leadership authorisation from below
52 (0.6)
53 to be able to solve her dilemma
54 that she's sitting in
55 (0.5)
56 °yes°
57 (1.1)
58 and and (.) again↑ [sh]
59 A: [and] therefore I think that
60 that patient↑ flow and to think with the patient↑ flow concept
61 in quality↑
62 in the process↑
63 the shared responsibility
64 that that's what you should use

We wish to focus on how the participants managed the challenge of engaging with someone else's practice and on the socio-moral order that was established. We do this by exploring how epistemic domains, status and stance (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b) are managed in the interaction.

In the first lines, D summarises the challenge and gives an interpretation, categorising it as “leadership authorisation” (l. 25), which is met by acceptance and alignment (“mm” in line (l. 28 and a confirmatory “no” in l. 33). Leadership authorisation is elaborated on in l. 37 through B's extension of the category to different groups, and in ll. 38-42 via D, B and C's collaborative

specification that it is relevant in relation to the group of doctors. Thus, B shows alignment with the use of the category in relation to her challenge. Of note, this contribution and her previous utterances are in violation of the structure of the reflecting team, according to which she is only allowed to listen to the discussion and not participate. This is not fully accomplished until l. 44, indicated by the shift in pronoun from “you” to “she”.

Of particular interest is how D introduces the category in ll. 25-32 by making a positive claim in l. 25, which receives an alignment in l. 28, indicating that it is a preferred contribution. However, in l. 32, D starts to address what might be heard as a more problematic aspect of the situation. She stops short, indicated by a brief pause ((.)), and in l. 31 produces an insert sequence (Schegloff, 2007), that is, one or more turns that does not continue the work being done in the previous turn but does some other work before returning to the primary sequence. In this case, it expresses the epistemic domain that D now refers to in producing her comment, namely a lecture they attended together that morning. This works to mitigate D’s epistemic authority in relation to B’s work situation, in that the epistemic domain she draws on is the shared knowledge of a lecture, rather than insights into B’s work.

The preference structure observable here indicates an important aspect of a socio-moral order (Pomerantz and Heritage, 2012). The utterance is crafted as a dispreferred response, through the account in the insert sequence. The orientation towards epistemic status and domain in l. 31 suggests that there is a risk felt in violating B’s epistemic primacy when addressing a more problematic aspect of the situation. This risk is handled through the clarification and downplaying of D’s epistemic stance in relation to B’s practice. Interestingly, it would appear that exploration of such problematic aspects, if developed, might lead to assumptions surfacing and being challenged (Cunliffe, 2002; Reynolds, 1998), i.e. to practicing critical reflexivity. However, the evolving socio-

moral order seems to make such an orientation interactionally problematic, as a focus on these aspects is treated as a dispreferred action.

The category 'leadership authorisation' is further developed by D into a candidate solution (ll. 46-51), i.e. that B should "get the leadership authorisation from below" (ll. 50-51). However, in alignment with the weak epistemic stance taken in relation to B's work situation, the solution is quite generally formulated, not indicating how it would translate to that particular situation. The candidate solution draws on the lecture as the domain of knowledge, without making any substantial epistemic claims on B's work situation, or by making any elaboration or reformulation relevant.

This is followed by a second categorisation of the challenge as concerning "patient flow" (l. 60), suggested by A. In introducing this category, A's utterance overlaps with and interrupts D's, positioning it as a contribution to how D should win leadership authorisation. A prefaces her suggestion with an explicit reference to her thinking, drawing on a domain where she can claim epistemic primacy (Stivers et al., 2011), effectively downplaying her epistemic status in relation to another epistemic domain, namely B's work situation. The category is further developed in ll. 61-63 but without any direct reference to B's challenge, thus refraining from making any strong epistemic claims. The final suggestion, "that's what you should use" (l. 64), thus leaves the task of translating this to her own situation with B. The presentation of different ways to categorise the challenge combined with a consistent downplay of epistemic status (in relation to the particular challenge), can be seen as attempts to engage in what Cunliffe (2002) and Reynolds (1998) call reflection. The new candidate categorisations suggest somewhat instrumental solution strategies. They do not facilitate a surfacing of assumptions and elaborating and questioning the problem owner's way of framing the challenge and the situation, which would be more in the direction of critical reflexivity.

To validate this pattern across the material, although unusual in conversation analysis studies, we coded utterances according to type of epistemic stance and conversational context; see Table 1. We excluded obvious questions and focused on comments that added some form of content. Note that the numbers do not reflect the length of utterances. More time was generally spent on talking about one's own practice, typically in extensive turns, rather than on commenting on each other's practice, typically in much shorter but more numerous turns. As shown in Table 1, the pattern of downplaying one's own epistemic status in relation to another's practice was consistent across the empirical material as a whole.

--- Insert table 1 around here ---

Essentially, what we see is how the participants engage in moral work by constantly and carefully tuning their epistemic status to what they gauge as appropriate. Displaying the grounds for one's claims (e.g. as one's own experience, understanding of the presented problem or theory), serves to qualify the speaker as an advice giver while simultaneously respecting the presenter's epistemic authority in relation to the challenge faced. In crafting their contributions to the interaction, the participants can be seen to orient toward a socio-moral principle that could be described as 'treat each participants as experts on their own leadership practice'.

This central principle of the socio-moral order of the programme can be seen as an extension of an everyday orientation towards maintaining social solidarity and avoiding friction in social interaction (Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1992). However, this general orientation takes a particular form in the MLDP, where the ostensive aims are different from everyday conversation, namely learning about and developing practical leadership. This particular form is of importance for the possibility to

engage in and develop a capacity for critical reflexivity. The challenge and critique (rather than acceptance and affirmation) of assumptions, descriptions and leadership practices that is central to critical reflexivity, risk clashing with the orientation towards social solidarity and the principle of treating participants as experts on their own leadership practice. While solution-oriented reflection seems to be unproblematic and is typically structured as preferred contributions, more deeply questioning and challenging someone else's practice and assumptions is clearly more problematic.

Mostly, the peer interactions in the programme were smooth and completely free flowing, in line with the pattern described above. Sometimes, however, individual participants attempted to pursue goals and interests that seemed to clash with the basic principle of treating each other as experts. These situations can be seen as deviant cases where the socio-moral order is challenged. The participants then jointly worked to restore and maintain the socio-moral order, to the detriment of the individual's requests for assistance with their practice. Such cases show how the socio-moral order is actively produced and maintained by the participants (Garfinkel, 1967; Hester and Eglin, 1997).

Two such more problematic sequences are presented in the following, the detailed interactional analysis revealing the dynamics of the socio-moral order and the core principle described above. While the particular way the order takes shape of course varies between situations, these sequences show two important aspects of the socio-moral order in the programme under study. First, in this particular programme, the socio-moral order worked to constrain the possibilities for deeper questioning and thus critical reflexivity in relation to one's own leadership practice. Second, the analysis shows how the socio-moral order was actively maintained by the participants, even to the detriment of their own learning interests.

Avoiding challenging each other

The following excerpts are from an exercise called the leadership mirror. In this somewhat complex exercise, two programme participants provided a third, focal participant with feedback on his or her leadership practices. The feedback was prepared based on interviews with colleagues of the focal participant conducted during a previous visit to the participant's organization. The goal of the exercise was to provide the participants with an opportunity to reflect on their way of performing their role to help identify areas for development and improvement. However, it turned out that this objective was difficult to pursue fully. In the next excerpt, A and B give feedback to D based on interviews they previously conducted with D's colleagues.

Excerpt 2

215 D: if there was someone [that could] come with input

216 B: [ye:s]

((4 lines omitted))

221 D: to [help] me with it

222 B: [yes]

223 D: because it is really something that I work a lot [with]

224 A: [yes]

225 B: yes

226 D: ehmm::

227 A: but to be that specific would not be possible [here] I think

228 D: [no]

229 B: no and I think you could say

230 we really don't know about how things work at your place

In ll. 215-223, D asks for input to and help with a practical problem described in lines prior to this excerpt. Asking for "input" (l. 215), she can be heard to claim a relatively low epistemic stance in

relation to the issue, asking them to share knowledge that she assumes they now hold that she does not have access to yet.

However, B and D have little to say about this. In l. 227, A's "but" projects a non-aligning response, delivered as "to be that specific would not be possible here". B aligns and her claim that they do not really "know how things work" in D's department positions her with low epistemic status in contrast to D's offer of a higher one. D's rather quick acceptance of this, seemingly at the first possible recognition point (Jefferson, 1973), in an overlap in l. 228, signals that A's decline is actually the preferred alternative (Pomerantz and Heritage, 2012). In other words, the reluctance of her colleagues to provide new information is seen as appropriate.

This sequence shows how the socio-moral order of the community of programme participants constrains interaction. Despite an individual's explicit invitation to her peers to claim higher epistemic status in relation to her situation, which would make it possible to more deeply challenge her understanding of it, it is deflected. Furthermore, this avoidance is treated as the appropriate thing to do, or in other words, as being in line with the socio-moral order. While the socio-moral order seems to resonate well with reflection on a more instrumental level (Cunliffe, 2002; Reynolds, 1998), a deeper critique and challenge of assumptions and practices seems to be more problematic, as it clashes with the basic principle of treating each other as experts on one's own practice. Essentially, an appreciative environment is established, along with a certain amount of conservatism, where existing practices are always treated as reasonable and appropriate.

Turning away from practical leadership

A slightly different version of the problem of focusing on one's own leadership challenges emerged in another exercise, this time focusing on implementing strategic changes. This sequence shows

how the socio-moral order and the basic principle of treating each other as experts on one's own leadership practice tend to shape how learning is conceived in practice in this community.

During their discussions, participants label and categorise their leadership challenges in a particular way, categorising aids by linking experiences and stories to each other and to more generalised knowledge. In doing this, a shared repertoire of concepts and cases is built (Wenger, 1998). In excerpt 1, B's challenge was categorised as leadership authorisation (l. 25) and patient flow (l. 60), connecting it to, respectively, shared knowledge acquired from a lecture and to a current discussion within healthcare management. In turn, the challenge represents a case for these concepts, enriching the shared understanding of what they might mean in practice. The categories thus draw on and are evidence of the existence of a pool of shared conceptual resources (Heritage and Clayman, 2010; Sacks, 1992).

Building a shared repertoire fits nicely with the principle of treating participants as experts on their own leadership practice since all of them share equal epistemic access to this repertoire (in contrast to each individual's leadership practice). At times, however, some participants attempted to pursue other aims, such as to better understand the challenges in one's own organization. These situations proved to be problematic. The building of a shared repertoire was treated not only as an opportunity but as the norm for how learning was to be accomplished in the programme, i.e. as part of the socio-moral order.

In excerpt 2, D's desire to learn more about her practical problem was treated (also by herself) as a violation of the socio-moral order, prompting her desire to be marginalised. The following excerpt shows how two different ways of orienting towards a practical challenge emerge as two interactional projects (Schegloff, 2007), one of which is to engage with a practical challenge and the

other to build a shared repertoire in the programme community. The excerpt is from an exercise on implementing strategic changes in which the participants discussed C's leadership challenge.

Excerpt 3

1 C: the other is that there generally in the organization
2 is more of a hunger more
3 that we should go back and focus the professional quality
4 we have so much eh
5 B: performance management
6 C: we have (.) yes
7 B: it's performance ((operations?))
8 C: we have so much performance management
9 so I'm thinking there is also an energy in
10 there is a desire for it
11 A: are you measuring something now?
12 C: what?
13 A: do you measure something (.) when you say the professional quality
14 C: in in [rela]
15 A: [do you] know at what level you are?
16 C: if we measure it in relation to
17 d- eh how
18 you're thinking speci[fic goals]
19 A: [well]
20 C: [or performance targets or (.) °do you think about°]
21 A: [yes (.) how you (.) I mean professional:]
22 when you [say] that professional quality should: [increase?]
23 C: [yes] [not is is]
24 only in relation to
25 I mean what we do right now
26 I mean there we have I mean we have some

27 A: do you compare yourself nationally or (.) internationally
28 or do you have any parameters you measure where you can say
29 we:: we should be able to this better or
30 our score is good or we would like to be even better or?
31 C: I can't answer you on that

C talks about a challenge that she would like to work with in her unit. She initially starts out by categorising the issue as being a question of achieving better “professional quality” (l. 3). This is picked up by B, who supplies a contrast, “performance management” (l. 5), elaborating on the categorisation and simultaneously acknowledging its general relevance. In l. 11, A then adds measurement as another characteristic. In the context of the programme, this is reasonably heard as implying the category ‘measurable strategic goals’, which were discussed in programme presentations. C does not acknowledge this candidate category, and the question in ll. 14-18 is reasonably heard as hesitancy and uncertainty. This is followed by an insert sequence with an attempted repair (ll. 21-30; Schegloff 2007), in which A explains and elaborates on how measurement could potentially be relevant.

What A suggests can be heard as a categorisation that makes the challenge even more relevant to the programme and the community, i.e. orienting towards building a shared repertoire. However, the reason C brought this challenge up was not measurement, but the “hunger” (l. 2) for more quality. That is, the reason for engaging with the issue of quality is categorised more as a matter of what can be understood as caring about the enthusiasm of employees than as a question of orienting toward a measurable level of quality. Furthermore, the pronoun “we” in l. 3 is reasonably heard as ‘we in the work unit’. In other words, it relates to the work unit as the relevant community (Jayyusi, 1984; Wenger, 1998) rather than the programme group. C can be seen as trying to pursue the interactional project of getting support on how to engage with her subordinates, rather than of building a shared

repertoire in the programme group. However, the ambiguity of the category of quality also allows a connection to that repertoire.

Shortly afterwards one of the consultants joined the conversation and elaborated on the meaning of “mission” in the programme. As the following excerpt shows, the way this is done contributes to turning attention away from the practical leadership challenge and toward building a repertoire of concepts and cases in the programme community.

Excerpt 4

56 Cons: yes because to be able to call it a mission we would like it to be
57 possible to say
58 well in three to five years
59 then the employees are more satisfied or something like that
60 I mean, what is it that I want to achieve by engaging in this change
61 and use my energy to have

((6 lines omitted))

68 C: yes I could imagine to measure the professional aspect, right
69 I mean what the group
70 I mean if you do it like a scientific study right
71 and make a protocol, then you could measure the patient group
72 that would be (.) how they I mean the process had been, right
72 how their () the length of the sick period and eh::
73 use of drugs or
74 use of drugs or need for help arrangements
75 I mean process generally
76 and the illness and
77 I mean in that way we could measure quality
78 and that would be (.) that is closest to my mission
79 but what I mean (.) is that it is also spurred by

80 what I mentioned before
81 that we also have a wish and hunger for to have more focus on
82 our professional skills

Following the consultant's clarification of the meaning of mission in the programme, C works toward finding a way to produce a measurement, categorising her challenge as a measurable strategic goal. Her original interactional project involving the development of professional quality, based on her perception of a "hunger" (l. 81; excerpt 3, l. 2) among her subordinates, is effectively exchanged for the focus on measurability and an interactional project involving categorising the challenge as a strategic goal, i.e. a mission. The transformation accomplished through this category work thus involved a gain in relevance for the programme community but a loss of the original relevance for her own context. Her willingness and active engagement in the project of building a shared repertoire further indicates that she orients to this as a more appropriate pursuit than her original orientation towards her practical problem. She thus both adheres to and enacts a normative order, where some orientations are more appropriate than others. The final lines in excerpt 4 indicate that she understands the pursuits as two different projects. "[I]t is also spurred by" (l. 79) is reasonably heard as a return to her previous orientation toward the "hunger" (excerpt 3, l. 2 and repeated in l. 81) for professional quality in her work unit, while "also" in l. 81 recognises that the previous few lines actually were oriented towards something else.

Clearly, there seems to be a strong preference in this sequence to prioritise the project of developing a shared repertoire of concepts and cases. Problem solving and learning about practical leadership in the context of the participant's home organizations is consequently downplayed. Conduct is regulated and the socio-moral order of the programme community is maintained, while critical reflexivity and learning about practical leadership is constrained.

Obviously, this is a single interactional sequence, but the active and collaborative work shown in the analysis indicates that what is laid open and made visible is a significant feature of what the participants come to treat as appropriate in their community, that is, as elements of a socio-moral order. Our detailed analysis of more problematic sequences shows that the participants actively work to establish and maintain a socio-moral order, even to the detriment of their own learning goals (evidenced in the interactions). Obviously, the specific way interaction is shaped in a particular sequence is always unique as it is tailored to the specifics of the situation (Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984). The mechanisms behind these specific instances, including the basic principle of treating each other as experts on one's own leadership practice, however, seem to be constantly present and utilised to produce a consistent socio-moral order of the peer community with consequences for learning and reflexivity.

Discussion and conclusion

Our analysis of peer interactions in an MLDP shows an emergent socio-moral order characterized by a consistent fine tuning of one's epistemic authority so as to treat participants as experts on their own leadership practice. Recognisable as an extension of everyday conversation, this principle takes on a particular significance in a context where the formal aim and purpose is learning and reflection. In particular, the socio-moral order shaped the participants' engagement with each other's practice fields. While enabling reflection on a more instrumental level, it worked to constrain deeper challenges, questioning and critique. The socio-moral order essentially directed the participants in the programme away from engaging as co-authors (Cunliffe, 2002) of one another's organizational realities and thus away from critical reflexivity.

The analysis of the epistemic dimensions of interaction casts new light on the practical challenges

of reflexive dialogue. Clearly, to engage as co-authors of the organizational reality requires a rather equal level of epistemic authority in which both parties have influence over what is constructed. Similarly, “critical questioning through reflexive dialogical practice” that could help surface assumptions and challenge defensive routines (Holton and Grandy, 2016: 386) implies an epistemic position with sufficient authority. In that sense, the normative expectations toward how each participant’s leadership challenges are to be treated play into and shape the conditions for engaging in reflexive dialogue. In the programme we studied, the principle of treating each other as experts implied a deference towards the other participants’ epistemic authority, effectively constraining them from claiming the stronger position needed for deeper challenges, as was the case in excerpt 2. The reluctance to claim such stronger epistemic positions effectively curtailed critique and reflexivity.

At the same time, the participants did engage with rather equal epistemic authority in relation to what we called the shared repertoire of cases and concepts as a feature of the group as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). This type of repertoire clearly constitutes a knowledge resource and can be inspiring for individuals in finding new solutions. Using it to achieve deeper reflexivity, however, requires the participants to engage in the practices of “question[ing] and surface[ing] taken-for-granted aspects of everyday practice” (Cunliffe, 2002: 46). Such practices become more problematic in the presence of the normative expectations concerning epistemic authority.

In our case, the socio-moral order worked to direct the participants’ learning orientation away from their own leadership practices and towards a shared repertoire of cases and concepts, as shown in excerpts 3 and 4.

Reflexive practices in MLDPs are clearly dependent on more than just the pedagogical design (Corlett, 2012; Hahn and Vignon, 2019; Holton and Grandy, 2016), the atmosphere in the room

(Hibbert, 2013) and the available conceptual resources (Irving et al., 2019; Schaupp and Virkkunen, 2017). The extent to which participants are willing to challenge each other and engage as co-authors of the organizational reality also depends on how these actions resonate with the socio-moral order of interactions. Just as participants in Nicholson and Carroll's (2013: 1234) study could refrain from "shaking each other up", participants in our study shied away from critical reflexivity to instead maintain the norms of the socio-moral order.

Clearly, the conditions for reflexivity, including the socio-moral order, can be influenced (Barge, 2004). Facilitation (Holton and Grandy, 2016; Schedlitzki et al., 2014) and instructor behaviour might be helpful in enabling a more reflexive interactional style. However, as acknowledged by Schedlitzki et al. (2014) facilitator interventions need to be carefully crafted. Based on our analysis, we suggest that, while facilitation can be both emotionally sensitive and intellectually challenging for participants (Hibbert, 2013; Schedlitzki et al., 2014), it is also a morally problematic interactional terrain. Instructors may be seen as experts on academic knowledge, but that authority needs to be translated and balanced when engaging with the participants' leadership practices to establish the relatively equal epistemic stances conducive to reflexive co-authorship (Cunliffe, 2002). Our analysis shows that when participants claimed the necessary level of epistemic authority, it was treated as inappropriate, even when the target participant explicitly invited this (excerpt 2). The facilitator's position in this regard needs to be carefully negotiated, as also implied by the importance placed on collaborative goal setting and on displays of empathy in coaching (Gessnitzer and Kauffeld, 2015; Will et al., 2016). Further studies of facilitator practices may shed additional light on this topic.

Limitations

As any other study, this article also has its limitations. The fact that only one programme was studied limits generalisation of our analysis and calls for further exploration of other programmes to challenge and expand the understanding elaborated on here. Studies focusing on various types of programmes and with an assortment of pedagogical approaches might further add to the preliminary insights we present here. Furthermore, close examination of multiple types of facilitation would add an understanding of the plasticity of the socio-moral order and possibly demonstrate what types of interactional interventions might shift the work more towards critical reflexivity.

In conclusion this paper demonstrates that peer interaction in MLDPs is a dynamic and complex field. To engage in critical reflexive practices in discussions with peers is challenging. Peer interaction emerges as a deeply moral field, where participants carefully navigate and negotiate how to engage with one another. Our results do not confirm existing assumptions that peer interaction unambiguously supports reflexivity, particularly not concerning practical leadership. Instead, in the programme we studied, the socio-moral order filled a conservative function by constraining and limiting reflexivity and thus also transformation of leadership practice. The concept of a socio-moral order of interaction extends our theoretical understanding of these challenges as an inherent and regulating quality of peer relations, shaping the conditions for reflexivity.

Appendix

Transcription symbols	Explanation
(2.5)	approximate length of pause in seconds
[utterance]	overlapping utterances
↑	rising intonation
:	sound stretched

=	latched utterances
<u>utterance</u>	stressed word
()	inaudible words or syllables
(())	comments by author
>utterance<	spoken faster than the surrounding speech
°utterance°	spoken more softly than the surrounding speech
.hh	audible inbreath
UNC	unclear speaker
Cons.	consultant

References

Andersen T (1987) The reflecting team: Dialogue and meta-dialogue in clinical work. *Family process* 26(4): 415–428.

Ardichvili A, Dag KN and Manderscheid S (2016) Leadership development: Current and emerging models and practices. *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 18(3): 275–285. DOI: 10.1177/1523422316645506.

Barge JK (2004) Reflexivity and managerial practice. *Communication Monographs* 71(1): 70–96.

Bergmann JR (1998) Introduction: Morality in discourse. *Research on Language & Social Interaction* 31(3–4): 279–294.

Bolden R (2016) Leadership, management and organisational development. In: Gold J, Thorpe R, and Mumford A (eds) *Gower Handbook of Leadership and Management Development*. Routledge, pp. 143–158.

Carroll B and Levy L (2010) Leadership development as identity construction. *Management Communication Quarterly* 24(2): 211–231.

Carroll B and Nicholson H (2014) Resistance and struggle in leadership development. *Human Relations* 67(11): 1413–1436.

- Corlett S (2012) Participant learning in and through research as reflexive dialogue: Being ‘struck’ and the effects of recall. *Management Learning* 44(5). SAGE Publications Ltd: 453–469. DOI: 10.1177/1350507612453429.
- Cunliffe AL (2002) Reflexive dialogical practice in management learning. *Management learning* 33(1): 35–61.
- Fairhurst GT (2011) Discursive approaches to leadership. In: *The SAGE Handbook of Leadership*. London: SAGE, pp. 495–507.
- Fernández-Aráoz C, Roscoe A and Aramaki K (2017) Turning potential into success: The missing link in leadership development. *Harvard Business Review* 95(6): 86–93.
- Ford J and Harding N (2007) Move over management we are all leaders now. *Management Learning* 38(5): 475–493.
- Fox S (2008) That miracle of familiar organizational things’: Social and moral order in the MBA classroom. *Organization Studies* 29(5): 733–761.
- Gagnon S and Collinson D (2014) Rethinking global leadership development programmes: the interrelated significance of power, context and identity. *Organization Studies* 35(5): 645–670.
- Garfinkel H (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Gessnitzer S and Kauffeld S (2015) The working alliance in coaching: Why behavior is the key to success. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 51(2). Sage Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA: 177–197.
- Gray DE (2007) Facilitating management learning. Developing critical reflection through reflective tools. *Management Learning* 38(5): 495–517.
- Gurdjian P, Halbeisen T and Lane K (2014) Why leadership-development programs fail. *McKinsey Quarterly* 1(1): 121–126.
- Hahn C and Vignon C (2019) Management education from episteme to phronesis: The contribution of French didactic theory. *Management Learning*: 1350507619831118.
- Hay A (2014) ‘I don’t know what I am doing!’: Surfacing struggles of managerial identity work. *Management Learning* 45(5): 509–524. DOI: 10.1177/1350507613483421.
- Hay A and Hodgkinson M (2008) More Success than Meets the Eye—A Challenge to Critiques of the MBA: Possibilities for Critical Management Education? *Management Learning* 39(1): 21–40. DOI: 10.1177/1350507607085170.
- Heritage J (1984) *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Heritage J (2012a) Epistemics in Action: Action Formation and Territories of Knowledge. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 45(1): 1–29. DOI: 10.1080/08351813.2012.646684.

- Heritage J (2012b) The Epistemic Engine: Sequence Organization and Territories of Knowledge. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 45(1): 30–52. DOI: 10.1080/08351813.2012.646685.
- Heritage J and Clayman S (2010) *Talk in Action: Interactions, Identities, and Institutions*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hester S and Eglin P (1997) *Culture in Action. Studies in Membership Categorization Analysis*. Washington, D. C.: International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis & University Press of America.
- Hibbert P (2013) Approaching reflexivity through reflection: Issues for critical management education. *Journal of Management Education* 37(6): 803–827.
- Holton JA and Grandy G (2016) Voiced inner dialogue as relational reflection-on-action: The case of middle managers in health care. *Management Learning* 47(4). SAGE Publications Ltd: 369–390. DOI: 10.1177/1350507616629602.
- Hutchby I and Woofit R (2008) *Conversation Analysis*. 2nd ed. Chichester, UK: Polity Press.
- Iles P and Preece D (2006) Developing leaders or developing leadership? The Academy of Chief Executives' programmes in the North East of England. *Leadership* 2(3): 317–340.
- Irving G, Wright A and Hibbert P (2019) Threshold concept learning: emotions and liminal space transitions. *Management Learning*: 1350507619836062.
- Iszatt-White M, Kempster S and Carroll B (2017) An educator's perspective on reflexive pedagogy: Identity undoing and issues of power. *Management Learning* 48(5): 582–596.
- Jayyusi L (1984) *Categorization and the Moral Order*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Jefferson G (1973) A case of precision timing in ordinary conversation: Overlapped tag-positioned address terms in closing sequences. *Semiotica* 9(1): 47–96.
- Larsson M, Carsten M and Knudsen M (2020) Good intentions gone awry: investigating a strategically oriented MLD program. *Journal of Management Development* 39(3): 334–354.
- Larsson M, Holmberg R and Kempster S (2019) 'It's the organization that is wrong': Exploring disengagement from organisations through leadership development. *Leadership*.
- Mantere S and Ketokivi M (2013) Reasoning in organization science. *Academy of Management Review* 38(1): 70–89.
- McGurk P (2010) Outcomes of management and leadership development. *Journal of Management Development* 29(5): 457–470. DOI: 10.1108/02621711011039222.
- Nicholson H and Carroll B (2013) Identity undoing and power relations in leadership development. *Human Relations* 66(9): 1225–1248. DOI: 10.1177/0018726712469548.

- Pomerantz A and Heritage J (2012) Preference. *The handbook of conversation analysis* Sidnell J and Stivers T (eds): 210–228.
- Raelin JA (2001) Public reflection as the basis of learning. *Management learning* 32(1): 11–30.
- Raelin JA and Raelin JD (2006) Developmental action learning: Toward collaborative change. *Action Learning: Research and Practice* 3(1): 45–67.
- Reynolds M (1998) Reflection and critical reflection in management learning. *Management learning* 29(2): 183–200.
- Sacks H (1992) *Lectures on Conversation*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Sacks H, Schegloff EA and Jefferson G (1974) A simplest systematics for the organization of turn taking for conversation. *Language*: 696–735.
- Schaupp M and Virkkunen J (2017) Why a management concept fails to support managers' work: The case of the 'core competence of a corporation'. *Management Learning* 48(1): 97–109.
- Schedlitzki D (2019) Developing apprentice leaders through critical reflection. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*.
- Schedlitzki D, Jarvis C and MacInnes J (2014) Leadership development: A place for storytelling and Greek mythology? *Management Learning* 46(4): 412–426. DOI: 10.1177/1350507614560303.
- Schegloff EA (1968) Sequencing in conversational openings 1. *American anthropologist* 70(6). Wiley Online Library: 1075–1095.
- Schegloff EA (2007) *Sequence Organization in Interaction: A Primer in Conversation Analysis, Volume 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stivers T, Mondada L and Steensig J (2011) Knowledge, morality and affiliation in social interaction. In: Stivers T, Mondada L, and Steensig J (eds) *The Morality of Knowledge in Conversation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3–24.
- Wenger E (1998) *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Will T, Gessnitzer S and Kauffeld S (2016) You think you are an empathic coach? Maybe you should think again. The difference between perceptions of empathy vs. empathic behaviour after a person-centred coaching training. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice* 9(1). Taylor & Francis: 53–68.
- Yip J and Raelin JA (2012) Threshold concepts and modalities for teaching leadership practice. *Management Learning* 43(3): 333–354.

Table 1

	Own practice	Other's practice or epistemic field	Illustrative quotes	General description
Weakened epistemic status	6	119	"now I cannot generalize, but relating to the first story you told", "I'm thinking that they go out and ...", "therefore it is my experience that if you make an introduction.."	Weakening epistemic markers such as "maybe", "could it be that", or Explicitly marking that the epistemic domain drawn on is different from the other's practice field – instead of being own practice, what is heard before (shared knowledge) own thinking
Strong epistemic status	37	1	"as it is now, it is part of my work", "he's got a task he likes and feels no need to develop" "yes, that is correct"	Unmitigated claims, or high-status epistemic markers ("of course"; "that is correct")

Table 1. Utterances coded according to epistemic stance and conversational context.