Organisation, Power and E-mail: An Investigation of Electronic Power Relationships

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<u>Acknowledgements</u>

To Evelyn May Hall with all my love

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Abstract

This thesis examines and contributes to the study of how, and in what forms, power and influence is communicated via e-mail. The methods used in the investigation examine the e-mail patterns of six respondents, who occupy varying hierarchical positions, within a single public sector organisation. It achieves this examination through a discourse analysis of each respondent's sent mail box, using the respondents themselves as secondary coders. Underpinning the empirical work is an examination of how the theories of Foucault relate to the subject of power and e-mail. The examination suggests that Foucault's methodology can provide insight into the role of power in influencing e-mail discursive patterns. This is theoretically achieved by applying a similar structural linguistic methodology to that used by Foucault to uncover how logical relations appear in e-mail exchanges and the power relationships they produce. Central to the application of Foucault's work is the notion of context; a theoretical concept that suggests relational power as expressed through e-mails is shaped by the perceptual relationship between actors and text.

Introduction

E-mail predates the inception of the Internet, becoming a driving factor in its subsequent development. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) first demonstrated the Compatible Time-Sharing System (CTSS) in 1961. It allowed multiple users to log into the IBM 7094 from remote dial-up terminals, and to store files online through disk. This new ability encouraged users to share information in new ways. E-mail started in 1965 as a way for multiple users of a time-sharing mainframe computer to communicate. Although the history is inexact, among the first systems to have such a facility were SDC's Q32 and MIT's CTSS.

E-mail was quickly extended to become *network e-mail*, which allowed users to pass messages between different computers by at least 1966. ARPANET computer network made a large contribution to the development of e-mail. There exists a report that indicates experimental inter-system e-mail transfers on it shortly after its creation, in 1969. Ray Tomlinson initiated the use of the @ sign to separate the names of the user and their machine in 1971. ARPANET significantly increased the popularity of e-mail, and it became the killer application of the ARPANET. The term killer application sums well the role e-mail had begun to play in communications technology: a computer program that is so desirable or essential that it becomes the core value of a larger operating system.

E-mail has since proliferated globally, a proliferation here described by Ducheneaut and Watts (2005) "Whereas e-mail was once restricted to a limited circle of technocrats, it has now become a part of everyday life for many people beyond the world of science and technology" (p12). Ducheneaut et al (2005) go on to make the observation that e-mail has now passed into everyday language, if someone says that they will e-mail you, you'll not only know what it means but also likely have an e-mail address by which you can be contacted.

A search of Google reveals the following top current definitions of e-mail as of late 2007:

- A process of sending text messages in electronic form. The messages can also include images and video clips.
  www.whichvoip.com/voip/voip_dictionary.htm
- (Electronic + mail) The term electronic mail understandably shortened itself to E-mail, e-mail and now email as it became an everyday process. Email is a cheap, fast text message delivered electronically over the Internet.
  www.eubios.info/biodict.htm
- Electronic mail, electronic files that are transferred quickly from an outbox on one computer, to the inbox of another.
  www.100best.com/articles40.html
- (Electronic mail) The exchange of electronic messages and computer files between computers that are connected to the Internet or some other computer network.
  www.hookusup.com/glossary.htm
- This is a system used by computers to send and receive messages over the internet. When you send an email or someone sends you an email, the message will remain on the mail server (your email providers computer) until it is downloaded.
  www.rwh.org.au/rwhict/jargon.cfm
- Electronic Mail enables you to communicate electronically. To use email you need to use a computer that is on a Network.
  www.its.strath.ac.uk/helpdesk/glossary/

These definitions are entirely accurate; simply outlining the process and technology. However, the inspiration behind this thesis was the effect that communicating electronically via e-mail had on language, perception and understanding. It is one thing to type a message with a particular intention and send it instantly, but that intention has to be understood by the recipient (Rooksby, 2002). If the intention is misunderstood, then a number of possibilities can occur, both positive and negative.

And for organisations in particular, this has significant implications. Organisations have a challenge when it comes to e-mail, its use has many advantages but it also requires skills to use it effectively. Very often, and virtually nonexistent within the literature, these skills are implicit, informal and tacit parts of organisational life, but nonetheless they are vital, as Hardy and Clegg observe:

"How will the informal organisation, so vital to formal organisation, be shaped in the virtual world? Which communicative competencies can flourish in cyberspace and which cannot? What are the implications of the absence of subtle, tacit and embodied clues to meaning and context that are present in more face to face communication? Are there contexts where mediated communication can still be followed up with more direct access? New competencies will be required to navigate this cyberspace, both within and across organisations, that presently we know little about" (Hardy and Clegg, 1998, p432)

Nearly ten years on from the Hardy et al's point, very little is still known with regard to the strategic side of organisational e-mail life. The strategic use of e-mail, its effect on organisational communication and the lack of literature within this area was a great source of motivation behind this research subject. An equal source of motivation was the effect e-mail had upon language, its construction and identity, with emphasis on how e-mail transforms, challenges or supports established theories and theorists on discourse. Derrida was of particular interest as Derrida himself had acknowledged the potentially transformative role e-mail could play in theoretical and social development:

"...the indicative value of e-mail is privileged in my opinion for a more important and obvious reason: because electronic mail today, and even more than the fax, is on the way to transforming the entire public and private space of humanity, and first of all the limit between the private, the secret, and the public or phenomenal" (Derrida, 1998, *Archive Fever*).

E-mail's socially transformative ability provoked theoretical questions in this author's mind; what effect can e-mail have on sign and signifiers when physical presence is absent? And most significantly, how would Foucault's notions of power and discourse apply to e-mail? Along these routes the topic of investigation was created: What e-mail strategies exist and function/not function in gaining desired responses in organisation? This became an interest in the power structures of organisations both formal and informal. Would formal power produce certain types of e-mail strategies and could informal power be built up, maintained and deployed through e-mail? What can be drawn from the work of Foucault to explain the dynamics of power relationships in e-mail? Does e-mail provide a discursive field where Foucault's notions of power are challenged or is it a technology that reproduces hierarchical power as opposed to challenging it? And significantly what can these theories tell a modern audience about the e-mail strategies being used in organisations?

With these issues in mind, this thesis sets out to investigate how a single public sector organisation uses e-mail to send and respond to requests internally, many of these requests were of a formal nature many were not. Using the sent mailboxes (each providing two years of incoming and outgoing e-mails) of six actors, the e-mail discursive patterns used to communicate and respond to these formal and informal requests was investigated. Brigham and Corbett (1997, 2000) comment that any study of organisational communication is either implicitly or explicitly about power. Within this study it was explicit. Actors who occupied various hierarchical positions were faced with a host of changing circumstances and the way actors legitimised their requests and responses using e-mail was crucial to the outcome. These factors contributed to the investigation being very much about the manipulation of power but most significantly, about the management of social space.

Managing the natural social space that exists during e-mail exchanges is the underwriter of organisational power within this study. If space management can be carried out successfully then a lack of formal authority can be bypassed. These circumstances make e-mail a highly tactical political tool if actors choose to take advantage of it.

To develop this perspective the literature belonging to cyberspace is compared and contrasted to that of organisational e-mail studies in order to explore implicit themes of social space and the strategies and methods actors use to navigate these spaces.

In order to examine how power was communicated and the e-mail discursive patterns it generated a content analysis was applied. Using the literature, a code book was developed to examine respondent e-mails. Types that were not located were discarded and emerging patterns that were not covered within the types were added, creating a typology of power applicable to organisational e-mail. All e-mails were read and coded adopting a relational perspective on power i.e. that there was potentially power in all e-mails. Interwoven into the thesis are the theories and methodologies of Foucault. The subject of e-mail and its related literature is critically analysed drawing from the work of Foucault in exploring the unique dynamics of e-mail and relational power.

The thesis is broadly structured in the following way; chapter 1 introduces e-mail as a communication genre; the resulting discussion attempts to identify common themes that run through the e-mail literature. Chapter 2 takes these themes and explores their wider relevance to cyber communities to produce key points on the subject of e-mail, power and organisation. Chapter 3 is devoted to the subject of power, with particular emphasis on authors who examine power from the perspective of structure and language. Chapter 4 evaluates the various theories of power from the previous chapter in terms of their potential relationship with e-mail and the key points that have emerged from the earlier chapters; chapter 4 also produces key theoretical points that can be used to inform the subject of e-mail, organisations and power. Chapter 5 discusses and introduces the methods and methodology used in the empirical stages of the investigation. Chapter 6 is an overview of the results. Chapter 7 is a discussion of the results and how these relate to the wider literature of e-mail. Chapter 8 provides a discussion of the results relationship and development with the subject of power and the theoretical authors who have informed this study. Chapter 9 contains the concluding comments.

Chapter One - E-mail as a Communication Genre

In this section the aim is introduce the reader to e-mail research that focuses upon its (e-mails) qualities as a communication genre. The section focuses particular attention on patterns of e-mail communication in organisations.

E-mail research is a highly diverse field that has been collecting over the past 30 years (Ducheneaut and Watts, 2005). It contains little in the way of a single thrust, instead embracing multiple fields that range from data filing to organisational sociology. Ducheneaut and Watts (2005) in an attempt to draw together the various strands of e-mail literature, identify the following main themes:

- E-mail as a file cabinet
- E-mail as a production facility
- E-mail as a communication genre

E-mail as a file cabinet is well described in the authors own words:

"*It is a means of storage for individuals to use, organise, and manipulate messages in terms of their content. Its effectiveness depends on its compliance with the constraints of human learning, reasoning and memory*" (Ducheneaut et al, 2005, p15).

Based in cognitive psychology this angle of e-mail research attempts to provide insight into the categorisation processes of the mind and the cognitive ordering principles actors use to organise and retrieve data. The insights this literature provides are intended to inform the design of e-mail programmes; matching the cognitive processes of actors with technology design to make e-mail more cognitively ergonomic. This perspective remains removed from the social world in the sense that the research aims to inform technological advancements.

E-mail as a production facility focuses upon the control of discipline and the flows of information arising from e-mail use. Its focus lies in the study of e-mail systems which are designed to "structure articulation"; the e-mail system chooses responses for the actor based on a range of stock replies. This element of e-mail design is aimed to facilitate and support e-mail's role in collaboration by removing the complexity of "human interaction" and placing it into the hands of soft-ware.

Winograd and Flores (1987, 1988), in developing this area, argued that e-mail should be modelled on the basis that human beings live in a world created, changed and maintained by language. In order to improve organisational efficiency it made sense (to Winograd and Flores) to manage language use in the e-mail system; the application of the language perspective to e-mail design became known as the Language Action Perspective. It was the subject of much controversy.

The Language Action Perspective became influenced and theoretically legitimised through its integration with Speech Act Theory. Speech Act Theory, developed by Searle (1991) holds that speech performs a performative function; it has an intention (something is said), it is heard, and it facilitates a response. In the domain of e-mail research this translated into designs and debate over whether a computer programme could take over the role of replying to some of these responses. Suchman (1994) observed that such an approach compromises organisational freedom and assumes that role structures are stable. More decisively Ljungberg and Holm (1997) observe that such approaches completely underestimate the political nature of organisations and this is a natural occurrence when theories from one discipline are passively carried to another and applied prescriptively (ibid).

E-mail as a production line, as Ducheneaut et al (2005) observe, examines communication technology as a work based solution to enhance group work among individuals. This area of research lends itself to the study of e-mail communication where contexts are stable and tasks repetitive (ibid).

Research began to recognise the political and strategic value of e-mail (Ducheneaut et al, 2005). As efforts to manage language became increasingly unproductive, research focused on the sociological impacts of communication technology into organisations and organisation type structures. This avenue had consequences for meaning, identity and structure; Ducheneaut et al (2005) refer to this area of investigation as e-mail as a communication genre.

E-mail as a communication genre uncovered that the communication medium was being used, not just for the transmission of factual information, but emotionally invested conversations more closely associated with the telephone (Markus, 1994). As a result, interpretation of messages between respondents was having consequences for organisational relationships (ibid). This perspective was further expanded Ngwenyama and Lee (1997) who argued that e-mail was significant in shaping the social life of organisations. As Ducheneaut et al (2005) observe, socially loaded decision making conducted over e-mail will need, in some way, to communicate the supporting authority, autonomy and accountability. With the absence of face to face cues, misunderstandings are more likely to occur and far harder to resolve (Kiesler and McGuire, 1986).

E-mail as a communication genre based research has, however, been less than conclusive. The role e-mail plays in social life is debated in terms of degree. This is very much a context specific debate and is caused, in part, due to a focus of research on the problems e-mail causes in decision making as oppose to a focus on everyday electronic life (Ducheneaut et al, 2005, Bayam, 1995).

This thesis is located within the communication genre perspective and seeks to establish how influence, persuasion and both formal and informal power are communicated in an e-mail environment where there is physical absence between respondents. Authors such as Ducheneaut (2003) and Kiesler and McGuire (1986) acknowledge that e-mail contains an emotional potential. This emotional potential needs to be managed by respondents using e-mail in order to avoid the misunderstandings that frequently take place (Ducheneaut et al, 2005, Bayam, 1995, Kiesler and McGuire, 1986).

The chapter now considers previous studies, conducted from the communication genre perspective, and examines how they can broaden and develop the understanding of how the emotional potential of e-mail is managed.

Previous Studies and Emotional Potential

The space that exists between interlocutors using e-mail contains potential emotion. Whereas within the business letter stated facts are aimed to reduce ambivalence, the conversational nature of e-mail requires a greater need to manage the space more carefully. The reasons for this are that e-mail can be many things. Socio-linguistic authors such as Naomi Barron (2000) have invested much time to answering the question: is e-mail speech or writing? There is yet to be a definitive answer and could well be due to e-mails hybrid nature and the fact that many different actors use it in many different ways (Ducheneaut, 2005). In other words, there are multiple tactics to the management of emotional potential or rather the social space that exists between two physically absent actors engaged in e-mail exchanges. Gains (1999) a socio-linguistic author demonstrates this notion.

A study of two-organisation's e-mail use by Gains (1999) reveals that there appears to be a correlation between how organisational actors manage space and their relative positions in an organisation. The two organisations within the study are one commercial and one academic. Within the study two very different communication cultures and means of managing space emerge. Gains explains the fundamental findings from within the commercial organisation:

"Nearly all writers (of the sampled e-mails) *observed what may be described as the standard conventions for written business English, that is: fully-formed and correctly punctuated sentences which a normal speaker of British English would regard as* **grammatical** *in their written form. This uniformity of written style was breached in only three messages in the data. In these three cases, the first person pronoun is either typed unconventionally in lower-case or omitted from the sentence altogether, both of which devices seem to indicate the writers' intent to convey a less formal tone to their messages or their use of the medium"* (Gains, 1999, p90).

The formal linguistic features employed by the commercial respondents seem to suggest that they attempt to manage space through the use of formality. Since this style seems to tally with a tone more often employed in letter format it might also be employed to reduce ambivalence. Also, Gains observes that when organisational actors drop the structural formality it is to convey a more relaxed tone, providing another means of managing the space. In regard to the effect of organisational position and language use Gains makes the following observations:

"On occasion, the stylistic register appeared to have been raised to a more formal level than would be appropriate for dealing with external clients. This change in register might be linked to the status of the writer in the organisation, or alternatively, to the sensitive nature of the message's content, such as the mistake has been made, or a request has to be refused" (ibid).

Based upon the above, higher levels of formality ensue (in the commercial organisation) when faced with communicating with an actor of higher status or having to enforce some form of authority/apology. The examples provide clear perspectives on managing space. E-mail, in similar ways to speech, operates on the basis of what type of message the actor wishes to convey and to whom the actor wishes to communicate with. Means of managing the space (within this sample) seem to rely upon whether a respondent wishes to open or close this space (bearing in mind the potential emotion e-mail can convey). Some empirical examples of Gains' work provide good illustration. Below he discusses how informality is used to persuade other actors to engage in activities that are beyond official remit:

"There are only three instances where the stylistic register is lowered from what appears to be the norm, and more informal and personal tone is adopted. Two examples are given below, followed by a synthesis of the apparent intent of the complete message in parenthesis:

SS13: So this is where you and I come in…
If we are lucky enough to win!!
IT IS FOR A VERY GOOD CAUSE-AND YOU NEVER KNOW, YOU MAY EVEN
WIN!!
(Promoting charity event)

SS18: Hi folks,…
Could you drop me a line, by say, Tuesday 2ⁿᵈ April (ibid, p92).

Contrast the above findings with the same author's observations on e-mail style when authority or scolding is communicated electronically. Gains suggests that actors employ a style that makes the message appear official thus absolving themselves of the responsibility:

"This might be interoperated as attempt by the individual concerned, to depersonalise their direct responsibility for the activity, or perhaps a stylistic device designed to make the message seem more official and therefore sanctioned" (ibid).

A pattern emerges within Gains' sample. Space is managed on a more "friendly" basis when actions outside of official organisational remit are required and by contrast on a formal basis when formal rules and position are required. In conclusion, it would appear that there exists a communication norm via e-mail in the commercial sample but options (formal v informal) exist in terms of language used. In other words, there is a tactic for different occasions (within the commercial sample).

Cultural Implications

During the academic phase of Gains' research, a different (over arching) discursive norm was in evidence. The author, whilst acknowledging the problems of drawing generalisable conclusions from such a small sample rightly points out the very different culture encountered in the academic sample:

"Although this problem indicates that the data which was studied cannot be treated as single coherent corpus from the point of view of an analysis of register, it does provide a number of interesting examples of ways in which writers are using the medium creatively, and differently to the general style which was apparent in the analysis of commercial e-mail examples" (ibid, p93).

Again Gains illustrates that there seem to be many different ways of managing space through e-mail. Where in the commercial organisation space was managed in a largely very formal style of communication, the academic sample depends more on informality in its management:

"A number of writers appear to have adopted some of the discourse features of conversation and incorporated these into their written messages, as if they are conducting a conversation with an absent interlocutor. In the case of short message responses to preceding messages, the response can be analysed under the conventions of conversation analysis" (ibid).

Gains, in his commentary on conversation analysis, points to Gold (1986) and her work on dialogic devices. What this produces (quite excellently) is another e-mail tactic in ordering potential emotion. The purpose of dialogic devices is to reply to echo questions in an extended digital conversation:

*"**GF3:** yup it got through, fine and dandy. M*
***GF2:** Thanks love, yes I feel in torture*
***GF3:** YES, my birthday on the first!!!!!!!!"* (ibid, p92).

The sum of such a tactic appears to maintain a close emotional contact between the respondents with dialogic devices also aiding in the self repair of conversation:

"in the following extract, the writer can be seen to be responding to the imagined echo questions of her absent interlocutor in order to confirm the implausible truth of her information:

LG21: *Islamic Mortmain (yes, that's right!!!)*
…of the ELTU (yes, he got a PhD for that)…(ibid)

In addition to the dialogic devices, the author identifies the heavy use of rhetorical questions woven into the text. These seem to act as 'anchors' that pin the text onto an informal pattern:

"The apparent interactiveness of the discourse as imagined by some writers, is evidenced by their use of rhetorical questions interwoven into the text, which might be assumed to have been included more for their phatic effect than in the hope of an immediate or considered response" (ibid, p93).

Gains demonstrates how these strategies are employed. In a context where one interlocutor possess superior knowledge to the other, the conversational "tactics" are employed to ensure that no "face is lost". This is a particularly important example as it considers two key points. The first is that the emotional potential of e-mail is acknowledged (by actors) and the second a specific tactic is being used to manage the space and mitigate for the former point:

"The writer's inclusion of conversational devices such as "just", "you see" or "though", may be deliberate face-saving strategy to mitigate for the apparent knowledge advantage which he holds over the recipient of the message in technical matters. By adopting this conversational tone, he is thereby able to display the distinctly Anglo-Saxon pose of the "humble expert", which does not threaten the professional face of the academic colleague to whom he is writing" (ibid. p95).

In concluding the work of Gains, there seem to be two distinct e-mail cultures in the two different organisations. In order for actors to navigate these cultures there also seems to be the option of using various tactics. These tactics (in the work of Gains) seem to be context specific: there appears to be structural norms that keep e-mail moving down certain broad channels. Gains illustrates:

"In contrast to the data from the commercial source where messages have a permanent and sometimes legal status, the high incidence of conversational features in this data (the academic sample) *indicate that, in many cases, the writers do not seem to perceive the medium of electronic mail as a particularly permanent form of communication. Rather, it frequently appears to be used as a short-term medium of pseudo-conversational interaction, regardless of the fact that it can be stored, retrieved and printed, as with any information which is captured and processed by the computer"* (ibid, p95).

Despite the technical structural parameters of the technology remaining the same, the linguistic codes that categorise the two different institutions differ quite widely. At present the only concept it may be assumed to be reducible to, are the presence of cultural codes of linguistic community. This may be the transformation of digital language into patterns that prove effective within particular organisational cultures. This would enable the reduction in message ambivalence, through conversational "tactics" that cause both sender and receiver to arrive at an effective pattern of discursive code (whether those resemble speaking or writing).

The Emerging Role of Context

The previous section demonstrated that within the work of Gains (1999), the role of context in understanding (or demonstrating) the means by which space is managed is essential. Two samples produced two over arching cultures that seemed to stream electronic discourse into acceptable patterns. Space, it seems in this case, is best managed upon a defined context: a framework that produces mutual understanding in the "absent" mode of communication. This would mean that the emotional potential does not produce negative results because the text contains a certain "flavour". O'Sullivan and Flannigan (2003) argue along these same lines:

"Communication ambiguity and equivocally have been conceptualised as residing in the senders intentions, the receivers interpretations, the message itself (Eisenberg, 1984), or from interaction of all three (Bantz, 1983; Putman, 1983; Putnam and Sorrenson, 1982; Weick, 1979). This suggests that message construction should be viewed as a relational process, since communication involves at least message sender(s) and receiver(s) in a relational context" (O'Sullivan and Flannigan, 2003, p77).

The comments of O'Sullivan et al (2003) certainly support Gains in the sense that e-mail discursive patterns seem to follow rules of an interlocutor relationship. However, the process maybe an even more complex one than that suggested in the work of Gains. On an individual basis, O'Sullivan et al suggest, working out the meaning carried in e-mail correspondence can be extremely problematic:

"...we argue that an outside observer most often cannot reliably know what the essence of a message means to the sender or the receiver (Bradac et al, 1989, Poole et al., 1987). Furthermore, just as an outside observer might misinterpret the meaning of a particular interaction, the interactants themselves cannot necessarily have perfect understanding of one another through communication. Pearce and Cronen (1980) and Cronen et al (1988), for example, noted that the communication process requires a complex co-ordination of efforts among interactants to determine message meanings" (ibid, p77-78).

Allowing context to be the primary judge of e-mail interaction seems to be a sensible one. Gains (1999) did not focus his attention on the individual context of each actor but he did demonstrate multiple means of navigating an organisations digital culture. Some authors in their e-mail research tend to avoid context and concern themselves with a unified field theory of e-mail discursive codes:

"Although initial research has added important information about the effects of the electronic medium on communication practises, we still lack a comprehensive vocabulary to describe stylistic forms and textures unique to e-mail, primarily because none of the pioneering studies reviewed here affords a comprehensive analytical technique that can supply specific descriptive information about stylistic practices" (p9).

The conversational qualities of e-mail make it a culturally specific tool (Poole 1987, Cronen 1987, O'Sullivan et al 2003). And because of this authors such as Rice (1994) could possibly never discover a vocabulary to describe stylistic forms. Indeed, agenda's such as Lindeborg's which offer specific advice on *how to e-mail* may seem obsolete when context is factored in:

"Keep your messages short; send them one at a time; emphasise the main point by repeating it three times; get information out quickly; offer in-depth back up materials; refer to your earlier messages on the topic; and index your messages for later retrieval" (Lindeborg, p157).

The key contention with Lindeborg's advice is that e-mail is used not only to transport information but it also has to arrive in such a manner that it manages social space. If it does not then the emotional potential, the context argued by O'Sullivan et al could produce negative consequences. In other words space needs to be managed effectively on a near psychological basis in much the same way some authors (Buchanan and Badham, 1999, Clegg and Hardy, 1999) argue that effective organisational actors must interact politically with various sub-cultures. E-mail, within an organisational context, contains a political element.

E-mail as a Socio-Political Tool

A good demonstration of e-mail as a socio-political tool is offered by Pliskin, Romm and Markey (1997) who have conducted a research into the role e-mail played in reconciling an industrial dispute. The theoretical basis from which they launch their study acknowledges the political nature of e-mail that not only supports concrete cultures and norms but also re-configures them:

*"The thrust of the early research on e-mail has been to view it as a dependant variable, ie, to concentrate on what **causes** e-mail to be successfully implemented in organisations, and how to look for explanations for why it is accepted and how its diffusion by other organisational processes. It is only in recent years that e-mail has begun to be researched as an independent variable that **causes** other organisational phenomena"* (Pliskin, Romm and Markey, p3-4).

What Pliskin et al (1997) appears to suggest is that previous e-mail research has tended to focus upon its technical boundaries (such as does it produces speech or writing). Pliskin et al (1997) turn their focus upon the relational aspects of e-mail/actor relationships. In a sense they (Pliskin et al) acknowledge e-mail as an extension of psychologically produced concrete norms, a sort of cybernetic tool. Using an industrial dispute as the research setting, the authors investigate how a concrete agenda is extended through e-mail, and how the space within the dispute is managed:

"The purpose here is to build on the growing body of research in this area by exploring the effect of e-mail on the successful outcome of an industrial dispute. More specifically, we focus on the role of e-mail in improving communication between members of a constituency group and the negotiating team representing them during the dispute" (p4).

The management of space is a key mechanism in the author's research. E-mail is utilised within the industrial dispute to close relationships and bring together a united front between sides in the research setting:

"From bargaining theory's perspective the role that e-mail seemed to have played in this case is that of a mechanism which closed the communication gap between the constituents and their representative negotiators. It facilitated a high level and quality of communication throughout the dispute, enabling the constituents to debate and argue and yet consistently provide their representatives with a united front that they could work from. Thanks to e-mail, the risk of negotiators becoming separate was minimised" (ibid,p10).

Context is of particular interest here. Where in the work of Gains (1999) in the previous section communication cultures and tactics were already established, within this context they emerge. The above comments of Pliskin et al (1997) describe how space was managed between allies within the dispute in such a manner that a community of debate fortified by binding norms that unified efforts was established. This community was established electronically and it is of great interest as the psychological tactics that bridge the space emerge:

"The first and most important role that e-mail played in this case was in helping the strikers maintain their unity in the face of pressures from all directions. E-mail was the means through which the strikers boosted each others' morale, aired their differences, exchanged jokes about their opponents, and eventually reaching agreements on issues that were initially in dispute. E-mail was also the means through which the strikers offered practical help to members in need, and the vehicle through which they consolidated their support of their leadership. The unity that e-mail helped maintain made it possible for the strikers to keep on fighting until the group of stake holders became too large to be ignored by the employers and the government" (ibid, p10).

E-mail, in this context, provided support, humour, advice and opinions in similar vein to the dialogic devices explored by Gains (1999) in "absent" exchanges. Within Pliskin et al's setting that adds to other studies, the digital community grew, it contained an attractive quality. In the same way that both organisations in Gains' sample contained the structural obligation of performing organisation assigned duties, Pliskin et al's strikers contained the structural component of better working conditions. Within this similarity there grew a communication norm-one that offered advice, comfort and support. In this sense Pliskin et al's respondents utilised e-mail in an informal manner more akin to the academic sample of Gains (1999) rather than the commercial. But one point remains. In all studies so far reviewed a communication norm emerges within the idiosyncratic context. Because Pliskin et al (1997) do not provide discursive examples it can only be theorised, yet there is evidence to suggest that within a specific context e-mail norms sway between formal and informal modes of address in order to manage the space that exists.

The creation of a growing community within the work of Pliskin et al (1997) provides further demonstration that contexts can be politically levered electronically in order to gain advantage. In this context it was achieved informally. Within the more formal commercial context of Gains (1999) it was achieved through methods such as non-attribution of agency.

Brigham and Corbett (1997) investigate the political implications of e-mail, using the re-distribution of power as their context. The authors, Brigham and Corbett (1997) rightly point out that any study of organisationally formed networks becomes either an implicit or explicit study of power. In other words, a study of structured communication channels will be intertwined with power and politics regardless of intention. The authors explain:

"When one begins to analyse communication networks within any hierarchically structured organisation, the issue of power inevitably comes to the fore. Yet, partly as a consequence of the dominance of information richness theory, the concept of power remains under researched in these research endeavour" (Brigham and Corbett, 1997, p26).

The subject of power is an interesting addition to e-mail literature. In a way, it forces an acknowledgement that e-mail is an extension of organisational power relationships (and how these are facilitated through political discourses) and in turn facilitates power relationships themselves. E-mail, from this perspective, can be either speech or writing depending upon the context. An example of this appears in the work of Gains (1999) that demonstrates in his commercial sample that formality is raised in communicating with higher-ranking actors and lowered when communicating non-sanctioned requests. As has been argued these methods represent tactics for managing space that can shift when the context requires it (or is perceived to require it). Brigham et al (1997) acknowledge something similar- that actors can and will manipulate electronic space, in their application of actor network theory:

"Actor-network theory insists that social agents are not located in bodies and bodies alone. Rather an actor is a patterned network of heterogeneous relations, or an effect produced by such networks: actors are both sets of relations and nodes in sets of relations" (p26).

As a consequence Brigham and Corbett (1997) research the ways in which e-mail reflects concrete perceptions of organisational reality:

"It explores the role and distinctive character of advanced communication technologies and the ways in which they constitute, mediate and reinforce social reality in an organisational reality" (p25).

The study itself takes place in a large hierarchical organisation that recently (relative to the study-taking place) went through major re-structuring that increased organisational reliance on e-mail. What appears during the investigation is the emergence of strict codes of e-mail communication. A communication norm seems to be developing along similar lines to Gains' commercial organisation:

"Fidelity of employees to the e-mail system is gained through the reassemble of their actions into a prescribed, regular and observable order. This helps the creation of what Foucault termed "drilled bodies"- passive agents who have been drilled to reliably carry out their assigned tasks" (p31).

The creation of a formal communication norm in e-mail exchanges seems to be attributable (by Brigham et al) to the visibility of the e-mail system. This sense of exposure causes a rigorous adherence to formal structures when communicating:

"From the perspective of actor-network theory, the e-mail network can be conceptualised as an agent of organisational power in the sense that it mediates and constitutes employee relationship and behaviour. The durability of this network of actors stems from its ability to constitute an ordering strategy embodying a set of relations between technical inscription devices, physical structures and drilled bodies" (ibid, p32).

It is an interesting point as Gains (1999) argued that within his commercial sample respondents seemed to regard e-mail as a permanent record, whilst within the academic sample e-mail seemed to be regarded as something more temporal. What is more likely is that it is an extension of existing power relationships within the organisation and this, in turn, creates the over arching norm. It is important to remember that the over arching communication structure can still include both informal and formal styles of communication. Brigham et al (1997) seem to suggest as much when they discuss the role of cultural resistance:

"Yet as Giddens observes, all strategies for control call forth counter strategies on the part of subordinates. There must be, In Foucault's words, "a distant roar of battle…the e-mail network configures a range of power relationships, but actors do not always perform their prescribed roles accurately or reliably" (ibid, p32).

As e-mail is capable of managing space in different ways, the overarching structural norm will always be open to interpretation. Brigham and Corbett (1997) explain this as a resistance to power. As the structural norm becomes stretched, different tactics to manipulate it emerge, causing what Brigham et al refer to as "unanticipated changes". The visibility of the e-mail structure "spreads" these tactics across the organisation and become integrated into the norms as tactical "tools". As this condition happens, as e-mail itself becomes a communication norm (an extension of the social self), the medium itself becomes more anonymous. It becomes a socially dynamic tool:

"…the visibility and formalisation enabled by e-mail constituted new terrain for inter-group conflict. In this way, visibilities mobilised by e-mail open up a window on organisational practices, which may lead to other, often unanticipated changes. At the same time, however, e-mail itself (and the formalisation and rationality it shapes and reinforces) is rendered less visible and contestable" (ibid, p32).

Within the study by Brigham and Corbett (1997) e-mail becomes socialised into the organisational culture with norms controlling communication throughout different contexts. O'Sullivan and Flannigan (2003) provide an overview of the argument:

"Concurrently, and heavily interwoven with cultural norms, norms grounded in local social structures such as a specific organisation or other social network can influence individuals' message construction and interpretation. For example, it might be normative in an organisation for managers to use highly formal language when interacting with each other and with employees. For another organisation it might be normative for managers to use informal language and even engage in teasing and joking with each other and with employees" (O'Sullivan et al, 2003, p78).

This condition appears so far in all the reviewed researches. A baseline of communication is established for each particular context in order to facilitate the messages being read and interpreted in the intended manner. However, because context can shift so often, multiple tactics for multiple contexts could co-exist in a single organisation:

"What an outside observer might perceive as hostile language could be perceived by one or both interactants as a routine reminder, an attempt at humour, a deserved reprimand, a poorly-worded but well-intended suggestion, or an intentional use of non-normative language for specific organisational goals. Differences in interpretation could be due to observers' lack of access to the wide array of contextual factors that are key to interactants' message interpretation" (ibid, p73)

This is demonstrated in the work of Gains (1999) (with both informal and formal structures) and in Brigham et al in the presence of resistance. Actors, as Brigham and Corbett argue, become locked in relational power networks, or perhaps are free to manipulate multiple power networks in order to manage space more effectively. In order to further this topic Ducheneaut (2002) provides interesting commentary.

The Explicit Study of E-mail, Power and Organisation

In a way not too dissimilar to Brigham et al (1997), Ducheneaut (2002) reflects upon how studies of information network reflect organisational power relations. The perspective from which Ducheneaut examines e-mail is a highly productive one. New technology, he argues, when introduced into an organisation causes uncertainty zones to be created. From the perspective of e-mail, uncertainty exists over *how to communicate* or rather how to represent ones-self:

"Indeed, a change in technology increases uncertainty as attempts are made to master the new tools, devices or techniques (Tushman and Anderson 1986). According to Crozier and Friedberg (1977), uncertainty is a fundamental resource used inside the games played by organizational actors. Moreover, control over communication channels is another resource used during games and e-mail has the potential to open up new communication pathways (Romm 1999). The introduction of e-mail can be, therefore, doubly disruptive as far as power games are concerned" (Ducheneaut, p78).

Using uncertainty zones as the theoretical basis, it could be concluded that examining the discursive codes produced through e-mail will create a "window" into how relational power is communicated via e-mail:

"By looking at how e-mail and the uncertainty it introduces inside these games, we can understand how and why changes in interaction patterns occur, if they do. Structure can be viewed as patterned, repeated interaction among social actors (Mintzberg 1979); hence, this offers us a window through which to analyse the structural changes (or lack thereof) caused by the use of electronic communication tools inside an organization. But an approach drawing directly on the sociology of organizations has never been used to study the organizational impacts of communication technologies (although for similar approaches see Rice 1994). In this paper, I plan to close this gap and show how Crozier and Friedberg's theory can help us conceptualize the interaction between electronic communication tools and organizational structure" (ibid).

Ducheneaut's stated agenda is an exciting one. Where previous studies have demonstrated that over-arching communication cultures may exist (Gains,1999, O'Sullivan et al 2003, Rice 1994 for instance), the focus upon the different ways this culture is managed across space is only vaguely hinted at. Gains (1999) illustrated that there are plural means of representing actors across e-mail networks. Gold's (1986) research into dialogic devices demonstrates the use of self-repair in "distant" conversations. Gains (ibid) has applied these to demonstrate how discursive patterns shift when the nature of requests change. What Ducheneaut proposes is a study that is focused upon how e-mail patterns relate to positional relationships. This reflects an engagement with power by actors through e-mail on an "everyday" basis, meaning a particular context is not used to demonstrate results.

Managing space plays a key role in Ducheneaut's theorising. The author acknowledges that e-mails distance shapes discursive codes:

"Another important point is that e-mail provides fewer cues than face-to face communication about interactions, physical context or social roles. On the one hand, it can foster status equalization, but on the other hand, there is also less awareness of group members' expertise, organizational niche and power, and characteristics such as age and gender. Many studies show that people are more uninhibited, non-conformist and conflictual when using e-mail. Still, meta-analyses (e.g. Walther 1992, 1995) show that uninhibited behaviour is quite infrequent when e-mail is used in organizations, and decreases with time, group history and anticipated future interaction"(Ducheneaut, ibid, p81).

It is of great interest that Ducheneaut acknowledges that uninhibited electronic behaviour is uncommon in organisational settings. What seem to structure language in organisations are its organisational norms and these seem to be related to both formal and informal notions of power. If relative positions of interlocutors are unknown then interpretation becomes problematic. It would seem that in order to resolve this condition strict linguistic codes emerge. Ducheneaut continues to illustrate that managing space in these circumstances tends to polarise groups (this has been witnessed by the overarching structures of previous studies):

"Moreover, as it is more difficult to interpret the intentions of the sender, misunderstandings are more likely to emerge and more difficult to resolve. Groups tend to be more polarized, and are slower to develop leaders and reach consensus" (ibid, p82).

E-mail seems to have an entrenching effect. Yet this entrenching effect helps to manage space. In an ambiguous environment, where identity is somewhat guessed, rules appear in the form of linguistic norms. Linguistic norms seem to serve the purpose of sign posting intention and position in accordance with the overarching linguistic patterns (See Gains 1999 for an example). Ducheneaut reinforces the theory that although e-language can be highly structured, its greater visibility allows the structures to be manipulated. This management of space can be used tactically in the form of power (Ducheneaut 2002) and/-or manipulated as games:

"Consequently, an organization is the scene of power relations articulated as 'games' in which relatively autonomous actors follow their own diverging interests and negotiate their participation to the organization. The notion of games can be defined as follows (Dutton 1992): a game is an arena of competition and cooperation structured by a set of rules and assumptions about how to act to achieve a particular set of objectives. All games share several attributes: there is a set of players (here, organizational actors), defined by the fact that they interact; there is a set of rules that govern their moves and strategies; there is a set of objectives; and there is a set of prizes underlying those objectives" (ibid, p83)

In regard to summarising some of the observations on organisation e-communication the above comments summarise superbly. The specific role of e–mail within the authors' comments is not present but the connection can be made. Actors in their e-mail use are relatively autonomous, language use follows rules, but these rules can be manipulated through games and/or tactics. Ducheneaut implicitly talks of how the above applies to space management. The author writes of space when he talks of uncertainty zones. Mastering uncertainty zones is the key to exerting power (ibid). Distance within e-mail communication creates a space where an uncertainty zone exists. The visibility of language codes (in e-mail) allows games to be played:

"The notion of power is central during games. Power is not to be understood in the narrow sense of political or hierarchical power: according to Crozier and Friedberg, it has a relational character. This relation is instrumental, nontransitive, reciprocal but also unbalanced. Power inside organizational constructs resides in an actor's margin of freedom, that is, his/her ability to change the nature of the game or displace uncertainty zones. Anyone mastering an uncertainty zone, from a simple worker to a manager, can exert power" (ibid, p84)

Thus, in Ducheneaut's view, e-mail within organisations creates power (is empowering) or in Brigham et al's (1997) view creates conditions whereby the "distant roar of battle" can take place. The terrain where this occurs is upon the space or uncertainty zone that exists between e-mail respondents.

Summary

In the previous section the work of Ducheneaut was used to demonstrate and support two re-occurring themes in organisational e-mail research. Firstly, that there is an overarching e-mail structure within organisations (see again Gains, 1999 informal/formal linguistic structures and O'Sullivan et al 2003 for contextual "bases") and within this super-structure there exists a plurality of linguistic codes (see Mallon and Oppenhiem, 2000 for a study of multiple discursive codes within an organisation). Secondly, the visibility of e-mail creates opportunities whereby these codes can be manipulated. The two themes present themselves quite clearly in Ducheneaut's following comments:

"The organization offers the structure to create and regulate these uncertainty zones. One uncertainty is fundamental and imposed on everyone: the survival of the organization, and with it the possibility of continuing the games. Hence, the organization regularizes power relations by reintroducing some certainty into the behaviour of actors. Indeed, it regulates their capacities, their motivations, their resources and the prizes they can obtain" (Ducheneaut, ibid, p86).

It could be argued that e-mail is shaped by relational power. Authors such as Barron (2000) argue that regional dialects, mood, time, age, gender etc, govern e-mail structure. Yet, the implicit evidence running through organisational e-mail research and the arguments offered by authors such as McCormick and McCormick (1992) and Postmes et al (2000) suggest that contextual bedrock shapes e-mail exchanges. The spaces that exist between respondents require management in some form; rules for management (structured language styles) that exist to impose an order upon the space. Actors are seemingly *free* to choose which structure they wish to apply to which context (because of greater visibility), but there seems to be no escaping that each linguistic option is itself structured and rule bound (Gains, 1999, O'Sullivan et al 2003, Ducheneaut 2002). Therefore, there always appears to be some form of with straining rules acting over choices. The difference is that e-mail provides a tool whereby an actor's relationship with power can be potentially more reflexive (see Brigham and Corbett, 1997, comments upon resistance).

The literature has suggested that there is a deterministic quality to e-mail in that choices over linguistic options are limited to rules. However, running concurrently with the above suggestion is the theme that greater exposure to all linguistic structures allows them to be subject to management at all levels (Ducheneaut 2003). This is reflected in the stylistic choices made by actors in communicating via e-mail in the reviewed literature.

The following chapter follows these conclusions into cyberspace to examine how text based communication patterns itself in this environment. Cyberspace is an environment where organised communities have emerged built entirely on text. To maintain these communities actors who participate in them will need to follow certain linguistic rules and norms. It is how these rules and norms present themselves within the environment of cyberspace and what can be learnt from this that chiefly concerns the following chapter.

Chapter Two-Cyberspace, Language, Structure, and Power

The following section is an examination of how communities form and remain coherent in cyberspace. Following on from the previous chapter there is an emphasis on the rules that govern text based interaction across the cyberspace environment. Initially this chapter begins with a description, through examining the cyberspace literature, of the conditions that constitute text based communication in cyberspace.

Text based interaction through cyberspace exists upon a level that is very different to normal or more popular forms of social communication. It is communication that is dependent upon text. As such it requires investigation of the discursive strategies that create and maintain communication conducted at local and global distances:

"Human interaction through computers must thus be studied from the perspective of the transcultural/transinstitutional principle and "discourse strategies" governing any type of human interaction, but also from the specificity of the communicative and linguistic practices that arise from the media involved" (Escobar, 2000, p65).

As explored within the previous chapter, e-mail creates spaces. These spaces are psychological and similar to the type of transitional spaces that face us all in everyday object relationships (Elliot, 2000, Giddens, 1991). These spaces are linked to choices that are very often determined by our encounters with cultural and institutional histories, and indeed, organisations (Giddens, ibid). When we encounter a person for the very first time a transitional space emerges. This space becomes filled or shortened with the imaginative and reflexive use of language. These forms of transitional space, authors such as Winnicott (1974) and Giddens (1991) argue are the essential components for the creative involvement of social life.

E-mail technologies have produced an environment where intensity regarding everyday encounters is no longer confined to the sharing of physical and stable time and space. Theories of crossing social space, such as those of Winnicott (ibid) are considered significant in the makeup of virtual communicating:

" (...) it is useful to look at experiences in and of cyberspace and virtual reality in the light of Winniocott's notion of potential space: the "third area of human living", neither inside the individual nor outside of the in the world of shared reality, the space of playing and cultural experience" (Robins, 2000, p85).

Modern developments in communication mean that social spaces are closable displaced of conventional time and space. What has occurred in the words of Giddens (1991) is an "emptying out" of time and space:

"A world that has a universal dating system, and globally standardised time zones, as ours does today, is socially and experimentally different from all pre-modern eras. The global map, in which there is no privileging of place (a universal projection), is the correlate symbol to the clock in the "emptying" of space. It is not just a mode of portraying "what has always been there"- the geography of the earth-but is constitutive of quite basic transformations in social relations" (Giddens, 1991, p17).

Castells (1996) underpins this argument in his discussions regarding the *space of flows* and *timeless time*. Technology transforms the boundaries of socially experienced time and space:

"Both space and time are being transformed under the combined effect of the information technology paradigm, and of social forms and processes induced by the current process of historical change (.)" (Castells, 1996, p376).

Giddens (ibid) uses the example of two actors engaged in a telephone conversation, arguing that it can be as emotionally charged as any face-to-face encounter, these create conditions whereby:

"The learning of self and other in a transitional realm involves a good deal more than merely adjusting to social reality; it is actually constitutive of an emotional acceptance of the socio-symbolic world of other persons and objects" (Elliot, 2000, p74).

Mediums for displaced communications such as e-mail are not only forms of communication, but also involve social and emotional investment in the creation of effective object/person relationships - they contain an emotional potential. Globalising processes (forms of communication that stretch across time and space) create an environment where self-identity needs to be re-created or perhaps re-established across ever-fluctuating boundaries in order to be successful in its relationships (Elliot, 2000). This is a social process that requires identity to be re-established in a generally absent environment. Absent are the visual auditory cues of shared time and space (O'Sullivan et al 2003), and very often shared codes that centre communication and identity have to be re-established (Barglow, 1994). Identities, within a cyberspace environment, are capable of being stretched to a point of total re-configuration. Terranova (2000) comments on the widening concept of "individual self-transformation" through interaction with communication technologies. Discussing online opinions regarding self re-articulation, Terranova observes:

"These statements, although expressed in restricted circles of like minded individuals, should not prevent us from remembering the fact that they are an expression of a widely felt belief. The idea that current regulars of the virtual communities are the avant-garde of a historical process that will soon be universal does certainly posses wider political currency at this stage. This vision of a wave of cognitive change spreading steadily, at virus like speed, is expressed also through the evocative use of statistics describing the growth of the Net population (.)" (Terranova, 2000, p276).

A key problem with radical cybernetic perspectives is that they are ultimately rooted in material circumstances. Identities are certainly capable of manipulation, but only through language. The language used in any context across cyber-space must comply with basic sets of rules; rules that govern acceptable and unacceptable uses of language. These rules function rather like an ideology. It is Zickmund (2000) who recognises this in her analysis of subversive groups in cyberspace. According to Zickmund individuals who engage in subversive groups within cyberspace are interpellated into ideologies:

"Individuals who propagate this discourse are unified complex structures of a shared subversive ideology. They are "interpellated", a phenomenon Althusser defines as the discursive process of evoking collection of individuals into a group through an ideological screen" (Zickmund, 2000, p237).

E-mail based communication within cyber space contain language rules (Zickmund, 2000) that transport ideologies, which can either be accepted or rejected dependent upon their perceived appropriateness of the context (tones of Ducheneaut's (2002) organisational work). This is not so much a re-articulation of identity but an extension of concrete ideologies that are transported through text based language. The difference between the cyberspace environment and the "real world" environment is that access and opportunities to adopt ideologies is increased.

Zickmund (ibid) further observes, using Wittengenstien, that language games are the defining expression of cultural difference:

"Wittengenstien argues that language itself functions within a community and that discursive game rules formulate the notion of rationality that exist within that culture. As one moves from one society to another, the rules and norms of the language game change" (ibid, p240)

These arguments operate in a manner reminiscent of Ducheneaut's (2003) organisational work on power and e-mail. Where Zickmund (2000), through Wittengenstien, argues that as culture and societies shift so too does their language, Ducheneaut (2003) argues that multiple "language societies" exist within organisations. As organisational sub cultures formulate their own language expressive of their shared views, so too do cyber-cultures. Docking the two arguments together they contain one common thread: they both require a language based ideology to recognise, develop and sustain them.

This is what Baudrillard (1983) refers to as the *production of this demand for meaning.* Whether within an organisation or loose in cyber-space, needs, requests etc require a channel to fulfilment. The articulation of this through cyberspace can only be transported through text. Needs won't be fulfilled unless they have a referent word or phrase to communicate them and the referent system must be contextually shared. In other words, all forms of communication are ideologically structured because they are conducted through language:

"...the oldest thread begins in language, and perhaps before language, with commonness-of-mind among members of a tribe or social group. Untested by dialogue-not yet brought out "into the open" in this way- this commonness-of –mind is tested and effective none the less in the coordinated behaviour of the group around a set of beliefs held simply to be "the case": beliefs about the environment, about the magnitude and location of its dangers and rewards, what is wise and what is foolhardy, and about what lies beyond; about the past the future, about what lies within opaque things, over the horizon, under the earth, or above the sky" (Benedikt, 2000, p32).

Communicating through e-mail and recasting identity in cyberspace is only possible by tapping into shared frameworks of language rules. Zickmund observed that these shared frameworks of language rules operate rather like ideologies. Ideologies seem to play a key role in the forming and maintenance of communities in cyberspace. In the following section the concept of ideologies is further explored in regard to its relationship with cyberspace communication.

Ideologies, Organisation and Cyberspace

Zickmund (2000) observed that subversive groups are interpellated into subversive cyber communities through interpellation into various ideologies, the fundamentals of which are based on language games (ibid). The definition of ideologies that Zickmund is using to make their argument is the definition used by Louis Althusser.

In the work of Althusser it is not just subversive groups who are interpellated into ideologies but societies, with many smaller, or intra-ideologies providing voice too many groups who complement or contradict the ruling ideology. This is like the plurality of discourse communities in organisations identified (implicitly and explicitly) by authors such Gains (1999), Mallon et al (2000) etc.

Althusser (1970) in *Ideology and the State Apparatus* argues that an individual is centred within an ideological framework. Essential components of this framework are the repeatable and knowable qualities of ideology manifested in culture and the simple "everydayness" that hail or interpellate individuals. In other words, ideological interpolation takes place upon a subversive taken for granted plain:

"Althusser insists that the cultural forms of ideology are produced, not so much in the public spheres of politics and history, as in the private realm of day-to day life. In this respect, Althusser offers the following example of a person being "interpellated" through a closed door (.)"(Elliot, 2000, p104).

The example is completed in Althusser's own words:

"We all have friends who, when they knock on our door and we ask, through the door, the question "who's there?" answer (since its obvious) "it's me". And we recognise that "it is him", or "her". We open the door, and it's true, it really was she who was there" (Althusser, 1970, p46).

The theories of Althusser are influenced in part by structural linguistics. Working from the structural psychoanalysis of Jacque Lacan, Althusser recognises that actors within a super structure identify themselves in relation to it through language. Althusser's illustration of the knock on a door is based on the circumstance that the interlocutors are actually absent but *sound like* something familiar. This is the role of language.

Within organisational e-mail research a similar process takes place. Gains (1999) identifies styles of communication that correspond with position or request type, and Mallon et al (2000) locate styles that can be identified as friends contacting friends, superiors contacting sub-ordinates. Within virtual communication the linguistic structure refers to the ideological reference point:

 "Certain theoretical strategies recognise that while sexual differention, genetic structure, and age are biological phenomena, gender difference, ethnicity, and class are cultural determinations that appear natural only because of the processes in which the ideological is absorbed into the perceptual. Because in the potentially open interactivity of cyberperformance, categories of gender, race, and class may be selected and transformed at will" (Causey, 1999, p190-1).

What Causey (ibid.) appears to re-enforce is that concepts of identity such as gender and race are understood and articulated ideologically. However, within virtual communication these ideologies are open to manipulation through their increased visibility. Again, the components of space management emerge. The conditions of virtual communication seem to give actors an anthropological potential. In other words, linguistic codes that define identities and contexts can be studied and copied as a means of managing the space that exists when using e-mail. Causey (1999) provides an illustrative example analogous to the theatre:

 "The promise of interactivity in virtual environments is the breakdown of the isolation of the viewer and actor that can define the theatre. In what Jaron Lanier has called "post-symbolic communication" there is no need to Watch Hamlet, since you can be Hamlet (Heilbrun 108). Like the classic question of science fiction, am I real or am I a simulation, the issue turns from witnessing the other to being the other" (ibid, p190).

Causey's (1999) closing argument that there is a shift from witnessing the other to being the other is an apt one. The anthropology that e-mails grant provides access to linguistic codes that refer to an identity (in the above example Hamlet) which can be copied. In other words, access to the referent system provides the means to be Hamlet, to manage oneself through space as Hamlet.

Brigham and Corbett (1997) in their application of actor/network theory argue that e-mail communication becomes a social extension resulting in the technology becoming a circumstance rather than a definition of interaction. As more and more actors increasingly use e-mail within organisation communication norms become spread and established through wider networks. The e-mail system itself becomes fused with the organisation ideology making it socio-reflexive. Lievrouw (2000) argues that the same process occurs in cyber-space:

"Neither access to technology nor information resources in themselves are sufficient to ensure effective social participation...networked interpersonal interaction is the core of more complex engagement with the society's mediating institutions, that is, social action or participation...participation produces, reproduces and breaks down institutional arrangements, cultural discourse, and technical products and infrastructures" (Lievrouw, 2000, p15-16).

Siegel et al (1986) and Dubrovsky et al (1991) have argued that the above conditions observed by Lievrouw (2000) in virtual communication increases participation and equalises status. Indeed Pliskin et al (1997) describe how a community of workers involved in an industrial dispute were held together through e-mail forums and Mitra et al (2002) describes how immigrants are able to manipulate e-mail to manage their identity:

"Within groups of immigrants a member can also begin to re-negotiate his or her identity in relation to those of others in the group as well as in relation to those of others in the group as well as in relation to the larger real-life public sphere where the members and the communities are inserted. This process of re-negotiating an identity is particularly crucial for marginalised groups, such as immigrants, for whom the construction of communal and personnel identity is sometimes a painful and urgent necessity" (Mitra et al, 2002, p30).

In order to manage space effectively the ideological rules of language seem to apply. The common thread within the literature presented here is the presence of ideological type structures which frame language. If the ideology is absent or weak then linguistic reference points for articulating needs won't exist; the value of language will fall.

Poster (1995) illustrates the point when he argues that unregulated virtual discussion represents little in the way of progress:

"Disembodied exchange of video text is not a substitute for face-to-face meeting-it has its own logic, its own ways of forming opinion…The Net allows people to talk as equals. But traditional argument rarely prevails; and achieving consensus is widely seen as impossible. These are symptoms of the fundamentally different ways identity is defined in the public sphere and on the Net. Traditionally, a person's identity is defined by contact. Identity is rooted is rooted in the physical body. This stability forces individuals to be accountable for their positions and allows **trust** *to build up between people. The internet, however, allows individuals to define their own identities and change them at will…Dissent on the Net does not lead to consensus: it creates the profusion of different views. Without embodied co presence, the charisma and status of individuals have no force. The conditions that encourage compromise, the hallmark of the democratic political process, are lacking online…The technology of the Internet shouldn't be viewed as a new form of public sphere"* (Poster, 1995, p235).

Poster (1995) points out carefully that new communication technology should not be viewed as a new form of public sphere. He (Poster) argues above that without physical presence and related cues such as status and charisma, all cyberspace delivers is a profusion of different views, which have led to the multiple cyber communities that currently exist. Zickmund (2000) pointed out earlier that these communities are ideologically constructed; the language speaks to people, they recognise, relate and reply in a process similar to Althusser's knock. Within the organisational literature a similar process seems to take place; language seems to get channelled down culturally acceptable patterns. At the same time choices emerge as to which pattern actors use, and these choices can be tailored to specific contexts (see Gains, 1999). In further similarity, research suggests that sub cultures within organisations emerge, develop and sustain using e-mail (for instance, Spears et al, 2001, Watts et al, 2003, Walther, 1992, 1995). Whether the discussion takes place concerning cyber space and its communities or organisations and sub-groups the basic processes of communication take place.

As a means of summary, these basic processes are presented below:

1. Communication patterns are ideologically constructed; they need to relate to actor and respondent perceptions of context and are bound by rules

2. Communication patterns are highly visible thereby offering linguistic choice

3. Communication patterns need to be managed as the contents of an e-mail must meet the expectation of the receiver

4. The natural distance between respondents using e-mail technology is emotionally charged and represents a social space

Summary

These processes illustrate common ground between organisations and cyberspace and cyberspace communities. This thesis is about organisational relationships with and using e-mail. The examination of cyberspace and its communities has been useful in establishing and confirming a nature of e-mail communication that can be used in the study of organisation. The pervading presence of ideology and rules raises the question to what extent does power shape e-mail interaction within organisation. Brigham and Corbett (1997) and Ducheneaut et al (2001, 2002, 2003) have all argued that e-mail is a representation of power relationships within organisations and Brigham et al (1997) have argued that any study of organisational networks is either an implicit or explicit study of power. To take forward these points and further the conclusions drawn from literature concerning ideology and language rules in e-mail use, the following chapter is devoted to an examination of power. The emphasis is placed on those authors who have dealt with ideology, structures and language in order to develop the points theoretically and empirically, raised at the end of this chapter.

Chapter Three - Considerations on Power, Language and Texts: A Discussion of Some Key Authors

The following chapter is devoted to power. Its purpose is to take the reader through the literature on power that this author has read in order to develop the points raised at the end of the last chapter. The chapter focuses on theorists who have examined ideology, structure and language. This choice of emphasis has been made due to the following theorists offering the most potential for furthering the points drawn at the end of chapter 2.

Marx and Weber

Marx and Weber are considered to provide the impetus for literature on organisational power (Hardy et al, 1998). This has consequently led to two strands of thought. Firstly, that power is about formal, almost visible domination, and secondly, that power is not confined to visible causal episodes but rather embedded in the fabric of everyday life (for instance Foucault, 1977).

Marx is fundamental to any discussion of domination. Ownership, production, property and control were factors that separated the ruling upper class from the subordinate working class. The working class were metaphorically blind to their subordination; within Marx's ontology it appears that economic conditions develop feelings of identity. This creates a model whereby power flows from the top down, with the lower levels trapped in a state of "false consciousness":

"The same process-capitalist production and exchange-can be expressed within a different ideological framework, by the use of different systems of representation. There is the discourse of the market, the discourse of production, the discourse of the circuits: each produces a different definition of the system. Each also locates us differently - as worker, capitalist, wage worker, wage slave, producer, consumer etc…All these inscriptions have effects which are real. They make a material difference, since how we act in different situations depends on what our definitions of the situation are" (Hall, 1983, p77).

These categories within the organisational system are the lens actors are given with which to view the world. With power taking a downward path and allocating identities along the way, the Marxist model does not account for what actors actually do with these identities. Do they actually take them as given and perform the role of a cog within a giant machine? For Weber the answer was no. Weber acknowledged power cannot be solely reducible to given and compliant identities within a capitalist system, for it raises the question what happens *within* production?

Weber advanced Marx's view beyond ownership and control by attempting to answer the above question. From Weber's view, power came from knowledge as well as ownership. The discrete occupational diversities within organisations meant that knowledge of production becomes fragmented. These locales of expertise created areas of power that could be used by actors in strategic agency providing the potential to perform:

"certain social relationships or carry out forms of social action within the order governing the organisation" (Weber, 1978, p217).

For Weber there was a freedom within rules. This was an important shift in terms of defining the role of power within organisations. Beneath the organisational superstructure there was the potential for power to be exercised on every level. Within the Marxist paradigm there is little or no scope for strategic agency (Hardy et al, 1998). However, as Hardy et al (1998) explain below, despite the "room" Weber gives to organisational actors, the corpus of his work is still based on dominating actor flexibility:

"Always, because of embodiment, the people hired as labour will retain ultimate discretion over themselves, what they do, and how they do it. Consequently, a potential source of resistance resides in this inescapable and irreducible embodiment of labour power" (Hardy et al, 1998, p370).

In order to counteract these potential sources of resistance, organisations form themselves into rule based structures of control: hierarchical bureaucracy. Weber argued that hierarchical bureaucracies were successful at securing compliance as they tapped into one of the three historical forms of power through which actors largely comply:

1. Traditional Authority
2. Rational-legal Authority
3. Charismatic

Organisations, he argued, are built upon rational legal authority. In a similar way to Marx's notion of material conditions, rational legal authority is a system of rules and regulations that provide organisations with legitimate grounds to control actor roles. Weber and Marx diverge on the potential of the "subordinate" actor. Weber recognised that anyone within an organisation had the potential to possess power and exercise resistance. Marx, with a less defined focus upon the empirical reality of life within an organisation, argued largely of blanket domination to which subordinate actors were totally unaware.

The recognition of locally formed power within organisations gave rise to the strategic role of domination. Weber's perspective identified the potential presence of local power and resistance, however, the theoretical basis still operated on a top down domination model. For both Marx and Weber power was the strategic application of a controlling class over a subordinate class.

Dahl, The First Face of Power

Dahl (1957) argued that power is much discussed and debated but never defined. He (Dahl, ibid) continues that it is important to define and identify a formal notion of power. The underlying reason is that given the constant inferences to power, its use as an explanatory variable and theoretical base, it must be capable of being empirically defined. Dahl (ibid) is very careful to draw limits on his intention to operationalise power, seeking to "capture the form of any and every notion of power" (Clegg, 1998).

The conclusion that Dahl draws reads thus:

"What is the intuitive idea we are trying to capture? Suppose I stand on a street corner and say to myself, "I command all automobile drivers on this street to drive on the right side of the road"; suppose further that all drivers actually do as I "command" them to do; still, most people will regard me as mentally ill if I insist that I have enough power over automobile drivers to compel them to use the right side of the road. On the other hand, suppose a policeman is standing in the middle of an intersection at which most traffic usually moves ahead; he orders all traffic to turn right or left; the traffic moves as he orders it to do. Then it accords with what I conceive to be the bedrock idea of power to say that the policeman acting in this particular role evidently has the power to make automobile drivers turn right or left rather than go ahead. My intuitive idea of power, then, is something like this: A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something B would not otherwise do" (Dahl, 1957, p202-3).

Dahl's rather mechanistic definition of power draws upon four elements in order to be functional:

1. Power is a relationship between actors of varying size
2. Power is the relationship between group/actor A over group/actor B
3. The power of A will have a source, legal-rational, personal, etc
4. The power of A will have limits

The main product of these definitions is that they make power context specific far more empirically focused. Dahl (1957) is very critical of power theories that do not factor in the contextual variable, in particular his criticism of Hunters' (1953) research into the power elites of Atlantic City:

"Are we to conclude that "Regional City" there is a small determinate group of leaders whose power significantly exceeds that of all members of the community on all or nearly all key issues that arise? Or are we to conclude, at the other extreme, that some leaders are relatively powerful on some issues and not on others, and that no leaders are relatively powerful on all issues? We have no way of choosing between these two interpretations or indeed among many others that might be formulated" (Dahl, 1957, p208).

Dahl's arguments attach and modify Weber's. Where Weber brought attention to local power and the fact that organisations become empowering, Dahl recognised that power is a context dependant notion; indeed, Dahl concluded from his own research that no single elite governs. However, his own means for arriving at this conclusion has been severely questioned both in his earlier (1957) and later (1968) work. Dahl's work on the plural model of power has been especially criticised (see Newton, 1969) for its lack of attention to actor intention: the intentions of A when affecting B. Strict adherence to empirical representations of power advocated by Dahl tend to overlook these underlying subtleties (Clegg, 1998).

The Second and Third Faces of Power

Bachrach and Baratz (1962) attempt to make a link between the autonomy of the actor outside of observation and the structures the same actors operate in. These authors argue that power could often be:

"exercised by confining the scope of decision-making to relatively "safe" issues. The other is that the model provides no objective criteria for distinguishing between "important" and "unimportant" issues arising in the political arena" (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, p948).

In pushing the field forward, Bachrach and Baratz identify non-decision making (ibid). The important issue is that non-decision making identifies the complex interplay of rules and involves three types of strategic deployment:

1. The powerful may not listen to, or hear the requests/responses of subordinates. If these requests and responses do appear on agenda they may be diluted by being passed onto various committees and bodies until they are "passed away".
2. B can anticipate A's reaction and accordingly never raise the issue.
3. The mobilisation of bias by creating an environment where certain issues never get discussed and debated.

Thus, power can operate in a very real way and never be empirically demonstrable in the way that Dhal suggests (Clegg, 1998). Saunders (1979) illustrates in his critique of Dahl's research:

"Crucial issues thus never emerge for public debate, and to study the course of contentious issues (as Dahl did in New Haven) is merely to study what happens to the political crumbs strewn carelessly about by an elite with its hand clasped firmly around the cake" (p30-1).

Context, in this modification, becomes a wider issue than that considered by Dahl. As Newton (1969) observed, the contextual variable with Dahl's analysis is too narrow and based on assumptions that prize empirical observation over actual intention. Bachrach et al refer to their model as the 'two faces of power'. This was extended and modified by Lukes (1974) to include three faces. Lukes argued that although there were mechanistic observer-able episodes of power, and behind these existed the manipulating of rules that escaped Dahl's more tangible definitions, there also exist interests. Lukes argued that power was not only episodic and contextual but also used to prevent conflict from emerging at all:

"perceptions, cognitions, and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they view it as natural and changeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial" (Lukes,1974, p24)

Lukes outlines his methodology in relation to the previous two faces:

"Extremely crudely, one might say that the liberal takes men as they are and applies want-regarding principles to them, relating their interests to what they actually want or prefer, to their policy preferences as manifested by their political participation. The reformist, seeing and deploring that not all men's wants are given equal weight by the political system, also relates their interests to what they want or prefer, but allows that this may be revealed in more direct and sub-political ways- in the form of deflected, submerged or concealed wants and preferences. The radical, however, maintains that men's wants may themselves be a product of a system which works against their interests, and in such cases, relates the latter to what they would want and prefer, were they able to make the choice" (Lukes, ibid, p34).

Clegg (1998) observes that at the heart of Lukes' model is an ethic of responsible individualism. As a result, Lukes (1974) places power in the hands of agency. Through this perspective, Lukes removes power from structure and places it into the hands of actors who now (within his model) have the choice in how to use it:

"the constraints facing choice making agents are minimal...the only structural constraints are external to the choosing; internal constraints are always rational ones and can always be surmounted" (Lukes, 1974, p14).

Giddens (1981) theoretical basis of structuration supports the overview of actor-structure relationships offered by Lukes:

"Power is an integral element of all social life as are meaning and norms; this is the significance of the claim that structure can be analysed as rules and resources, resources being drawn upon in the constitution of power relations. All social interaction involves the use of power, as a necessary implication of the logical connection between human action and transformative capacity. Power within social systems can be analysed as relations of autonomy and dependence between actors in which these actors draw upon and reproduce structural properties of domination" (Giddens, 1981, p28-29).

However, the relationship of actors' with structures which Lukes introduces: real interests through such things as non-decision making, has a possible flaw in its relationship between agency and structure. A relationship, according to Lukes, between agency and structure is one that is ultimately dominated by the actor; however, this is whilst marginalising the structure (Clegg, 1998). This places the identification of real interests in a relativist void. If an actor has precedence over a structure, how is it possible to identify their real interests, and how is it possible to know when power has been exercised?

For Barbalet (1987) applying Lukes' methodology disguises power. By making actors the sum of their choices, it misses the complex interplay between structure and actor (Barbalet, ibid). Real interests do not account for what Weber termed "*domination by virtue of a constellation of interests*" (Weber,1978, p943).

Structures can narrow down actor choices, as well as herd them in desirable directions through strategic manipulation (ie misinformation). In an attempt to explore real interests, Lukes, with too much emphasis on actor dependence, does not resolve the relationship between power and structure. This matter is taken up in Lukes', (2005) revisit to the subject of power. Within this work he attempts to reinvigorate the ideologically based third dimension of power. To achieve this, Lukes tackles Foucault's Discipline and Punish, arguing that the author has produced an overly extreme vision of power that rests on power as repression and production. Although arguing against the result of Foucault's work, which he argues is an extreme and negative view of power, Lukes fails to take into account the strength of Foucault's process, his attention to micro strategies.

This means that Lukes makes a case for power being ideologically dominant as opposed to repressive and productive, but fails to say how we can know the "objective interests" of the dominated in much the same way as the Lukes of 1974. Lukes (2005) places power back into the hands of actors but offers little explanation of how these actors know they have power, what it is and how do we know their interests in using it. In summary, the analysis of Lukes (2005) engages very little with the mechanics of power. The enduring point which Lukes reaches however is a vital one. By placing responsibility in the hands of actors it opens an interesting and important field of debate. As Clegg (1998) comments, if real interests are hidden, who does or can know and how? Language may hold the answer. Language as discourses (Foucault, 1977) or statements (Althusser, 1970), are the conduits of power, they create areas that legitimise both subjects and objects. Lukes attempts at establishing a third face of power may fall short due to the relationship not just between actors and structures – as he points out - but between structures, language and actors.

Lukes' theory has been criticised in that it compromises the role of structure whilst inflating the role of choice. Structures themselves, as Weber (1978) argued, create rules and regulations that attempt to control the disparate but powerful elements. Rules, regulations and resulting cultures manifest themselves in language, creating discourses that become right or wrong ways of discussing or examining contexts and events. Thus, if structural influences become salient through language, then it moves the locus of power into the everyday life worlds of actors. Hall captures this rather well:

"In language the same social relation can be differently represented and construed…because language by its nature is not fixed in a one to one relation to its referent but is "multi-referential": it can construct different meanings around what is apparently the same social relation or phenomenon" (Hall, 1983, p71).

Actor responsibility in this revised configuration of power makes the identification of true interests a little murkier:

"general redeployment of social power; which entailed both the re-structuring of authority and a drastic shift in the scope of power and the method of its exercise. Power moved from the distant horizon into the very centre of everyday life. Its object, previously the goods possessed or produced by the subject, was now the subject himself, his daily rhythm, his time, his bodily actions, his mode of life. The power reached now towards the body and the soul of its subjects. It wished to regulate, to legislate, to tell the right from the wrong, the norm from deviance, the ought from the is" (Bauman, 1982, p40).

Structural Semiotics

Saussure pioneered structural linguistics. His work centred on the development of language external to its prescribed meanings; in other words, language could be explained in terms of structuralism:

"Saussure departs from all previous theories of meaning by discovering that language can be examined independently of its referents (that is, anything outside of language that can be said to be what language refers to, like things, fictions and abstractions). This is because the sign contains both its signifying element (what you see or hear when you look at a written word or hear a spoken one) and its meaningful content" (Philips, 2000, p117).

Saussure's work introduces the concepts of signifiers and signified. Borrowing and adapting from Leader, Groves and Appignanesi (1995) a signifier is an acoustic or written image (such as a word) and its corresponding signified is a concept. An example is the word "cow" corresponding to the image (concept) that it creates. Philips (ibid) in his commentary of structural linguistics uses the word (signifier) 'cat' to illustrate the relationship between signs and their intended signifiers:

"The meaning of the word cat is not that… nor any of the actual feline beings that have existed nor any that one day surely will-a potential infinity of cats. The meaning of the word cat is its potentials to be used (e.g. in the sentence "Your cat kept me up all night".) And we need to be able to use it potentially infinitely many times. So in some strict sense cat has no specific meaning at all, more like a kind of empty space into which certain images or concepts or events of usage can be spilled" (Philips, 2000, p117)

From this perspective language can be isolated from any actual occurrence, event or concept. There is always something implied by language in its conventional use, but by the same token its exact meaning is suspended until placed into a specific context. Through history the meanings of words begin to change, signifiers attaching themselves to differing signified against a shifting backdrop of contexts.

Suassure argues that instead of tracing the historical development of language systems it is of more benefit to focus upon what conditions make a language what it is at any particular time. The result of this analysis produces a linguistic system that is built on utterances, a system of elements and how these elements relate to each other. In its simplest terms, the relationship between these elements allows anything to be said at all (Philips, 2000). Utterances are defined as an event or object that has been created by and in some sense governed by, the inter-related elements of the operating linguistic system.

Drawing some parallels, with Foucault's work, definitions of acceptable are conducted through the attachment of words to objects and subjects. For instance, the practice of medicine, explored by Foucault (1963), is an attachment of words and later classifications directed toward the human body; this creates a situation whereby the patient is reduced to objectification. Within Althusser's work, words identify individuals within the capitalist system, articulating the drives toward compliance with the current state of power relations.

The Link Between Power, Structure and Language

This revised form of power, the relationship of actor and structure, called (implicitly at least), for a rethink of the more structural configurations of power. More structural theories, such as Marxism required revision. If actors or the working class are subordinate through false consciousness, then how does this take place? Louis Althusser considered Marx's work within the emerging role of language. False consciousness had to be created in some way, and for Althusser it happened in, and through, language.

The theories of Althusser are based upon the more psychological level of structural linguistics. Working from the structural psychoanalysis of Jacque Lacan, Althusser recognises that actors within a super structure identify themselves in relation to it through language. Althusser's above illustration is based on the context that actors are actually absent but *sound like* something familiar. This is the role of language (Philips, 2000).

Althusser composed the concept of *statement* to reflect how an actor becomes inserted into this discursive obligation. A statement is reflective of the imaginary relationship an actor shares with a structure. This produces actors who are disciplined through language to recognise material conditions in certain ways. Through the examination of how actors are faced with the agency/structure relationship and how actor choices are framed/perceived; the capacity issue of A's over B's becomes diluted:

"It is not necessary to construe those differential advantages and disadvantages such as popular aspirations, morale, responsibilities, principles, rights or virtues as essential human or subjective factors belonging to the moral domain. Rather it is possible to treat these phenomena of the moral or personal life as always determined by specific discourses and social relations in which they are formed and where they exercise definite, albeit limited effects. They are no less "objective" nor more conditional than a policeman's powers of arrest or the power of a gun to penetrate a body or of a manager to sack an employee" (Minson, 1986, p129-30).

Minson's words introduce the contribution made to the study of power by Foucault. Power, Foucault argued, is something invisible and cannot be understood as strictly structural phenomena. Rather, with shades of Althusser, power is articulated (mobilised) by discourses:

"...living beings no longer define their resemblances, their affinities, and their families on the basis of their displayed descriptability; they possess characters which language can scan and define because they have a structure that is, in a way, the dark, concave, inner side of their visibility: it is on the clear and discursive surface of this secret but sovereign mass in which characters emerge..." (Foucault,1970, p237).

What Foucault is describing is a system of classification that makes the outside world very transparent. The mode of transparency is meant in the sense that classifications can be separated into good versus bad, effective versus non-effective and so forth. Because conceptions of what is good and bad (the acceptable and non-acceptable) are formulated through knowledge, and knowledge creates the discourses that sound or are read as acceptable or non-acceptable, power and knowledge become tied up as a single concept: power/knowledge. Knowledge through the creation of an epistemology, it justifies its classifications as correct and true, people are then influenced and act in accordance with them, creating circuits of power:

"As a form of knowledge they work through their own ontogenesis. Because they are knowledge constituted, not just in texts but in definite institutional and organisational practices, they are "discursive practices": knowledge reproduced through practices made possible by the framing assumptions of knowledge. Moreover it is a very practical knowledge: it disciplines the body, regulates the mind and orders the emotions in such a way that the ranking, hierarchy and stratification which ensues is not the blind reproduction of a transcendent traditional order, as in feudalism. It produces a new basis for order in the productive worth of individuals, as they are defined by these new disciplinary practices of power" (Clegg, 1998, p153).

Foucault rejected the concept of ideology arguing that Marxist ideas that run against it were themselves ideological. Instead, there runs a multiplicity of discourses; created and recreated on both local and broader levels; Hall (1983) observes:

"The image of great, immovable class battalions heaving their ascribed ideological luggage about the field of struggle…it is replaced here by an infinity of subtle variations through which the elements of a discourse appear spontaneously to combine and recombine with each other, without material constraints of any kind other than that provided by the discursive operations themselves" (Hall, 1983, p79).

Foucault, moving away from materialism focuses upon **non-discursive formations**, institutions that create discourses in which people identify with, such as medicine and economics. These institutions become grounds of knowledge produced and maintained institutionally; Foucault explains:

"There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can run different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1984, p101-2).

Actors within Foucault's theory are products of discourses: epistemic mutations. In other words, actors are a composition of discourses obtained from the various institutions they come into contact with during their life. These discourses moderate and control both language and behaviour. As Foucault (1984) argues, discourses do not oppose one another; they are both strategic and tactical in their character. This nature creates a situation where actors may seem trapped within an intertwining network of discourses, only able to move from one discursive strategy to another.

Emerging from the work of Althusser and Foucault is a strong emphasis upon the role of language. Althusser developed his concepts of hailing and interpellation through contact with psycho-analyst Jacque Lacan. Lacan based his theories on close readings of Freud's work. He concluded that the unconscious can only articulate its drives through language. This operates upon a similar theoretical base to language being the conduit of power in Althusser and Foucault. Lacan, who had many influences upon his own work, borrowed heavily from structural linguistics to both illustrate and operationalise his theories. He argued that false consciousness is based on attaching certain constellations of words (signifiers) onto things (signs). The concepts of sign and signified, fundamental to structural linguistics, became a heavy influence upon the work of power, particularly its intrinsic relationship with agency and structure.

Baudrillard and Derrida

Baudrillard (1970) put particular emphasis on the role of signs and signifiers in shaping and manipulating actor desires. He argued that the concepts of sign and signifier, the symbolic order, attach themselves to the economy of objects. This makes consumption a form of investment on behalf of the actor. Objects, or purchased items, are parts of a signifying chain; they are purchased to represent *something* about the actor. One item, using Baudrillard's example, such as a Rolex, is part of a signifying chain, a narrative that speaks the actor. As actors consume, *they reproduce the system* (ibid), reinforcing the relationship between sign and signifier.

Mediums such as the internet, television and marketing help to create and re-create the symbolic order through images. Economy in this sense becomes a *seduction* of the actor, calling for them to invest in objectives (signs) that provide the actor with a favourable self narrative (signifiers). The element of seduction however, is where Baudrillard departs with power. In his 1977 paper, *Forget Foucault*, Baudrillard explains how images seduce actors, and that using power as an explanatory variable merely reproduces its effects:

"*We must say that power seduces, but not in the vulgar sense of a complicit form of desire on the part of those who are dominated -- this comes down to basing it in the desire of others, which is really going overboard in taking people for idiots -- no, power seduces by that reversibility which haunts it, and upon which a minimal symbolic cycle is set up,*" (Baudrillard,1977,p43-4).

What Baudrillard seems to be arguing, is that within the work of Foucault (to whom the paper is specifically addressed) there is an implicit thread that regards actors as overly passive. Actors are not the subjects of and subjects to power; they are rather more subtly seduced by images. However, seduction and power are both generated to persuade and influence. Both rely on the insertion of actors into a symbolic order, whether through images or discursive patterns neither explains false consciousness in a rigorous manner.

The effect of language and the symbolic order continues with Derrida. Two key features of Derrida's work are also fundamental to structural linguistics: *Absence* and *presence.* Derrida's theories take place in the reading of texts or text:

*"All the questions to which this type of book must habitually presuppose replies, around for instance the practice of quotation, the relationship between commentary and interpretation the identification and delimitation of a corpus or a work, the respect owed to the singularity or the event of a work in its idiom, its signature, its date and its context, without simply making them into examples or cases…are **already** put to us by the texts we have to read, not as preliminary or marginal to the true work of thought, but as this work itself in its most pressing and formidable aspects"* (Bennington and Derrida, 1993, p9-10).

Meaning, for Derrida, is always outside of the text. There is never any coherent centre *present*. When a text is read, what is visual, what can be physically seen is the systematic relationship between elements in a signifying chain What is perennially *absent* is the signified. The sign (word) always comes before what it refers to, which is perennially *absent*. What allows signs their principle of operation is their ability to be repeated, for instance: *yes* (the sign) has an infinite quality:

"A signifier, like a scientific experiment, is not significant unless it is repeatable; a meaningful message is woven from repeatable marks. An absolutely singular, unprecedented, and unrepeatable mark would be unrecognisable and meaningless" (Caputo, 1997, p187-88).

What occurs during the repetition of a sign, however, is that it becomes changed; it can never be the same sign again; because context has shifted. Signs have infinite possible uses in chains of infinite possible context they are constantly de-centred:

"The very thing that makes "yes" possible threatens it from within, limiting it from within. Like a gramophone that perfectly reproduces the living voice on the surface of a phonograph record or a compact disk, in the absence of living, intentional presence. If the technological repetition, if the "reproduction" is "faithful" enough, I cannot tell whether the voice is living or long since dead, a living "yes" or an automaton. So yes must be said, must be constantly repeated, in the face of this threat or internal menace" (ibid, p188).

Meaning within a text is situated outside of the text itself or subject to *play*. In other words, between the construction of a text (an e-mail for example) and its reading, there exists a transitional space. The elements of the signs contain a free-floating quality, with meaning suspended until the reader has experienced the text itself. A question that arises is that meaning, at some point, if communication is at all possible, must arrive at some fixed meaning. The creation of meaning for Derrida rests within the concept of *centre:*

"With a text any number of possible readings, based upon the substitutions that the language of literature particularly suggest, can be limited and qualified by the notion of its centre. Typical concepts of centre in literary criticism, for instance, would include the "author", the "historical context", the "reader", the "ideology" of a "political economy", each of which provides a ground outside of the text for limiting interpretation" (Philips, 2000, p146).

For Derrida, text arrives at some sort of stability based on the authority of its writer. The concept of the writer itself (remaining faithful to the quoted explanation) and the authority that they carry is not strictly based upon the personal, phenomenal qualities of that person. Rather, it also rests on their legitimate right to communicate this centre (or fixity) to an audience or singular respondent; it is a positional relationship. What occurs at the point of interpretation (the reading of a text) is the concept of *play*. Play allows the reader access to the plurality of interpretations a text can conjure forth. The role of a text is to reduce play and fix the centre:

"In order for the concept of an author to limit the play of the text an attempt must be made to play down or efface the influence on interpretation that the reader, or the historical and ideological context, has upon it. The centre is itself a concept among the concepts that it would limit from outside" (Philips, 2000, p150).

An actor is subject to control by the text. Derrida's theoretical base in a broadly similar way to Baudrillard, Foucault and Althusser relies on the insertion of an actor into the symbolic order. Texts facilitate the direction of signs towards a signified, in the same way meanings become attached to objects. Lukes left power in the hands of the actor. Post structuralism has tended to place it back within the hands of structures, albeit highly fluid ones. The recognition of fluidity in structures has produced theory that explores the strategic and tactical "methods" used to maintain elements of actor control. This shift has tended to move away from the ruling class- subordinate class model, and focus on the subtle interplay of an actor's relationship with institutions and organisations, or a duality of structure. Duality of structure was developed by Giddens in response to theories of power and sociology that seemed to place the actor at the mercy of structures. His argument is well supported and similar to Fligstein's notion of New Institutionalism. Both authors are summarised in the following section.

New Institutionalism and Giddens

The concentration of New Institutionalism deals with the influence of institutions on human behaviour through rules, norms, and other frameworks. Fligstein (1999) observes how institutions produce "local social orders" that could be regarded as "fields, arenas or games". The local social orders that Fligstein (ibid) refers act out against a backdrop of power through which positions and relationships are maintained, reinforced and built. This produces a deviation from previous theories that considered institutions as influencing individuals to act in one of two ways: causing individuals within institutions to maximize benefits (*regulative* institutions), in a similar way to Marxism and latterly rational choice theory or secondly, to act out of duty or an awareness of what one is "supposed" to do as in *normative* institutions. The crucial contribution of New Institutionalism was to add a cognitive influence; this perspective adds that, instead of acting under rules or based on obligation, individuals act because of conceptions. This notion of conceptions has led Fligstein (1999) to argue that institutions are not merely collections of oft repeated rules that order behaviour, rather:

"that the process of institution building takes place in the context of powerful actors attempting to produce rules of interaction to stabilize their situation vis a vis other powerful and less powerful actors" (Fligstein,1999, p7).

Within this argument Fligstein contends that actors within dominant positions will seek to maintain or increase their power, whilst actors of less formal authority will form challenger groups that seek to survive "albeit at a lower level of resources" (ibid). The institution developing moments occur, according to Fligstein, out of crisis:

"...institution building moments proceed from crises of existing groups- either in their attempts to produce stable interactions or when their current rules no longer serve their purposes...if a situation is sufficiently fluid and large numbers of groups begin to appear, it is possible for skilled social actors to help groups overcome their differences by proposing a new identity for the field. It is important to recognize that institution building may fail: disparate interests and identities of groups can prevent stable institutions from emerging" (ibid).

Fligstein's notion of institutions as fluid power struggles shares similarities with the power perspective offered by Foucault. Power, as described by Foucault, is an intertwining and strategic concept. Although there are many similarities between Fligstein's central argument and Foucault, (such as the positioning of actors in relation to structures), Foucault expands upon the strategic agency. Power, he argues, is never a constant sum. Almost anyone can be powerful at any given time within any given context, crudely put; it requires that all the variables be in place at a certain time. The ability of an actor to achieve power is not just limited to resource dependency, but also concepts such as knowledge, social capital and physical presence. This has a slightly Weberian feel to it. However, the difference lies in the way that power constantly shifts and changes form, it has no fixed quality but rather counters resistance through, for instance, disseminating popular notions of right and wrong. If these popular notions ever come under threat it will again change to regain control.

Fligstein argues that the dynamics of modern society are constituted through "games" or "social interactions orientated towards producing outcomes for each group" (p8). A group's ability to deliver positive outcomes is dependent upon their current circumstances "as challengers or dominators" (p8). Fligstein is careful to point out that the production of a positive outcome for one group can easily lead to a power struggle within another area. Referring to the problem of field construction, or a prevailing or improving system, Fligstein argues that positive power outcomes hinge on the effective use of culture and this is achieved in three ways.

The first concerns "pre-existing social practices". These include existing rules and regulation, customs and norms, definitions of relevant resources and rules (p8) and the ability to harness organising technologies. Secondly, the rules of each field are unique and embedded within the power relations of each group and finally, groups have a cognitive framework that they use to make meaning from interactions. Fligstein at this point seems to offer a differing perspective from Foucault. Within Fligstein's account of power, the actors appear to be engaged in overt strategies whilst in Foucault's, actors appear to be engaged in covert strategies. This analysis requires some clarification.

Foucault offers a perspective where little self conscious behaviour seems to exist, actors are defined through power relations yet their knowledge of this is likely to be limited. This is summed up rather well by Clegg (1998):

"Membership in a category, as a particular type of subject, is regarded as the effect of devices of categorisation; thus identity is seen as contingent, provisional, achieved not given. Identity is seen as always in process, as always subject to reproduction or transformation through discursive practices which secure or refuse particular posited identities" (Clegg, 1998, p151)

Whereas Fligstein argues:

"New institutional theories imply questioning conventional conceptions of actors by focusing on how collective social actors orient action towards one another. Actors may be purposeful, but those purposes must be constructed in the context of their collective situations" (Fligstein, 1999, p9)

The difference seems to be a subtle shift in the relationship between actor and structure. Within Fligstein's institutions, structures enable, constrain and importantly reshape based on actor strategic action. Foucault's form a web like structure that make actor mobilised change a near impossibility:

"There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can run different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, calculate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1984, p101-2).

Fligstein recognises this thinking as not incorrect, but lacking within the sociology of institutions:

"The more sociological versions accept that actors are collective and embedded in social relations and these relations determine the available cultural scripts. Actors have no alternative but to follow the scripts which could reflect their interests, values, roles or norms" (Fligstein, 1999, p10)

The author describes the missing element to this approach:

"What is missing from these theories is a real sociological conception of action. Rational choice models of strategic action are correct in focusing our attention on the strategic behaviour of actors. But, they do not take seriously the problem of how actors are socially situated in a group and how their strategic actions are framed by the problems of attaining cooperation" (ibid).

The theoretical inspiration for the relationship between duality of structure and agency is Antony Giddens. Giddens informs Fligstein on the point that structures (and/or institutions) both enable and constrain actors. For Giddens, it is wrong to place the actor at the centre of investigation; action and structure cannot be analysed separately, as structures are created, maintained and changed through actions, while actions are given meaningful form only through the background of structure. It is on this point that Giddens departs from seemingly similar theorists as Lukes:

"While Lukes regards the relationship between power and structure as dialectical, Giddens wants to sever the relationship as being two distinct things, a dualism, and, instead, reconstitute it as a duality, in which power and structure are interpenetrated. He refers to this as the duality of structure" (Clegg, 1998, p138).

As with Fligstein, this ontological position is the backdrop against which institutional power plays out. For both Giddens and Fligstein, power and agency are perennially tied concepts:

"To be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others. Action depends upon the capability of the individual to "make a difference" to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events. An agent ceases to be such if he or she loses the capability to "make a difference", that is to exercise some sort of power" (Giddens, 1984, p14).

And from Fligstein:

"Actors, under both stable and unstable institutional conditions, are not just captured by shared meanings in their fields, understood either as scripts as they might be interpreted by professionals or government bureaucrats. Instead, they operate with a certain amount of social skill to reproduce or contest systems of power and privilege. They do so as active members of a field whose lives are wrapped up and dependent on fields" (Fligstein,1999,p33).

Fligstein and Giddens connect on this point. Both authors seem to argue that actions only become meaningful when they become structured, and in turn, structures provide transformative opportunities for actors. For Fligstein, actors exist within fields, and actors that demonstrate the higher functioning levels of social skill define the nature of new and enduring fields:

"Skilled social actors tailor their actions depending on the current level of the organisation of the field, their place in that field, and the current moves by other groups in the field" (Fligstein,1999,p39).

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Organisational Power: Mintzberg and Pfeffer

Power within organisations, from the perspective of Mintzberg and Pfeffer, is concerned with the exercising of power from the organisations stance. This places a focus on power that is derived from resources and consequently provides a top down and structured perspective of the subject (Clegg, 1998). There appears very little attention to organisational actors' strategic agency, with the focus on organisational solutions for the control of power with the aim to increase organisational efficiency. With a focus on organisational solutions, political activity amongst actors becomes something that both authors see as illegitimate. Mintzberg illustrates this with his three definitions of organisational politics:

1. Behaviour outside of the legitimate systems of influence (or at least outside of their legitimate uses), and often in opposition to them, in other words, behaviour that is technically illegitimate, and often clandestine;
2. Behaviour designed to benefit the individual or group, ostensibly at the expense of the organisation at large;
3. As a result of points 1 and 2, behaviour typically diverse or conflictive in nature, pitting individuals or groups against the organisation at large, or against each other;

(Taken from Mintzberg, 1983, p172).

The above points by Mintzberg set the organisation against the actor in so far as the actor requires controlling. Actor agency in the theoretical arguments of Pfeffer (1981) and Mintzberg (1983) is marginalised as they view power as contingent on resources. Actor obedience to dominant organisational ideologies is central to this argument. This means that actors gain power through resources and disciplinary control channels this power into organisational efficiency. Clegg (1998) critiques this perspective, arguing that the theories of Mintzberg and Pfeffer have a tendency to view power has a thing and not the product of relations. This leaves a somewhat prescriptive view of power that does not account for the potential of actor agency or the unintended relational consequences that may arise through actors suddenly coming into the possession of the resources that grant power.

Actor Network Theory (ANT)

Actor Network Theory (ANT) is aimed at demonstrating how material and semiotic networks come together to act as a whole functioning system. This approach examines explicit strategies for relating different elements together into a network so that they form an apparently coherent whole. Latour explains:

"ANT aims at accounting for the very essence of societies and nature. It does not wish to add social networks to social theory but to rebuild social theory out of networks" (Latour, quoted in 2008)

ANT theorists such as Cannon and Latour, argue that actor-networks have the potential to be transient. If the relations that constitute the network are not repeatedly performed, then the result will be the fragmenting of the network. In other words, behaviour within networks becomes normalized; and there are no greater examples of this than institutions. The notion of repetition into normalization creates symmetry between ANT and Foucault's notion of governmentality (Dent, 2003). This also creates symmetry between ANT and the subject of power. Dent (2003) demonstrates that the normalization of behaviour in institutions creates professional practices that demonstrate power with both positive and negative qualities. The strong relational elements present within ANT and the perspective on power which ANT provides are a contrast to the "routine into efficiency" model offered by Mintzberg and Pfeffer.

ANT does not focus upon *why* a network takes the form that it does. The focus of ANT tends to be in exploring *how* actor-networks get formed, hold themselves together, or fall apart. ANT places a strong emphasis on semiotics and the language norms that hold together networks or emerging discourses that break networks apart, thereby strengthening its links with Foucault through micro-strategies. Latour argues that a key difference between the theories of Foucault and ANT exists in ANT's acknowledgement that discursive practices and arising micro-strategies can have both positive and negative value.

Synthesising the Theoretical Perspectives

The earlier parts of this chapter reviewed social theorists on the concept of power. So far, this chapter has provided an overview of how theories of power have developed since Marx and Weber and how they have become concerned with the role of language and the relationship between structure and agency. The core concept that seems to separate the trajectory of relational power from Marx and Marxist theorists through to dualism, appears to be the concept of 'limit'. Olssen (2004, p259) picks this argument up in his discussion of Foucault.

Olssen (ibid) suggests that Foucault broke away significantly from one of the key elements that had constrained theoretical notions of power, limit. An example of what is meant by limit is Althusser's notions of base and superstructure. Althusser saw power as a result of base and superstructure in a cause and effect relationship; this cause and effect relationship in turn limits the discussion of power to base and super structure. It is Foucault's position and his methodology that the cause and effect approach fails to recognise the subtle strategies of power:

"*The rapprochements are not intended to uncover great cultural continuities, nor to isolate mechanisms of causality…nor does it seek to rediscover what is expressed in them... it tries to determine how the rules of formation that govern it (*discourse/power*)…may be linked to non-discursive systems: it seeks to define specific forms of articulation*" (Foucault, 1972, p162)

To achieve this, Foucault focused on structural linguistics to examine what rules and norms governed structures. He (Foucault) did not do this in a way that could be interpreted as structuralist. Foucault's methodology sought to examine what not only held structures and their discourses together, but what forced them apart, created new ones and assimilated existing discourses. Foucault explains how structuralist methods can be applied to produce non-structuralist results if the 'limit' of investigation is removed:

"In a positive manner, we can say that structuralism investigates above all an unconscious. It is the unconscious structures of language, of the literary work, and of the knowledge that one is trying at this moment to illuminate. In the second place, I think that one can say that what one is essentially looking for are the forms, the system, that is to say that one tries to bring out the logical correlations that can exist among a great number of elements belonging to a language, to an ideology (as in the analyses of Althusser), to a society (as in Levi Strauss) or to different fields of knowledge; which is what I myself have studied. One could describe structuralism roughly as the search for logical structures everywhere that they could occur" (Foucault, 1994, p654)

The search for logical structures using practical methods supplied by structural linguistics is what makes Foucault stand out as an applicable theorist to the study of e-mail. The intention within this investigation is to examine how e-mail, a form of communication conducted solely through text, transports power and to examine this (e-mail) without a pre-conceived 'limit' such as base and super structure. In order to achieve this, logical structures that occur in e-mail and the patterns that organisational actors adopt (in e-mail) to accomplish aims and objectives seem a logical and applicable methodological approach to adopt; Olssen's (2004) comments on Foucault's methodology highlight this point well:

"It is about the processes of change internal to social systems. It holds that societies are to varying extents integrated systematically through their material practices and discursive coherences, and break down and change at the component elements of the system change" (p458)

In the application of Foucault to the investigation of e-mail two things can be achieved. Firstly, it will provide a theoretical base for the investigation and secondly, it will examine the relevance of Foucault's theories to e-mail communication.

However, a certain degree of caution needs to be injected when applying Foucault. Lukes (2005) and Giddens (1998) both suggest that left unchecked the theoretical base of Foucault can produce an overly oppressive view of power that marginalises the role of agency and as Lukes (2005) points out, a position that Foucault rejected later in his life; this is articulated in Foucault's (1991) own words when discussing power as totally negative and oppressive quality (in relation to Habermas):

"It is being blind to the fact that relations of power are not something bad in themselves, from which one must free oneself. I don't believe there can be a society without relations of power… The problem is not trying to dissolve them in the utopia of a perfectly transparent utopia of a perfectly transparent communication but to give oneself the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the ethics, the ethos, the practice of self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination" (p18)

To keep a focus upon the practical and linguistic forms of e-mail communication and to avoid "veering" toward interpreting data through the lens of an overly oppressive theory of power, the notion of context is introduced.

Context, within the parameters of this investigation, is taken to mean the communication norms that two or more actors create when they begin communicating via e-mail. For example, actor A sends actor B an e-mail; actor B reads this e-mail and interprets it. The interpretation by actor B is determined by how they (B) perceives the 'relations of power' context, is the perceived tone of the e-mail relevant? Do they relate to the urgency or otherwise conveyed? Is actor A communicating in a manner that B determines appropriate? When B replies, A interprets the context through examination of the words in the text. The two actors may agree on context and produce a particular discursive pattern or they may disagree and another discursive pattern emerges.

By placing a methodological focus on the role of context the aim is to unearth how actor interpretation of e-mail, and the contexts this creates, plays in shaping discursive patterns and the corresponding relationship context has with power (as seen from Foucault's perspective). To summarise, Foucault has been highlighted as a theorist who has a methodology that is relevant to the study of e-mail and this investigation. It has been argued that an emphasis be placed on the role of context to explore how it shapes discursive patterns and relational power. The application of context is not necessarily a departure from Foucault's work but rather a re-examination of how his work relates to e-mail patterns on a micro level.

This chapter has broadly introduced and described the theories of authors who wrote on the subjects of ideology, structure and language and summarised some of their key points. The key elements of their work are summarised here in tabular form.

Author	Key Elements
Marx	Subordination of the working classes through false consciousness
Weber	Capacity of individuals to exercise power which is curtailed through organisational rules and regulations
Dahl, Polsby, Wolfinger	Power expressed as the empirical ability of A to exert power over B
Bacharach and Baratz	Power expressed in contextual, more strategic terms: the Second Face
Lukes	Power expressed as true intentions, the actor takes centre stage over structure
Althusser	The role of language in creating false consciousness
Baudrillard	Actors being seduced by a simulated world of material suggestion
Foucault	The role of discourse in power and the creation of knowledge and institutions
Derrida	The role of text in shaping reader interpretations
Giddens	The duality of structure and actors creative involvement with institutions
Fligstein	The role of actor agency, games and social skills in developing institutions
Mintzberg and Pfeffer	Power's relationship to resources and the role of obedience in translating this into organisational effectiveness
ANT	The forming of actors into networks and how these networks are maintained

[Table 1]

The work of Foucault has been introduced and developed for it will play a key role in the analysis of e-mail communications. The following chapter aims to examine how the arguments developed here can help in progressing the key issues raised regarding e-mail communication at the end of chapter 2.

Chapter Four - Theoretical Perspectives on Power and their Applicability to E-mail

The purpose of the last chapter was to introduce the theories and theorists on power who dealt primarily with ideologies, structure and language. At the end of chapter 3 a theoretical perspective for use in the analysis of communication in a contemporary environment was discussed. This perspective drew heavily from Foucault and his methodologies but placed a greater emphasis on the analysis of actor created contexts. With this development in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to examine and critically analyse how the most relevant theories to this investigation can take forward the points that were introduced at the end of chapter 2. The points that were raised at the end of chapter 2 were generated from the e-mail and cyberspace literature, representing contemporary issues in e-mail communication. They appear below for summary:

1. Communication patterns are ideologically constructed; they need to relate to actor and respondent perceptions of context and are bound by rules
2. Communication patterns are highly visible thereby offering linguistic choice
3. Communication patterns need to be managed and can be manipulated as the contents of an e-mail must meet the expectation of the receiver
4. The natural distance between respondents using e-mail technology is emotionally charged and represents a social space

The table below is aimed to initiate the critical analysis. In column 1 appear the points from above. In column 2 appears the theorists and theories who address the points most relevantly:

Point	Theory/Theorist
Communication patterns are ideologically constructed; they need to relate to actor and respondent perceptions of context and are bound by rules	Althusser, Derrida, ANT, Semiotics, Baudrillard, Foucault, Giddens, Fligstein
Communication patterns are highly visible thereby offering linguistic choice	Derrida, semiotics, ANT, Althusser
Communication patterns need to be managed and can be manipulated as the contents of an e-mail must meet the expectation of the receiver	Derrida, semiotics, Althusser
The natural distance between respondents using e-mail technology is emotionally charged and represents a social space	Giddens, Althusser, semiotics, Derrida

[Table 2]

The points in the first column are derived from the literature on e-mail and cyberspace; they represent contemporary conclusions on the subject of electronic communication. In the second column these points are set against the authors and theories that have the most relevance to the contemporary issues. This process produces an agenda of the theories and theorists who will be evaluated to determine which of these perspectives can most productively inform the investigation and enhance and challenge the theoretical perspective set out earlier. The agenda appears in the table (adapted from the previous chapter) below along with short theoretical summary:

Althusser	The role of language in creating false consciousness
Baudrillard	Actors being seduced by a simulated world of material suggestion
Foucault	The role of discourse in relational power and the creation of knowledge and institutions in respect of identity
Derrida	The role of text in shaping reader interpretations
Giddens	The duality of structure and actors creative involvement with institutions
Fligstein	The role of actor agency, games and social skills in developing institutions
ANT	The forming of actors into networks and how these networks are maintained

[Table 3]

The above (table 3) table excludes the following theories and theorists who appeared in the previous chapter:

Marx	Subordination of the working classes through false consciousness
Weber	Capacity of individuals to exercise power which is curtailed through organisational rules and regulations
Dahl, Polsby, Wolfinger	Power expressed as the empirical ability of A to exert power over B
Bacharach and Baratz	Power expressed in contextual, more strategic terms: the Second Face
Lukes	Power expressed as true intentions, the actor takes centre stage over structure
Mintzberg and Pfeffer	Power's relationship to resources and the role of obedience in translating this into organisational effectiveness

[Table 4]

The authors have been excluded due to a lack of focus upon language and languages relationship to structure. The authors who have been included within this chapter have provided far more subtle and contextually sensitive perspectives on structures relationship with language. As a result they (the authors) are able to inform the points that have been raised and appear again at the beginning of this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to now critically evaluate the theories and theorists who have been included to determine which can support the investigation most effectively. The application of theory to this investigation is aimed at informing e-mail and cyberspace authors around the key points raised in this investigation. This aim is in contrast to attempting to extend the work of the selected theories and theorists through the investigation of e-mail.

Opening Points

Returning to a more Marxian premise, the question of how power achieves passivity and compliance required investigation, but upon a more sophisticated level. The three faces of power (Lukes) went a long way in describing this through issues such as context, resources and non-decision making. These all have relevance to the role of e-mail within organisational power relations. However, language transmitted through text is the key component of e-mail relations and for authors such as Althusser and Foucault; they were key components of relational power.

Within the earlier chapters of this thesis it has been suggested that e-mail in both virtual and organisational environments seems structured and ordered. Earlier research has alluded to the connections between ideology, interpellation and cyber communities (Terranova, 2000) and both implicitly and explicitly the work of Althusser. Within organisations research has explored how communities of discourse appear (see Mallon et al, 2002, Romm, 1999, Ducheneaut, 2002 for examples) and further, how they regulate themselves (see Pliskin et al, 1997). Althusser's concepts of actors being interpolated into discursive structures through hailing during a linguistic recognition present a strong theoretical backdrop. The work of Althusser helps to further the concept of strategic centres. Centres, for Derrida, were the articulation of ideologies through texts. For Althusser, the transportation of ideology took place through language in the form of statements. Both authors share a common thread in that language is the primary vehicle for power. Whatever the institutional or social form this power may take, language becomes a means of expressing it and in such a way that it becomes reinforced and disseminated. Althusser's concepts of ideology are now discussed as a means of expanding upon the nature of strategic centres.

Althusser

Althusser's perspective on actor relationships with institutions is accounted for in his two-fold description of ideology. The intriguing element of the following arguments is the similarities between Althusser's basic principles and the styles of e-mail communication uncovered by (for example) O'Sullivan et al (2003), Ducheneaut (2002) and Gains (1999).

Althusser (1966) distinguishes between ideology and ideologies. Ideology is a perennial super-structure. It is a timeless permanent structure, and for Althusser it was analogous to Freudian and Lacanian concepts of the unconscious. Because ideology is a structure it can be filled with anything, but because it is a structure, its form (like the unconscious) will remain the same. What the structure becomes filled with are ideologies that vary over time and culture (Marxist, Christian etc).

The ideologies, for Althusser, work upon the unconscious level. Based upon the same principles as language (syntagmatic axis-ideology, paradigmatic axis-ideologies), they are a system that actually identifies actors and their positional relationships whilst providing the impression of the actors being autonomous:

"Ideology is a "representation" of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real conditions of existence" (Althusser, 1966,p241).

The concept of interpellation is used to describe how an actor is integrated into ideologies through the allocation of subject positions. Althusser describes how an ideology (a super structure) has a hailing effect upon an actor. Hailing is how ideology as a language calls out and addresses an actor, in a similar way that Derrida refers to texts containing ideologies and power relationships that always lay outside of the text itself (1994). In other words, actors recognise their subject positions in and through language. Ideology as a structure requires not only a subject but also a Subject. When Althusser uses the capital S (of subject) he refers to the structural possibility of subject hood, with lower case s referring to the individual actor. The theory of S and s refers to the duality of being a subject where an actor is both the subject of language/ideology and subject to ideology, having to obey its rules and its laws. This element of Althusser's theory makes fascinating application to e-mail.

O'Sullivan et al (2003) refer to the importance of understanding context when observing and analysing e-mail exchanges. Each community of discourse seems to contain its own ideology (paradigmatic reference point) filled up with its own ideologies (syntagmatic articulation). Gains (1999) work illustrates this point well.

Gains (1999) focuses his research on two different types of organisation: commercial and academic. Within the commercial organisation the super-structure seems to be one of formality, with various ideologies based on this model. Where the formality of the communication can be said to rise or fall, this corresponds to the positional relationships of the interlocutors, e.g. when communicating with actors of a higher or external status the formality rises and when communicating non-organisationally sanctioned requests the formality lowers significantly.

In other words, the language used in e-mail exchanges hails other actors by positioning them in subject status through text.

Ducheneaut (2002) makes similar observations in his study of how power is communicated via e-mail. He suggests that members of an academic institution (that he studied) fall into three distinct groups: academic, administration, and student. Ducheneaut (2002) argues that each group has a style of communicating with one another, ideologies that position subjects through language. At the same time Pliskin et al's (1997) research into how e-mail was used to create a united bargaining community throughout an industrial dispute, discusses how the group was formed through common objectives and articulated this through an electronic forum of humour and debate. The concept of ideology and hailing figure strongly in a re-reading of Pliskin et al (1997), in how the community was formed and grew through the sole use of electronic language, hailing increasingly larger numbers to its ideology.

It can be argued that ideology is a means of dealing with an external world through image and status projection. Although this has explanatory value, the application of ideology as a sole explanatory variable could lead to actors being viewed as passive recipients of organisational power. E-mail and its relationship with users increase the visibility of ideologies due to their appearance in written form. Actors remain subject to rules, but the concepts of 'S' and 's' in Althusser's theory may need adjustment, the small case 's' needs to be a little larger. The space that exists between respondents in e-mail communication is subject to management, giving e-mail an empowering potential

Ideological structures represent the legislative structure of an organisation, within this organisational superstructure there exist multiple "ideologies" articulated through discursive patterns. These discursive patterns are representative of position; occupational groups, social relations and others (see Mallon et al, 2000, Pliskin, 1998, Rice, 1994 for examples). Each pattern will have its own rules and structure and appeal and hail to some actors whilst being unacceptable to others.

However, despite the clear and explicit linkages between Althusser and e-mail, as a sole theory it does not provide the explanatory mechanisms required to account for the contextual face of power; presenting a version of power that is focused on a top down trajectory. A more fluid and contextual account of power is offered by Foucault.

Foucault

Power, as described by Foucault, is an intertwining and strategic concept. Although there are many similarities between Althusser and Foucault such as the positioning of actors in relation to structures through language, Foucault moves onto expand upon the strategic agency through moving away from the economic limits of classical and neo Marxism. Power, he argues, is never a constant sum. Almost anyone can be powerful at any given time within any given context, crudely put; it requires that all the variables be in place at a time, it is context dependant. The ability of an actor to achieve power is not just limited to resource dependency, but also concepts such as knowledge, social capital and physical presence. This may have a slightly Weberian feel to it, however, the difference lies in the way that power constantly shifts and changes form, it has no fixed quality but rather counters resistance through, for instance, disseminating popular notions of right and wrong. If these popular notions ever come under threat it will again change to regain control.

Foucault introduced strategies of power through his acknowledgement that almost everyone can exercise power at some given point. When he argues this he seems to suggest that, to an extent, power can be manipulated:

"...for the signifying chain by which the unique experience of the individual is constituted is perpendicular to the formal system on the basis of the significations of a culture are constituted: at any given instant, the structure proper to individual experience finds a certain number of possible choices (and of excluded possibilities) in the systems of the society; inversely, at each of their points of choice the social structures encounter a certain number of possible individuals (and others who are not)- just as the linear structure of language always produces a possible choice between several words or phonemes at any given moment (but excludes all others)" (Foucault, 1970, p380).

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Foucault suggests that because power is transported, maintained and re-created through language it is open to manipulation. Values and qualities of words and appropriating context can be changed, if there is resistance to power a change in the linguistic system used to define the power can re-capture the resistance. In other words, power has a historical value, meaning institutional and social discourses are the product of historic struggles of power relations. These struggles result in differing cultures and paradigmatic axis in legitimising language construction.

A contrast can be drawn with Althusser's concept of interpellation, the recognition of status relations in language. However, what Foucault provides in contrast to Althusser is the value of historically constructed power relations and their micro-social relations. Both authors use language as a channel of power, but Althusser's notions do not account for the fact that language can be manipulated, this is in part due to the limits of structural determinism prevalent in Althusser's work. Relative power seems to position e-mail (organisational e-mails in particular) in certain discursive patterns (Mallon et al, 2002, Ducheneaut, 2002 for instance). Yet it also offers the potential for space to be manipulated, seemingly to a greater degree than concrete relations would allow. Foucault opposed ideological power, as he believed that almost everyone could exercise some form of power at some given point; power can be a contextual relationship created between and through actors. Micro-social relations, he argued, were the true nature of power:

"Rather than being casually observable social episodes, they represent ways in which both individual and collectively organised bodies become socially inscribed and normalized through the routine aspects of organisation. In this way, power is embedded in the fibre and fabric of everyday life" (Hardy and Clegg, 1999, p377).

Social relations have never been fixed, they are always subject to unpredictable changes (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), and because of this they are best understood on a historical level of micro-relations. Through these micro-relationships the articulation of power, as it is experienced within the organisational structures and also as it is resisted against and manipulated through language is best-understood (Clegg et al, 1998). E-mail research is indicative of this.

The most illustrative studies of e-mail research have tended to be pictures of micro-social relations within a small sample of organisations (very often an intrinsic case study).

Authors such as Gains (1999) have provided windows into how e-mail language changes not only within different cultures but also between different actors. Ducheneaut (2002) in a specific study of organisational power and e-mail demonstrates not only how relational power tends to shape e-mail language, but also how historic organisational changes have contributed to this. Studies that have applied the theoretical basis of Foucault (Brigham and Corbett, 1997) to e-mail research have focused upon the effect of the e-mailing system on concrete perspectives (the increased amount of surveillance over activities for instance) rather than everyday e-mail use. Foucault's perspective provides a theoretical window into the more ambiguous nature of language construction.

Foucault and Relational Power; It's Relationship to E-mail

The key interest of studying e-mail from Foucault's perspective is that although power is taken into consideration in other e-mail studies (Brigham et al 1997, Ducheneaut, 2002), a study of how actors deploy, resist and re-order the various electronic linguistic codes over an extended period of time do not exist. To illustrate, Ducheneaut (ibid) recognises that e-mail linguistic codes are representations of organisational power, and develops these ideas from a two-year study. However, what is missing is how power is resisted and re-ordered, either maintained or transformed.

The perspective suggests that whilst e-mail seems governed by the structural parameters of language, the discursive codes that fill these structures could potentially be managed politically (Gains, 1999 and Romm, 1999, Markus, 1994 for examples). This is what Foucault offers to the study of power- power as a non-constant concept.

As discussed in the previous chapter, it thus differs to more structural notions, as power is not something that can be made visible and overcome; it is an ever present daily phenomenon that exists in many shapes and many forms. Seeking to locate relational power over a longitudinal study of organisational e-mail, means, following a Foucault perspective, that it (power) will change hands, appear, disappear and reform in many different ways. Foucault can provide a "strategic account" in which e-mail behaves overtime; Brigham and Corbett (1997) applied similar reasoning in their application of Foucault to the study of e-mail, citing a need to investigate the strategic manner in which e-mail regulated (and opposed) worker relations. However, as discussed within chapter three, the application of Foucault's methodology to the study of e-mail should be accompanied by close attention to the dynamics of context. Context is taken to mean, within this study, the socially constructed dynamics that are between two or more actors and the related linguistic patterns that they follow, create or otherwise. A focus upon context is in many ways consistent with Foucault's analysis of micro-social relations through structural linguistics (Foucault, 1994c, p654). Context is a means of focussing investigation on how actors (within structures) create (or otherwise) discursive patterns in response to one another's interpretation of e-mails; this is an adaptation of Foucault's methodological search for "logical structures everywhere they could occur" (ibid).

Not all discourse may be about power, or negative notions of power; discourse and arising discursive practices may also be about the characteristics of actors, or agencies creative involvement with structure (Clegg, 1998). With this in mind (at the end of Chapter 3) the notion of context was introduced.

Baudrillard

Baudrillard has scrutinised extensively the relationship between power and language. Using semiotics in a stricter and less metaphorical sense than Althusser, Baudrillard's work is concerned with actor engagement with images. Consumerism, he argues, has become the chief basis of the social order. The implications of this are that actors are inserted into a symbolic order, where products and commodities are the signs that structure actor behaviour. Each sign (or commodity) possesses a corresponding signifier or meaning; possession of these signs refers the signifier onto the actor ie possession of a Rolex "says" something about the actor who possesses it. Thus meaning, identity and status become tied to material possession through exactly the same process as signs and signifiers in semiotics.

Transmitting signifiers through images has relevance to the investigation of e-mail. Baudrillard observes that the insertion of actors into a referent system produces a need for hierarchy, a system of differences where actors are separated from each other by what they possess. Again, this argument aligns closely to semiotics in its principles of difference. E-mail communication within organisations, (see Gains, 1999 and more implicitly Pliskin et al, 1997), and seemingly within cyber communities (see Terranova, 2000, for example), rely upon a system of semiotic differences. These differences form the basis of "speech communities" (see Mallon et al 2002, Terranova, 2000 for examples) that attract and regulate actors into them. Actors are identified by using and identifying with the same relationship of signs and signifiers, ie they speak the same language.

Baudrillard, who argues that status is actually an active manipulation of signs (words), creates a link between linguistic structure and power. A criticism of structural linguistics in this context is the neglect of context in its formation. A sign or word has no fixed meaning because it can be manipulated (Baudrillard, 1970) across contexts. Thus, when it is contextually managed through a concept such as ideology it can be used to discriminate by fixing signs into categories (eg-this list of attributes is good; this list of attributes is bad).

In other words, a system of differences is open to management. Examples of this are evident in the work of Brigham and Corbett (1997), Gains (1999), O'Sullivan et al (2003) and Ducheneaut (2002). Baudrillard's reading of linguistics allows entry into how an organisation can manage differences within semiotic meaning; this is particularly explicit in studies upon e-mail. Even within cyber-space a far less regulated environment, it is easy to see how communities need to be managed through the establishment of a fixed context, an ideology. In an environment devoid of physical cues the system of differences requires a certain degree of fixing.

From Baudrillard's perspective it is difficult to gain more than semiotics itself could provide. As can be gathered from the work of Gains (1999) and Ducheneaut (2002) identity using e-mail can be both a defined and fluid process. This has implications for e-mail respondents as they are confronted with making, or rather reading, a meaning from text. Creating, fixing and manipulating meaning through text whilst separated from visual and auditory cues is the "creation of meaning through the active manipulation of signs" (Baudrillard, 1970), but the theoretical basis offers no more than semiotic investigation. What is required is a more rigorous analysis of actor relationship with text as they attempt the "active manipulation of signs", the fixing of meanings.

Derrida

Derrida's work focuses upon how actors ascertain meaning from text and has dealt specifically with e-mail. Despite the obvious influences, Derrida moves beyond semiotics and contributes much to the understanding of reading text in the form of e-mail and how this is influenced by ideological structures.

Two of the basic principles which underpin his work are the concepts of presence and absence. These concepts are fundamental to the understanding of any text (Derrida, 1994), but have particular relevance to e-mail. As in e-mail, the writing (text) is used to refer to something that is absent (the same principles as the sign and the signified). In order to account for this, Derrida's recent work has addressed the concept of electronic text as a means of socialised writing in an increasingly virtual environment.

It is important to carefully consider Derrida's work within this area due to the author's historical significance in advancing/de-constructing semiotics and linguistics plus the significant relationship of these theories to e-mail communication. All that can actually be observed in e-mail discursive patterns is essentially meaning conveyed through writing (O'Sullivan et al, 2003, Poster 1995, Baron, 2000). Derrida moves beyond Baudrillard in this respect as he assesses the actual creation of meaning through the process of deconstruction. Not only this, but Derrida supplies a series of theoretical concepts (such as absence and presence) that enable the process of creating meaning through writing to be analysed and questioned.

With e-mail, the limits of reader and writer are expanded and so too are Derrida's theories. Meaning is transported through text on an almost daily basis through the proliferation of e-mail (Poster, 1995, Barron, 2000), making the relationship between reader and writer a vastly extended one:

"But the indicative value of e-mail is privileged in my opinion for a more important and obvious reason: because electronic mail today, and even more than the fax, is on the way to transforming the entire public and private space of humanity, and first of all the limit between the private, the secret, and the public or phenomenal" (Derrida, 1995, Archive Fever).

The creation and fixing of meaning through text has become integrated into the public and private sphere (ibid). Within organisations, research has demonstrated e-mail is frequently composed to transmit hierarchical authority and attempt to limit the reader to the ideology of the organisation. What Derrida initially perceived to be the domain of authors extending their various ideologies is now central to the everyday life of actors and organisations.

Within the theoretical development of e-mail some of Derrida's key concepts provide support. Caputo (1997) suggests that a mark (word or sign) must have a repeatable quality. E-mail research into organisations has demonstrated that language falls into context specific codes (see Gains, 1999 for instance). These codes are derived from a hierarchical super structure that appears to shape and sanction their legitimacy.

Organisational e-mails seem to demonstrate the centring effects of Derrida's theory in order to manage the space between presence and absence. It could be argued the contemporary organisational actor is an electronic author and is subject to the concepts of centre, play and absence. The process of fixing meaning in Derrida's earlier work lay in structures outside of texts (*meaning lays outside of the text itself*), into which the reader was integrated. Authorship, through communication technologies, may now reside with the actor who becomes both reader and writer across changing and emerging contexts.

This places the concepts of centre, play and absence in the hands of actors to manage and negotiate. The concepts are broadly explained in the table below:

1-**CONCEPT**	2-**DESCRIPTION**	3-**E-MAIL**
Absence	Within text there is no fixed meaning this is because the subject matter is never actually present	The writer is absent and thus the message is devoid of visible social cues
Play	Words are open to multiple interpretations especially within texts where the subject matter is absent	The context has to be assumed, this will effect the interpretation of words
Centre	The methods used by an author to restrict play within a text and control/limit meaning	Within organisations actors seem to revert to standard rhetorical structures to limit meaning

[Table 5]

The table above refers to the "traditional" application of Derrida's work versus its application to e-mail. Column three represents how the concepts are modified, yet the difference lies in the dissemination of the concepts, with organisational e-mail users now having to adopt strategies to limit meaning as a result of absence and play. Authors such as Ducheneaut (2002), Gains (1999) and Mallon (2000) (see for good examples) seem to suggest centre is achieved by referring to a standard rhetoric that reflects occupational group. Different occupational groups may vary rhetoric depending to whom they are communicating. For example, the formal mode of address between academic and administrative staff versus the informal mode of address between academic and students in Ducheneaut's (2002) study.

However, as in Gains (1999) study, a discernable type of pattern between groups is visible. In other words, rhetorical strategies change depending on respondent position in order to control centre. What appears to be absent in e-mail research is how these rhetorics are created, accepted and adapt when they are challenged by emerging contexts.

The interlocking strand between theorists who offer language based perspective on power and power relations is their application and adaptation of semiotics. Semiotics provides a technical and practical perspective on language and how meanings are created through it.

Semiotics

The key concept that allows a system of signs to operate is difference. Difference is what makes a sign *different* from any other sign. Suassure thus describes language as *a system of differences with no positive terms*; Philips (2000) illustrates this well:

"… if we are asked to accept that differences are what makes signs possible, that the signifiers cat, bat, rat, dog and mouse, have their distinctive qualities owing to their differences, then meaning can come into being for us only in the empty, imperceptible differences between signifiers. It is thus the system of differences that makes possible and to a certain extent governs meaningful experience" (Philips, 2000, p120-1).

Therefore, the system of differences that articulate perception (ie create meaning) have no actual grounding in reality; they are structurally induced systems that enable actors to articulate perception, experience and emotion. None of the aforementioned concepts exist independently of language, they are signifiers imposed on an always invisible signified.

The temporality of meaning that exists in linguistic exchange is highlighted in the advances made to the linguistic system of Suassure by Roman Jackobson. Jackobson (1994) introduces a two axes system that frames the meaning and application of signs across varying contexts. Jackobson refers to the two axes as the paradigmatic axis and the syntagmatic axis.

The syntagmatic axis is the relationship between all elements or signs that are used to construct a sentence. By means of explanation, the syntagmatic qualities of a sentence are the raw articulation of an empirically encountered situation into words; it is a reference to an experience as a whole. However, this sentence only makes sense within the paradigmatic axis. This relates to the choice of words used, providing the system in operation behind the words, thus creating meaning. In a linear definition, the syntagmatic axis moves across a sentence, whilst the paradigmatic moves down and selects from a reservoir of linguistic options. In pure linguistic terms the syntagmatic axis moves *contiguously* and is always present whilst the paradigmatic one is always *absent*: open to interpretation.

Jackobson (1994), whose theories are constructed from the experiences of stroke victims with the linguistic aphasics' disorder, argues that linguistics has recourse to two different types of figurative language: Metaphor and Metonymy:

"According to a range of determining factors, which include history, culture personality and psychology, we each tend to use these aspects of language with more or less emphasis on one or other of the two axis" (if metaphor bears a direct relationship to the paradigmatic axis and metonymy to the syntagmatic) (Philips, 2000, p140).

Discursive recourse to the above concepts seems, according to Jackobson, to sway to one side or the other. Personal perceptions of a situation define whether an actor sways toward the axis of metaphor or metonymy (Jackobson, 1994). If visual and auditory cues are suspended (as in e-mail) then the perceptive interpretation would be harder to control. For example, ideology may be seen as a product of the paradigmatic axis. The work of Gains (1999) and Mallon et al (2002) and O'Sullivan et al (2003) illustrate how organisations provide a paradigmatic axis in which to reference words/signs against. To illustrate, Althusser's knock, creates a discourse whereby an actor is recognised. Jackobson integrates something similar into his system in the form of *rhetoric*:

"What is revealed is that most, if not all, discourses (from the arts to sciences) can be understood in terms of rhetorical tendencies. If that is indeed so then knowledge itself is grounded in rhetoric" (Philips, 2000, p140).

Thus rhetorical structures within organisations may serve to manage the paradigmatic axis. This is not dissimilar to Weber's view of organisations and how actors within them are represented. Occupational identities, according to Weber, give rise to multiple actor representations, allowing actors to form:

"...certain social relationships or carry out forms of social action within the order governing the organisation" (Weber,1978, p217).

Occupational identities give rise to the rhetorical structures that Foucault identifies within disciplines such as medicine and psychology. Each produces a means of communicating and identifying not only with current "members" but also integrating new members by creating a discipline of acknowledged expertise. Jackobson illustrates that for such rhetorical structures to be in place words used must correlate with context, they must refer to some form of legitimate source. Within the work of Gains (1999) and Ducheneaut (2002) hierarchical structures produce occupational identities that produce stable rhetorical structures during their e-mail use. In other words, certain occupational groups seem to write e-mails through rhetorical structure A and communicate with other occupational groups using rhetorical structure B.

Semiotics has a natural link with the subject of e-mail and provides significant, if not in some cases defining, theoretical influence to the work of Althusser, Foucault and Derrida. As a result it is difficult to discuss the subject of meaning behind text without theoretical reference to semiotics; even if this reference is to semiotics as the inspiration behind the broader subject of text and meaning.

Fligstein and Giddens

Fligstein, drawing from Giddens, provides a theoretical account of the relationship between agency and structure. However, due to the diverse and fragmented nature of e-mail literature (Ducheneaut et al, 2002) it is very unclear of how actor agency through e-mail and structure interact; but what **is** clear is that structure and agency do interact on some levels. For example, Ducheneaut et al (2005) are critical of research into e-mail that treats the subject as isolated from the wider socio-technical environment:

"*One simply cannot discount the organisational context in which the technology is used, the history the past interactions built up over time and anticipations of consequences for future interactions*" (Ducheneaut et al, 2005,p33)

Ducheneaut et al (ibid) go on to say that e-mail increases socialisation throughout an organisation and that peripheral workers can gain more information and support (both emotional and professional support) through the medium. In an earlier piece of research by Ducheneaut (2002) the author explored how power relations operated through e-mail in a North American University. The results demonstrated that organisational groups reverted to type in their e-mail correspondence; this meant, for example, that Professors communicated in a specific way with students, with administrators and amongst themselves. These results illustrate a subtle interaction between structure and agency facilitated through e-mail. E-mail creates an opportunity for group cohesion (Kiesler and Sproull, 1992) and new groups to form. Fligstein's (1999) observations on institution building and social skill tie in with this effectively:

"*I pose that the idea that strategic action occurs in fields requires the notion of social skill, defined as the ability of actors to induce cooperation in other actors in order to produce, contest, or reproduce a given set of rules…Skilled social actors interpret the actions of others in the field, and on the basis of the position of their group, use their perception of current opportunities or constraints, to attain cooperation*" (Fligstein, 1999,p11)

E-mail is a potential enabler to the environment described by Fligstein above. However, how the notion of social skill plays out in an organisational environment through e-mail is an under explored and fragmented environment. This is due, in main, to the area of e-mail research only recently having considered the potential variability of its deployment. Previous work on e-mail and power within organisations are written from, or seem to conclude, a structuralist perspective (Ducheneaut, 2002, Brigham and Corbett, 1999); hierarchical power seems to write actor identity. For example, within Brigham and Corbett's (1999) investigation, resistance to formal through e-mail is acknowledged but not on the level of discreet strategies and "social skill". The tendency in the e-mail/power research is to write the actions off as by-products of the organisational structure; there remains an impression that varied deployment in "resisting" Formal power is fairly isolated with its tactics and causes lacking specific examination.

However, the implication, developed from the wider e-mail literature seems to suggest that creative actor agency could and/or does exist but the relationship between the two remains unexplored. In the earlier chapters of this investigation the role of an over-arching governing structure in the form of ideology was identified as shaping actor discursive patterns. It was also argued in the earlier chapters that the visibility of these patterns enabled actors the choice, within boundaries, of which discursive pattern to use. The duality of structure offered by Giddens and the notion of fields and social skills offered by Fligstein share many strands with this perspective. E-mail users interact with structures in order to arrive at acceptable and negotiable communication norms. Agre (1998) acknowledges something similar when he observes that e-mail discursive patterns become a combination of latent potentials in the existing social system and the actors own understanding of situations. E-mail, in a similar way to dualism, represents an interaction between structural influences and actor choices; exploring the explanatory power of this perspective against the potentially more structuralist perspectives that have been previously discussed represents an interesting counter point.

However, the focus of applying key theories from Giddens and Fligstein to inform the work of e-mail authors would need to be specific, and the danger is that the theories may be to general. Wellman et al (1999) warn of placing too much emphasis on organisational/actor interaction. This warning is concerned with overly linking material relations with e-mail relations; the two are not necessarily of an irreducible nature. Heeding Wellman et al (1999), when examining e-mail from a dualist perspective, there could be a danger that results could lapse into an overly generalist nature. For example, in Ducheneaut's (2003) study the author used a single respondent (a Professor) and discovered distinct e-mail communication patterns in how the respondent communicated with other professional groups and how the other professional groups communicated back to the respondent. Ducheneaut's (ibid) investigation then attempted to link the distinct e-mail communication patterns back to structural irreducibility, ie e-mail pattern A exists because the organisation is structured like X. This link was made without any triangulation or cross referencing of any other respondents and therefore provided a dualistic but highly general view of how and why e-mail patterns took such forms in his investigation. In addition, this approach compromises its data by failing to focus on which patterns succeed, fail, change, endure and so on but instead produces general observations set off against structure.

To overcome this potential danger, an approach that focuses upon the e-mail text and the various responses it elicits is suggested. The subject of organisational e-mail research has moved from a stance where it was viewed as a predictable, to a stance where it is unpredictable (Orlikowski and Yates, 1994, Yates, Orlikowski and Okamura, 1999) and as such, e-mail itself should be the primary focus. The implications of this mean a rejection of dualistic perspective and a focus on perspectives that focus on the structure and flow of text. This is not to suggest that structure plays no role in shaping e-mail communication patterns, it is in fact fundamental. What this argument does aim to suggest is the focus should remain on the structuring influences of language as oppose to attempting to constantly link and explain e-mail patterns through organisational structure. This is an investigation of how e-mail patterns perform in a structure and not why they perform due to a structure.

Actor Network Theory (ANT)

Actor Network Theory (ANT) has been applied by Brigham et al (1997) to both the study of organisational e-mail and the subject of power. Using ANT, this study examined the effect of a new e-mail system on an existing organisation's power relationships:

"Actor-network theory insists that social agents are not located in bodies and bodies alone. Rather an actor is a patterned network of heterogeneous relations, or an effect produced by such networks: actors are both sets of relations and nodes in sets of relations" (Brigham et al, 1997,p26).

Brigham and Corbett's (1997) investigation, instead of focusing upon power relationships through e-mail, focuses upon the effect of e-mail upon material relationships within the organisation:

"It explores the role and distinctive character of advanced communication technologies and the ways in which they constitute, mediate and reinforce social reality in an organisational reality" (ibid,p25).

The investigation of Brigham et al (ibid) is based around an organisational re-structure that has resulted in greater employee dependence on the e-mail system in order to achieve routine tasks. From the ANT perspective the e-mail system creates greater routine in the work of employees; demonstrating the actor technology relationship as an integrated network:

"Fidelity of employees to the e-mail system is gained through the reassemble of their actions into a prescribed, regular and observable order. This helps the creation of what Foucault termed "drilled bodies"- passive agents who have been drilled to reliably carry out their assigned tasks" (ibid,p31).

This integrated network, as argued by Brigham et al, became a demonstration of organisational power with employees being "controlled" through the new technology:

"From the perspective of actor-network theory, the e-mail network can be conceptualised as an agent of organisational power in the sense that it mediates and constitutes employee relationship and behaviour. The durability of this network of actors stems from its ability to constitute an ordering strategy embodying a set of relations between technical inscription devices, physical structures and drilled bodies" (ibid,p32)

ANT, in the above investigation, has accounted for the integration of actors into a cycle of repeatable and observer-able tasks. The ANT perspective paints a picture of actor-material relationships, how each of them combines and develops into a routine; running against this structuralist perspective is the presence of counter strategies to the e-mail system within the organisation:

"Yet as Giddens observes, all strategies for control call forth counter strategies on the part of subordinates. There must be, In Foucault's words, "a distant roar of battle...the e-mail network configures a range of power relationships, but actors do not always perform their prescribed roles accurately or reliably" (ibid,p32).

The tension and flows of power and resistance within Brigham and Corbett's investigation produce a new field where the organisations legitimacy is synthesised with the employee's creative agency and resistance to the new technology:

"...the visibility and formalisation enabled by e-mail constituted new terrain for inter-group conflict. In this way, visibilities mobilised by e-mail open up a window on organisational practices, which may lead to other, often unanticipated changes. At the same time, however, e-mail itself (and the formalisation and rationality it shapes and reinforces) is rendered less visible and contestable" (ibid).

Brigham et al's investigation is illustrative of what can be achieved using ANT. It also illustrates that the ANT methodology may not be appropriate for the purposes of this investigation. ANT accounts for how actors and material interacts, telling a story of how this interaction creates sustainable norms, how these norms become unstable and new norms form. The purposes of this investigation are indeed about norms, structures and how these may fall apart and reform; however, the focus of this investigation is placed upon how language is structured electronically to achieve actor aims and objectives. The investigation does not seek to link explicitly actor with the wider organisation; attempts to do this have met with criticism. Ducheneaut et al (2005) argue that attempting to link e-mail activity to material conditions has produced questionable assumptions about the reach of social relations. This is supported by Garton et al, (1995) who observe that e-mail research that has attempted to link actor and material relations has failed to demonstrate effectively how e-mail functions effectively or non-effectively within organisations. Applying ANT could possibly lead to the replication of these weaknesses in theoretical design. Isolating e-mail communication patterns, making them the sole focus of investigation, could produce a stronger account of how objectives get achieved (or not) via e-mail. As such, theories with a stronger semiotic base may prove more relevant.

Theoretical Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explore theories of power that could be used to develop the following points:

1. Communication patterns are ideologically constructed; they need to relate to actor and respondent perceptions of context and are bound by rules
2. Communication patterns are highly visible thereby offering linguistic choice
3. Communication patterns need to be managed and can be manipulated as the contents of an e-mail must meet the expectation of the receiver
4. The natural distance between respondents using e-mail technology is emotionally charged and represents a social space

To develop the above four points, three authors emerged as having the theoretical significance to develop these points Foucault, Althusser and Derrida. However, for the reasons raised and introduced at the end of chapter 3 Foucault's methodology provides the guiding theoretical perspective in this investigation, along with using Foucault's investigative principles (also discussed in chapter 3) to focus on the role of context. To summarise context again, for the purposes of this investigation context is taken to mean the socially constructed dynamic between two or more communicating actors and the affect this has on discursive patterns. Althusser's and Derrida's theoretical frameworks are essentially incompatible with those of Foucault (as explained earlier in this Chapter) nevertheless they do share a certain similarity on a methodological point, all three authors applied structural linguistics to illustrate their theories.

Foucault's application of structural linguistics was used to discover the limits, conditions and circumstances that produced, maintained and opposed discursive practices. Both Althusser and Derrida applied structural linguistics in differing ways, Althusser to illustrate the process of ideological interpellation and Derrida to illustrate the concepts of centre and play. Although these perspectives cannot find congruity with Foucault they nevertheless could provide a means to explore the notion of context. As explained within chapter 3, context, as a concept within this investigation, is focused upon how actors interpret text. Both Derrida and Althusser have also theoretically explored how actors interpret text and done this through the application of structural linguistics; Derrida has examined this in relation to e-mail. Although in respect to this investigation, Althusser's structuralism and Derrida's lack of focus on structures make them unsuitable as a means of exploring the micro dynamics of relational power, they can provide theoretical insight into the role of context. For this reason, the notion of context, post results, will be contrasted to the theoretical concepts of Derrida and Althusser.

Summary

Foucault's analysis of power could provide greater theoretical leverage on the questions that this thesis sets out to answer. His (Foucault's) notion of power and discourse provides a means of examining how discursive patterns occur within e-mail, what conditions produce them, how they are maintained and what conditions cause certain patterns to fail; this has been supported through the introduction of context. Context is a placing of emphasis on psychologically created context in the role of producing discursive strategies between actors. The following chapter aims to integrate the theoretical points made in this chapter with methodological points to produce methods for investigation.

The following chapter lays out the methods for empirical investigation and the case for why these methods have been chosen. At the end of the last chapter the theoretical notion of context was highlighted as being able to assist theoretical development move forward across four key points drawn out of e-mail and virtual communication literature:

1. Communication patterns are ideologically constructed; they need to relate to actor and respondent perceptions of context and are bound by rules,

2. Communication patterns are highly visible thereby offering linguistic choice,

3. Communication patterns need to be managed and can be manipulated as the contents of an e-mail must meet the expectation of the receiver,

4. The natural distance between respondents using e-mail technology is emotionally charged and represents a social space.

To begin the design of methods, the points raised above need to be turned into coherent aims and objectives for investigation. These appear below:

Aims and Objectives

- To identify and critically analyse the strategies of e-mail deployment generated and used by actors

- To develop types of strategy for the investigation of organisational e-mail

- To develop empirically and theoretically the notion of managing space in e-mail exchanges

- To empirically develop and critically analyse the role of relational power in e-mail exchanges

- To investigate and analyse the relationship between hierarchical position and e-mail discursive patterns

- To investigate, develop and critically analyse the theoretical linkages between the notion of context and the research findings of this investigation

Opening Points

The initial scope of the project was to locate and critically analyse the discursive patterns through which power was communicated in organisational e-mails. Current e-mail research has extended beyond the technical aspects of communication to the social (Romm, 1999). The social aspects in question have tended to concentrate upon how e-mail has redistributed power (Brigham and Corbett, 1997), resistance to technology and adoption (Markus, 1994), its effectiveness as a "weapon" of change (Pliskin et al, 1997), the structural style (stylistic register) dependent upon purpose and respondent (Mallon et al, 2002; Gaines 1999,) and the discursive codes of online communities (Paccagnella, 1997; Sharf, 1999). Examining power, e-mail and discursive patterns is not in itself original, but the examination of discursive patterns arising from relational power communicated through e-mail is. Previous studies of power relating to e-mail have tended to concentrate on the political aspects of its implementation (Brigham et al, 1997; Markus, 1994; Romm, 1999) and not upon the discursive codes it produces. Ducheneaut (2002) has examined power through discursive games, illustrating how a positional relationship can impact upon discursive patterns, however, how these power games, or rather the space that is bridged by power is managed, remains un-explored.

Studies that have focused upon discursive patterns have either concentrated on generic patterns in organisational e-mail communication, its stylistic register (whether e-mail is a text or a conversation) (Mallon et al, 2002; Gains, 1999), concentrated on large cyberspace communities with emphasis on real and concrete identities (Sharf, 1999; Hakken, 1999; Lee, 1994) or discursive patterns from an intrinsic case study (Pliskin et al, 1997). This thesis attempts to build upon work completed in organisational e-mail discursive patterns with focus not only upon relational power, but also how it is resisted, controlled and re-ordered within a historical context.

In order for communities of discourse (whether within organisations or cyber-space) to form effectively, structured discursive patterns emerge based on positional relationships. Actors can, theoretically, manipulate space in a manner not possible before due to e-mail technology. The result is a possible addition to the theory of relational power, which is of particular interest to the study of organisations (Markus, 1994, Brigham and Corbett, 1997, Ducheneaut, 2002, Romm, 1999).

Methods used in the investigation of e-mail have focused upon face-to-face interviews (Brigham et al, 1997), "lurking" (observing) chat room conversations (Hakken, 1999), e-mail analysis supplied by multiple sources (Mallon et al, 2000; Gaines, 1998) triangulation of text analysis and interviews (Romm et al, 1999) and ethnography (participating in chat rooms or forums) (Hakken, 1999; Schwandt, 1997). The use of personnel sent mailboxes (over extended periods of time) have been used by Ducheneaut (2002) and applied to the study of power, but not in a depth that explores changes in discursive patterns across various contexts. An examination of the literature reveals that the missing link in methods seems to be a mechanism that plugged into the everyday experience of using e-mail within an organisational setting (as oppose to cyberspace). Ducheneaut's (2002) study achieved this to a degree, but his use of a statistically produced content analysis (and very small sample) does not provide an account of how e-mail relationships are managed in detail.

Pragmatic Issues

In designing methods an approach needs to be developed that remains faithful to more ethnographic perspectives on power whilst being able to control and analyse relatively large amounts of data. Two factors have bearing - 1) time, 2) access. In order to benefit from a longitudinal study (how codes behave over time) it would be necessary to gain access to years of e-mail data. From an ethnographic perspective viewing organisational e-mails as they arrive and are replied to from various respondents was neither practically possible from either the time or access perspective. An alternative was actually an even more Foucauldian approach, the close scrutiny of historical data. In the same manner as Ducheneaut (2002) had analysed a sent mail box in order to gain an historic perspective, it was proposed to do the same but over a larger sample.

Sent mailboxes act as diaries of discourse, without making the demands of the respondent where they are often asked to act as "co-researchers" (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). It also allows for a triangulated methodology, where data can be cross-checked with the respondent in order to ensure reliability in analysis. Kendall points to the advantages this method offers in relation to e-mail examination:

"*The ability to access off-line environments provides useful information between online and off-line interaction, but such access may not always be feasible*" (Kendall, 1999, p71).

Even before a sample size was decided it was apparent that examining every respondent's e-mails (within the sent mailboxes) would produce an over whelming amount of data. Therefore, not only a method of control was necessary, but a valid and reliable mode of analysis that consistently defined the emerging concepts. This presented the challenge of designing a mapping system across the respondent sample.

The potential problem with a mapping strategy was the issue of reducing data into categories. This possibility was in opposition to Foucauldian notions of analysis. However, throughout this thesis it has been attempted to demonstrate that a structural element to e-mail exchanges is absolutely essential to the development of understanding virtual communication. Althusser provides some clarity. If e-mail is viewed as a linguistic structure (S) then it may be filled with any form of linguistic code (s), these codes will ultimately obey the principles of semiotics (the presence of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axis). Therefore, any form of historic analysis can capture a code within a structure. When Foucault identifies and accounts for psychiatry for instance, he is doing a similar thing. Foucault highlights that the parameters of psychiatry are built upon a paradigm, an episteme. This episteme generates a discursive practice, words, phrases and models, in other words, the paradigm's syntagmatic representation. Within this investigation, an attempt is being made to capture the various paradigms that actors use in order to reflect their e-mails against and the syntagmatic strategies they generate. The ethos has distinct similarities with Foucault, but the scale of application in this investigation is far narrower. Mapping the data would only serve as a marking process during the accounting of relational power rather than statistically record instances of a category appearing.

Content analysis has been defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952; GAO, 1996; Krippendorff, 1995; and Weber, 1985). Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as, "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p14). Under Holsti's definition, the technique of content analysis is not restricted to the domain of textual analysis, but may be applied to other areas such as coding student drawings (Wheelock, Haney, & Bebell, 2000), or coding of actions observed in videotaped studies (Stigler, Gonzales, Kawanaka, Knoll, & Serrano, 1999). In order to allow for replication, however, the technique can only be applied to data that are durable in nature, and thus content analysis provides an efficient method for e-mail research.

According to Krippendorff (1995) there are six questions that need to be addressed when designing a content analysis:

1. Which data are analysed?
2. How are they defined?
3. What is the population from which they are drawn?
4. What is the context relative to which the data are analysed?
5. What are the boundaries of the analysis?
6. What is the target of the inferences?

Each question will be answered in turn to provide a structure for analysis.

1. E-mails from the sent mail boxes of eight respondents provide the data for analysis,
2. The data is defined as e-mails, both received and sent by the respondent, stretching back for a period of two years. Two years of data is essential for two reasons. It is the maximum length the e-mail technology archives sent e-mails and it ensures that actors have been making minimum deletions. Any respondent who cannot supply the two years of data is considered unqualified for the investigation.

3. All respondents will be drawn from the same department within the same organisation. E-mail analysis will examine all respondent communications, whether they be inter departmental/inter organisational or not.

4. The context of the investigation is to examine how all respondents, and the actors they communicate with, use power, influence, persuasion and friendship in their e-mail requests, enquiries and responses.

5. Boundaries for analysis are determined by the content of e-mails. No e-mail relating to specific personal matters (discussion of poor health, money, relationships) will be included within the investigation. All e-mails must involve either organisational matters or of general social matters. In the case of general social matters, both the respondent and fellow interlocutors must be organisational members. Social topics discussed between respondents and outside actors, no matter how general the topic, shall not be included.

6. Target of inferences is as yet undetermined. The research strategy is to explore how issues of power, influence, persuasion, friendship etc are articulated through e-mail, and the role that they play in negotiating organisational life. However, an emphasis is placed upon the nature and articulation of formal and informal power within e-mail communication.

To communicate the six questions into a structured research strategy, a discussion of key content analysis methodologies follows.

Content Analysis Strategies

Having identified the general themes of research, power, influence, persuasion, friendship etc, it is necessary to examine how these themes are linked together in a theoretical model (Miles et al, 1996), this is composed of abstract constructs and the relationships that exist between them (Bulmer, 1979). A means of abstracting theoretical constructs and establishing both implicit and explicit relationships between them is through grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Strauss et al, 1990). This method is adopted by researchers who wish to understand respondent experience in as detailed and phenomenological manner as possible.

This objective is achieved by collecting facsimile accounts of interviews and reading through the text in intricate detail. Sandelowski (1995) observes that this stage of the process takes the form of proof-reading material and underlining key phrases on the basis they that they seem to suggest *something*. This process is often referred to as open coding as the researcher begins to develop themes by gathering like examples from the text (see Agar, 1996, Lofland and Lofland, 1995, Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Categorisation of these examples is achieved by using the words and phrases that respondents themselves use and these are then used to collect and frame additional respondent data.

Additional data collection using the "self generated" frameworks enables the researcher to compare and contrast under what conditions the frameworks re-appear. This enables the contextual limits of frameworks to be tested across differing respondents and circumstances. Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to this approach as cross comparison, and functions, argues Spradley (1979) the same as the contrast questions researchers ask respondents.

Developing these methods practically requires the application of what Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to as memo-ing. They (ibid) identify three types of memo that can be applied to theory development: code notes, theory notes, and operational notes. Code notes refer to and define the concepts that are being discovered "the discovery of grounded theory" (ibid). Theory notes are concerned with the researcher's theories upon what is actually occurring within the text, whilst operational notes refer to practical matters.

As with most forms of content analysis, as the theoretical model develops, negative cases are used to identify issues with classifications and necessary revisions. These are used to present the theory, along with its contextual limitations. Results are generally demonstrated through examples of text to illustrate the corresponding theory, or as conceptual maps (Strauss, 1992, Miles, 1979) of the key categories and the relationships between them.

Methodologically related to grounded theory is schema analysis (Denzin et al, 2000). Schema analysis aims to develop the theory that actors use cognitive systems that aim to simplify complex data (Casson, 1983). The exposure (of actors) to daily complexity enables gaps within stories to be filled by individually and culturally produced subjectivity. Schema analysis, in this respect, shares many similarities with the Sapir Whorf hypothesis. The Sapir Whorf hypothesis argues that perception is governed by available linguistic frameworks. A popular illustration is the Eskimo vocabulary containing sixteen words for snow; in contrast English speaking westerners have only one. The hypothesis suggests that this disparity occurs due to a difference in the *perceiving* of snow. Therefore, the words that respondents use provide a picture of how they perceive reality and the culture in which they interact. This is achieved in a very similar way to grounded theory.

Schema analysis begins with the close reading of verbatim texts and transcripts. Quinn (1997) for instance begins her content analysis with the examination of texts in order to establish patterns in respondent's speech. Particular attention is paid to the repetition of words and key phrases and how metaphors are used to express respondent feelings. D'Andrade (1991) takes a more pragmatic approach as he argues that schematic organisation is established through the repetition of "associative linkages". These arguments are based on the observations that ordinary discourse is marked by the number of instances actors "circle through the same network of ideas". In continuing similarity to the Sapir Whorf hypothesis, schema analysis, seeks to establish a theory of reality and perception through the use, style and repetition of language.

The demonstration of data in schema analysis follows grounded theory in the use of quotes to illustrate theoretical development. Denzin et al (2000) observe that quotes, when allied with emergent themes, allow the reader to understand theories that may have taken the researcher's years to uncover. The author highlights the work of Ryan (1999) as an example of how themes allied to direct quotes demonstrate schema analysis. Ryan (ibid) used typical quotes and applied multiple coders to identify themes within them.

The author argued that the use of multiple coders within a text indicated central tendency, and correspondingly, the fewer coders present within a quote, the further it deviated from central tendency. Schema analysis seems to sophisticate Sapir Whorf. This sophistication is in the sense that schema analysis seeks out and records a standard of perception through language, whilst acknowledging possible deviations from that standard. As Price (1997) observes, within content analysis, it is often the anomalies and what is not said that are indicative of culture.

The approach of verbatim quotes, codes and themes to illustrate theory is often supported by models that display themes; between the models are often arrows that indicate relationships between these themes. Denzin et al (2000) observe that arrows between themes are displayed unilaterally or bilaterally and are designed to mark out both implicit and explicit relationships.

Differing from both grounded theory and schema analysis approaches is classical content analysis. Whereas the previous two approaches are inductive, classical content analysis seeks to reduce text to quantitative data through the prior formulation of hypothesis. The theoretical basis lies in the assumption that themes and codes are already present and described.

This is operationalised by the researcher choosing a corpus of text and dividing them into units for each of the prescribed themes. Denzin et al (2000) observe that this approach a visit by variable matrix that can analyse using a variety of statistical techniques (p785). Classical content analysis is noted for its quite rigorous reliability and validity checks in ascertaining the quality of results. These checks are often achieved through the use of multiple coders (ibid). Coders are asked to examine the same sets of texts with the same coders in order to test the degree of agreement over categorisation. To further increase the reliability, the possibility of coders agreeing categorisation based on chance is calculated, drawn from number of coders being used and the precision of each code. For example, if an ordinal form of measurement is applied (low, medium and high) then the possibility of chance agreement is substantially increased. Cohen's (1968) Kappa test is often used to calculate these possibilities when dealing with codes and coders.

The Kappa test is a mechanism whereby if Kappa is zero agreement (between coders) then agreement on the code is distinctly possible by chance. When Kappa is negative this infers that agreement has occurred outside of chance and the likelihood of genuine congruence is high. However, despite these stringencies, agreement over a standard of inter-coder agreement has not been achieved universally, with many researchers offering differing calculations (see for instance Krippendorff, 1980, and Fliess, 1971).

Classical content analysis has proved highly productive in generating theoretical developments in areas such as anthropology. The statistical measures are used to test cross cultural analysis and the influences of statistically inferred theory are clear in the work of structural anthropologist Levi Strauss (1968). Levi Strauss (ibid) was able to conduct a structural analysis of the Oedipus myth by reducing the key themes within the story to statistics.

This allowed the author to create a formula, Fx (a): Fy (b) – Fx (b): Fa-I (y), that represents a "universal truth" about the role of myth in society. More recent examples of this tradition can be found in the work of Ember and Ember (1992) and White (1995).

Selecting a Content Analysis Strategy

Authors who have examined the subject of e-mail within organisations can be split into two broad categories: Studies that have focused upon patterns in organisational e-mail communication (for instance Mallon, 2002; Baron, 1999, 1998; Gaines, 1998, Ducheneaut, 2002), and studies that have focused upon the effects of e-mail upon organisational structures and actors/actor communication (for instance Pliskin et al, 1997, Brigham and Corbett, 1997). Within the second group of studies little or no emphasis has been placed upon e-mail content analysis. By contrast, the second group focus entirely on the content of e-mails.

Classic content analysis has proved the most popular methodology amongst researchers of organisational e-mail. Mallon (2002) for instance sampled a total of 300 of e-mails from a wide range of donors. Features such as emoticons, acronyms and creative spelling were counted along with length of texts and of sentences. The data was grouped according to purpose: social, business personal and business impersonal. Mallon concluded that users of e-mail appear to be generally unconcerned with formalities. Although the sample of e-mail texts was lucid, writers often dispense with traditions when opening their e-mail, and their closings are informal. These results were obtained using a form of classic content analysis, statistically measuring frequency of predefined hypothesis. The multiple locations and temporality of respondents within Mallon's study however, makes establishing any form of semantic schema impossible.

Ducheneaut (2002) applies classical content analysis to his investigation of power within a North American University. The author outlines several predetermined hypothesis he wishes to test using codes, taking the theoretical base that descriptions already exist a priori. Actual analysis is achieved through IT based statistical scrutiny and is used to confirm or modify the hypothesis. The interesting part of Ducheneaut's study is that the author, post data, begins to make linkages between actor schema and results. Without some form of embedded actor integration in the methodology these conclusions are hard to draw above anything other than superstition.

Gains' (1999) investigation of one public sector organisation and one private sector is very illustrative of what can be achieved through content analysis. Gains' investigation into a corpus of 116 email messages collected in the UK supported the view that the standards of English (formality etc) vary in different situations, and show differences in format, style, grammar, and vocabulary accordingly. He collected 62 samples from CIST, a closed system in a large insurance company, and the rest from individuals working in Leeds University. The question Gains posed is whether the data source contains recognizably new genres of written communication.

Gains' work placed its focus upon exploring styles of written English, again using a classic content analysis approach. However, by locating his investigation in two differing contexts, the author was able to capture two distinctly differing styles of communication. This approach suggests the value of exploring differing contexts as in this instance; they seem to have dictated content. The use of a schema based approach (although not relevant to the work of Gains), where specific respondents played a larger role in data collection, may have been able to capture the *why* behind the content disparity.

In selecting a method of content analysis the majority of e-mail investigations point to the classical approach. However, the aims of this investigation lend themselves toward more grounded and schema based approaches. The reasons for this are located in the need to explore how actors interact with e-mail in order to exert and negotiate power, influence, persuasion, friendship etc. This does not assume that these elements are described a priori; in fact, it is possible they may not exist at all.

Therefore, generating the necessary hypothesis, similar to Ducheneaut (2002), would not be possible as this investigation wishes to explore if and how these factors exist. It also wishes to explore actors own interpretations and experiences with e-mail, investigating what their concrete relationship with the data is *like* in regard to schema.

Selecting grounded theory is also not entirely appropriate. The reason for this is that the investigation does have some broadly defined parameters it wishes to focus on. Due to a concentration on issues surrounding influence, the study, to a degree, is contaminated. Conclusions, despite aversions to the classical approach are still based on the vague deductive notion of a hypothesis. Therefore, some form of hypothesis refutation or confirmation may take place if findings suggest that no form of influence takes place within the data or in the experiences of respondents.

With these arguments in mind, the most appropriate mechanism seems to be schema analysis. Schema analysis operates on the basis that the semantic features of respondents are based on simplifications in order to negotiate everyday complexity (Casson, 1983).

How this translates into e-mail, how individual actors negotiate complexity through text, is a point of key interest to this investigation. The method of examining texts to uncover patterns, associative linkages to establish personal semantic networks and coping strategies (D'Andrade, 1991, Strauss et al, 1992) seems the appropriate mechanism to establish a perspective on influence, power, friendship etc. However, it also necessary to establish some form of external validity and triangulate the methodology.

Within schema analysis there is a precedent for using the respondents themselves as extrinsic coders (Denzin et al, 2000). This entails gathering the respondents' views on data analysis, but it would also be a potentially productive opportunity to examine to what degree (or varying degrees) respondents are aware of the e-mail patterns that they use. To achieve this, a secondary strategy is required. The purpose of the secondary strategy is to try and establish to what degree are e-mail patterns the result of reflection. For instance, do actors not only seem to use personal influence in their e-mails but are also aware of it?

The secondary strategy, will seek to explore these issues as it may help to determine the tacit assumptions respondents hold regarding organisational life. This element of e-mail communication is yet to be explored within organisations.

Designing Concepts: Designing Methods and Analysis for a Pilot Study

To refine the applicability of schema analysis to the study of e-mail it first requires testing in the form of a pilot study. Conducting a content analysis of the respondent e-mails, it will be necessary to categorise what strategies and forms of power are being used to make and respond to requests. A means of doing this for the pilot study is through the use of ideal types. Ideal types are a Weberian form of analysis designed to measure the deviance of a concept from a predefined concept or ideal type. An example used in Weber's analysis is capitalism. Weber defined what ideal capitalism was then compared current economic systems to it. This allowed him to assess the degree and to what form capitalism was operating within specific countries.

In the area of power Foucault identifies two "types" of power that could possibly serve as ideal types for the pilot study. The two types of power would operate in much the same way as Weber used ideal types; starting points from which to develop more subtle forms of categorisation through empirical analysis.

Theoretical Justification

Foucault presents in his historical analysis of power alternative conceptions. Clegg (1998) observes that whilst the trajectory of power from Hobbes to Locke and to Dahl had a firm focus upon mechanics of domination and order, Foucault identified a strategic agency of power identified vividly by Machiavelli. The focus upon sovereign authority and visible, demarcated Formal power was joined by its intertwining relative that worked beneath and through formal structures with stealth. For Foucault this was representative of two traditions in the study and application of power: Hobbes and Machiavelli.

Hobbes provides the archetypical view of power as a legislative system that is designed to deliver benefits to society. This perspective moulds power into the very modernistic view of being a convenient, hierarchical and functional resource. Examining any form of organisation is structured upon the legislative lines outlined by Hobbes, with a leader disseminating rules and regulations down and through a widening pyramid of organisational actors. Marx drew upon this theory of power in his structural analysis of bourgeois ideological dominance over working classes. Within the Marxist system actors occupying positions within the lower half of the pyramid are held in subordinate positions through false consciousness. This could be viewed as an exterior perspective on power as it fails to take into account local relations within organisations. Weber, by contrast, took account of this gap in the Marxian analysis through localised studies of power within organisations:

*"Weber acknowledged that power was derived from owning and controlling the means of production, but he argued that it was not reducible exclusively to the dichotomous categories of ownership and non-ownership of the means of production, as proposed by Marx" (*Hardy et al, 1998, p369)

Weber stated that organisational bureaucracy is an attempt at an antidote to localised power. Power derives from knowledge of organisational operations and as such becomes imbedded in occupational identities. From this perspective, Weber argued, organisational actors were in possession of power and discretion in how to apply it. Thus the organisational hierarchy becomes an attempt by organisations to close the discrepancy gap:

"...such rule systems seek to regulate meaning to control relations in organisations through the structure of formal organisational design" (ibid, p370).

Foucault, though his analysis of historical power, concluded that Weber and Marx had approached power through two compatible but different approaches. Marx had focused upon the downward cascade of power washing over workers within organisations whilst Weber had given power a strategic capacity. Marx offered a Hobbsian analysis, focusing upon the consequences of structure. Weber offered a more strategic perspective, providing an analysis of what occurs within the formal structures of organisation. The table below illustrates the key features of both approaches:

Hobbes	Machiavelli
Emphasis on causality	Emphasis on "strategy"
Science and the Monarch each Constituted as authoritative origins of action as it should be	Pragmatic advice and ethnographic orientation towards forms of action actually encountered
Adoption of the role of "legislator"	Adoption of the role of the "interpreter"
Emphasis on mechanistic metaphors	Emphasis on military metaphors
Emphasis on a source of prime motion behind action	Emphasis on the contingent nature of action
Problematic of legitimacy lending the account of power an implicitly "moral" stance, with a stress on the legitimate identification (in terms of science) of the means of power as well as a concern for good order in the ends that power serves	Problematic of strategy lending the account of power an implicitly "amoral" stance, with a stress on the efficiency of means rather than the goodness of ends
The use of the myth of political community	The use of myths in political organisation

Machiavelli and Hobbes' metaphors for modernity, Clegg, 1998, p34 [Table 6]

Foucault developed the Weber/Machiavellian perspective to produce the notion of micro-strategies of power. Micro-strategies are not ordinarily perceived of as power, rather they are ways in which individuals and organisations become socially formed and normalised through routine. This produces a non-episodic theory of power that allows almost any organisational actor to be in the possession of some degree of power at some point. This may simply equate to a personal friendship with a senior member of staff or increased temporary influence after a job well done, but power becomes a contextually changing and non-fixed variable under Foucault's analysis.

Two general types of power emerge from the above discussion, power based on formality, and power based on an actor's ability to lever their contextual conditions. These two types of power themselves are reflected within organisational analysis, demonstrable as the tensions between formal and informal manifestations of power (Hardy and Clegg, 1999, Clegg, 1998). Based around these arguments two concepts of power can be adapted for investigative purposes, formal and personal.

These two concepts may represent a broad brush approach to analysis; however, they also examine the tensions and pragmatic strategies that contribute to organisational life. For instance, organisational actors are faced with decision making every day, how to facilitate these decisions requires some degree of reflective thought. The path of decision making will involve varying degrees of complexity and possibly engage other actors. How to negotiate this complexity is in the hands of actors, but some form of strategy is necessary and this is based upon an actor's perception of the situation. The situation may require a formal approach to facilitate ease of decision or require the levering of a personal relationship. Either way, actors are required to draw upon some form of power to negotiate organisational life.

Hardy et al (1998) observe that attempts to categorise all forms of power across all contexts is an impossible task. Foucault's work on micro-strategies informs this observation, the author's perspective on powers ability to constantly change course and strategy make over categorisation an unreliable process. Alternatively it is possible to examine how actors articulate the tensions between formal and informal structures through an examination of the two broad themes that run through power literature (Clegg, 1998).

A similar approach can be adopted using the Hobbs and Machiavellian forms of power. Through translating the two concepts of power into useable definitions, formal and personal, it is possible to measure e-mails in regard to what degree they compare to the pre-defined concepts.

To progress, it is necessary to develop ideal types of formal and Personal power; this is achieved in the table below. The definitions represent elements that contribute to the presence of either formal or strategic power:

Formal	Personal
Use of rules and regulations	Use of personal relationships
Use of affiliation to senior members of staff (including CC-ing)	Use of social language
Use of position	Offering to trade information/services
Use of formal, distant language	

If any of the above are present within an e-mail then it can be coded as demonstrating elements of a particular ideal type.

Two forms of power for use in the pilot study have been identified, formal and personal. This is the process of an actor choosing to apply a strategy based on their perception of a situation and context and articulating through an e-mail. Once this e-mail has reached another actor its effectiveness is determined by that actor agreeing with the sender's perception of situation and context.

Introducing Identification

In chapters 3 and 4 the role of context in exploring actor dynamics was raised. Context, it was argued, provides a means to focus on actor interpretation of e-mail that may exist and influence discursive patterns in addition to the presence of power .In order to develop this, placed at the centre of context is identification. The concept of identification is borrowed and developed from the work of Althusser and is best explained through direct reference to his work (Althusser, 1974).

Althusser provides a framework for the relationship between the types of power used and respondent identification. Coding e-mails into the ideal types produces discursive structures for analysis: one discursive structure is formal; the other discursive structure is personal. Drawing from Althusser's work discursive structures act as statements to which other actors can respond. In order for power to be operational other actors must identify with the discursive structure. This may entail identification with another actor's formal position and their legitimate right to make a specific request or a worthwhile trade of information. If the receiving actor fails to identify, then power fails and the sender encounters resistance.

Althusser devised a series of theoretical tools by which the meaning of text could be analysed. This is achieved through the acts of "hailing" or "interpellation". These are acts of attracting attention through a discursive structure (hailing), forcing the individuals to generate meaning (interpretation) and making them participate in the practice, in this instance identifying with another actors use of power. If the actor participates in the practice then interpellation has taken place.

This both names and positions a subject, for example, a subject of the family. It is also referred to as "spontaneous identification" (Donald and Hall, 1986). In other words, a subject may identify with their place within a particular discourse and recognise the sorts of characteristics which that discourse involves. Identification is an ideal type that can be drawn from Althusser; a respondent either identifies with the e-mail and the perceptions it embodies, or they do not; that is the context which is created.

Within this study identification helps in understanding the context between actors in its simplest terms. Context is concerned whether actors perceptually align through identification and the arising consequences for their discursive patterns.

The ideal types that have been drawn out for the pilot study are Formal, Personnel and Identification; for the purposes of brevity the ideal types will now be referred to as FPI. Now that FPI has been introduced they need to be operationalised for use in the pilot study.

Using Formal, Personnel and Identification (FPI)

The principles of FPI need to operationalise into a practical content analysis. This will serve the purpose of producing from e-mail, themes, codebook construction, and model construction. A brief re-cap of content analysis precedes the FPI methods being presented as a technical and theoretical tool.

Content analysis has been defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1995; and Weber, 1985). Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as, "*any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages*" (p 14). Under Holsti's definition, the technique of content analysis is not restricted to the domain of textual analysis, but may be applied to other areas such as coding student drawings (Wheelock, Haney, & Bebell, 2000), or coding of actions observed in videotaped studies (Stigler, Gonzales, Kawanaka, Knoll, & Serrano, 1999). In order to allow for replication, however, the technique can only be applied to data that are durable in nature, and thus content analysis provides an efficient method for e-mail research.

The initial task in implementing FPI is developing the theme criteria. Spradley (1979) suggests that searching for examples/evidence of social conflicts, cultural expressions, and informal networks of communication, status symbols and problem solving. The issues provided by Spradley (1979) suggest that although FPI currently relates to issues of power and identification, it fails to address emergent issues arising from e-mail analysis. For instance, although it may be possible to code e-mail requests/responses by identifying Formal and Personal power and whether this identified with by e-mail recipients. However, the deployment of Formal and Personal power may differ, perhaps greatly, in its content. In other words, there are potentially variations of Formal and Personal power. In order to cope with this, Willms et al. (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that content analysis begin with some general themes, derived from literature, with the intention to add and develop as research proceeds.

Within e-mail literature there exists little to inform coding structures in relation to the investigation of power. For instance, Ducheneaut's (2002) study of e-mail power relied upon a software derived frequency analysis, which reveals an account of discursive patterns without producing any transferable categories. Gains (1999) provides data that informs the study of power through e-mail, but again produces no defined categories from which to borrow. This is further intensified by the lack of explicit studies on the subject of power communicated through e-mail in organisations. Studies such as Mallon and Oppenhiem (2000), O'Sullivan and Flannigan (2003) Brigham and Corbett (1997) Pliskin, Romm and Markey (1997), draw implicit conclusions on the subject of power without producing results that can form the basis of a content analysis.

Power is a largely implicit theme within e-mail studies and even when it is explicit it does not produce defined transferable categories (see Gains, 1999, Ducheneaut, 2002 for examples). The analysis of e-mail literature was designed to pick out themes in communication. This analysis focused upon the style of e-mails constructed rather than what type of power that was applied.

For example, Gains (1999) seems to locate two broad communication patterns within his study, social and non-social. Social based e-mails make use of friendly language; provide personal information (ie *I am bored*) and rely on a conversational style of approach. Non-social e-mails tend to avoid any personal qualities, using what Gains (1999) refers to as non-attribution of agency, a device that places communication between a recipient and organisational rules and regulations, rather than between a recipient and a colleague. Social and non-social styles of communication can be seen re-occurring across the work of Mallon and Oppenhiem (2000), O'Sullivan and Flannigan (2003) Brigham and Corbett (1997) and Pliskin, Romm and Markey (1997).

Although social and non-social styles of communicating seem to have a distinct relationship between Formal and Personal power, they are not intended to exclusively represent the other. In other words, Formal power could be deployed through non-social or social means; there is evidence of this within Gains' (1999) study of organisational e-mails from the public and private sector. Personal power has an obvious relationship with social tactics, however, it will be interesting to examine whether this superficial observation is consistent post data collection and analysis. It is possible that calling in some form of organisational debt could be a demonstration of Personal power being illustrated through non-social tactics.

Producing two broad themes, social and non-social to represent the communication styles in which the two types of power are delivered is not meant for exclusivity. Both the types of power and communication styles are applied in the manner prescribed by Willms et al (1990) and Miles et al (1994). The consequence of this is that the types and styles will be open to development and modification as research progresses.

The next stage of content analysis is the development of a code book (Denzin et al, 2000). A code book is the necessary mechanism in which to organise the categories for analysis. MacQueen, McLellan, Kay, and Milstein (1998) suggest that an effective code book should contain a detailed description of "each code, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and exemplars of real text for each theme". At this stage of analysis, a general description of what text should "appear like" to qualify for a particular category is reasonable.

Once this has been achieved, the code book can be developed through pilot stages and refined during the course of actual data collection (Kurasaki, 1997).

Miles (1979) suggests that at the earliest stages of code book development boundaries should be devised in order to determine category qualification. The defining of boundaries, according to Carey, Morgan, and Oxtoby (1996), takes place during development and pilot stages of research, so it would seem prudent, at this stage, to determine type and style definitions only in order to measure the boundary limits within a pilot stage of investigation. Within the table below, the categories for initial content analysis along with initial definitions are laid out:

Category	Description
Formal	The use of organisational rules and regulations in making requests and responses
Personal	A request or response that exists outside of the formal structure such as a favour or a trade of information.
Social	The use of "friendly" language in making requests or responses. This may include opening with Hi, closing with Cheers and general questions/responses that are personal rather than formal. Has a strong resemblance to a conversation
Non-social	An official use of language that is more akin to a formal business letter than conversation. The e-mail provides the feeling that an exchange is taking place between the organisation and recipient rather than between two colleagues

[Table 7]

The next stage of content analysis involves the application of the above categories to a pilot study. A pilot study will enable the code book to expanded, exclusion and inclusion definitions defined along with the parameters of boundary setting (Miles, 1979). When developing a code book post initial themes, Miles (1979) argues that it is important to focus upon data reduction and not data proliferation. With this in mind a pilot study was conducted with the intention of both refining and defining the current set of themes ahead of attempting to draw as many themes as possible from the data.

This seemed a particularly reasonable direction given the argument of Hardy et al (1999) regarding categories of organisational power. Hardy et al argue that hoping to develop definitive categories of power within organisations is simply an impossible task. This impossibility is produced by the contextual and developing nature of power (ibid) that so often escapes microscopic definition. It seemed a more realistic expectation from both a methodological and theoretical view point to measure and define discrepancy from ideal types rather than focus on category generation.

The pilot study was set in the researchers own organisation and involved the analysis of two colleagues sent mail boxes. It was agreed that six months of retrospective data would be analysed both in the interests of practicality and the explorative nature of the pilot. In order to develop and apply the conceptual model to the pilot study, two broad areas of content analysis informed the methodological approach- grounded theory and schema analysis.

Grounded theories approach is described by Denzin et al (2000) as theorists who:

"want to understand people's experiences in as rigorous manner and detailed a manner as possible. They want to identify categories and concepts that emerge from text and link these concepts into substantive and formal theories". (Denzin et al, 2000,p782).

This is achieved through an iterative process in which the researcher becomes grounded within the data on an escalating level. Sandelowski (1995) suggest that this process begins through the close reading of texts and underlining key phrases *"because they make some as yet inchoate sense"* (p373). This process of open coding is developed by producing emerging themes from the text and underpinning them with examples (Agar, 1996; Bernard, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The process of identifying the terms, categories and definitions produced by research respondents is referred to by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as in vivo coding.

As these categories emerge they can become modelled into theoretical hypothesis that can be tested against each other using the "constant comparison method" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The constant comparison method is used to determine under what conditions and across what contexts do these theoretical hypothesis occur. Spradley (1979) suggests that a means of supporting the constant comparison methods is to ask the research respondent themselves.

In application to the pilot study the constant comparison method coupled with respondent triangulation (as suggested by Spradley, 1979) seemed a sound approach. This would be particularly useful in developing concepts (currently social and non-social) upon how the two forms of power were applied across varying contexts. Due to starting data analysis with predefined concepts, the approach could not be considered as pure grounded theory, but drawing from its methodological rigour would develop and test the concepts in practice.

In addition to grounded theory schema analysis helped inform the methodological application. Schema analysis shares many common themes with grounded theory (Denzin et al, 2000). Both forms of analysis begin with the closing reading of texts in order to determine and develop concepts. From this, patterns in communication such as the repetition of key words and phrases are examined (Quinn, 1997). Schema analysis explores how accepted patterns of communication are used by respondents in order to define their existence. For instance, Quinn (1997) argues that despite the hundreds of thousands of words respondents may generate they seem to move in repetitive loops, applying simplified cognitive frameworks to make sense of complex data (Casson, 1983).

A significant feature of schema analysis is the theoretical notion that when people tell stories they rely upon an assumption that respondents share the same cognitive framework (Price, 1987). This leads to people leaving out information that they believe is common, or "goes without saying". Thus, the study of absence is a vital component of schema analysis; this involves examining what is not said in order to uncover cultural assumptions (ibid).

In regard to the pilot study a focus on repetition, assumptions and absence became a sound methodological approach. The categories developed for the pilot study were derived from Foucault's text analysis of power. These were translated into Formal and Personal power, and provided the theoretical foundation for research. In order to test whether these two forms of power are the foundation for e-mail communication, it seems prudent to examine frequency, assumptions and absence. For instance, an organisational assumption (by an actor) may be that Formal power delivered in a non-social style is sufficient. It may be identified with within certain contexts by actors and rejected in others. Lack of identification may be marked by non-replies or single word answers. All these considerations are based on the cognitive schema used by actors to read text. Drawing from schema analysis principles can help define and account for these cognitive frameworks.

The pilot study began with an analysis of two respondent's sent mailboxes, as mentioned earlier this produced six months of retrospective data. Results obtained from these initials stage helped to develop and define the conceptual tools within the study. Below are examples of the content analysis conducted during the pilot stage of research.

Pilot Results

Both pilot respondents occupied the position of Senior Lecturer within the University and both worked within the same department one of which was male and the other female. For the purposes of clarity, the results are split into two sections: pilot respondent A (female) and pilot respondent B (male).

Pilot Respondent A

Respondent A provided 356 e-mails for analysis. Utilising the outlined methods evidence of both types of power was found. The predominate source of power within A's e-mails was Formal power delivered through the use of social tactics. Although the majority of communications concerned themselves with formal rules and regulations, A communicated these with a conversational style. The below example illustrates:

Respondent A

Hi Janet,

As you probably know I've got to hand over my scripts for you to second mark! Apologies in advance!

Thanks

Abbey

Following the content analysis, the circled opening (above) indicates a social theme. The second circle indicates the use of humour, confirming, through constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), that social patterns are consistent throughout this e-mail. In reference to the type of power being used, the red circle refers to the topic, a formal matter that is part of organisational rules and regulations. Utilising the cross comparison method, e-mails that had formal topics were compared and contrasted across different contexts in order to ascertain whether the use of social styles were consistent across the sample.

In the majority of cases this held true. Exception to this rule occurred in communications that were either out of department, or took place between respondent A and a senior member of staff. These patterns tended to result in the use of Formal power delivered through non-social methods. The example below illustrates:

Respondent A

Dear Ralph,

I have been asked to supply you with a copy of the external examiners report, to review. Please find it attached.

Abbey

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Respondent A is communicating with a senior member of staff. The red circles highlight the changes in style (using the cross comparison method), whilst the black circle highlights the formal topic. In contrast to the earlier example, A has now adopted a non social style in communicating Formal power. The changing context of communication with a senior member of staff appears to be the key variable. Application of the cross comparison method confirmed that these changes in style, when delivering Formal power, were consistent when respondent A e-mailed 1) senior members of staff 2) members of staff located within another department.

In instances where A sought to exercise Personal power, the results were entirely uniform across the sample. Personal power, in all instances, was communicated using a social style. The example below is typical:

Respondent A

Hi Jude,

I'm wondering if you could do me a favour!!? Any chance of doing my second marking for XXXX.. I'm drowning!!

Abby :)

The text circled in red indicates the use of social style: humour, emoticons, conversational opening. Text circled in black indicates the topic, a personal situation which requires the use of a favour to remedy.

Pilot Respondent B

Respondent B provided over 400 e-mails for analysis. The sample was scrutinised using identical methods of research. Analysis revealed that predominate form of power within the sample was Formal power delivered through non-social tactics. This was in contrast to respondent A, who had used social tactics to transport Formal power. A typical example appears below:

Respondent B

Dawn,

Will you transcribe the notes I have put in your pigeon hole for Wednesday. Thank you.

Regards

Fraser

The text circled in red highlights the use of a formal style, whilst the text circled in black denotes the formal topic. Unlike respondent A this is a typical example of how B uses e-mail to address and communicate organisational rules and regulations. The cross comparison method revealed no contextual divergence from these patterns when B was using/responding to similar issues.

When B was using Personal power, their e-mail style differed significantly. Personal power patterns followed those demonstrated by B far more closely. The example below illustrates:

Respondent B

Hi Alan,

I'm wondering (or rather hoping!) if you can help me? Could you get let me have a copy of your module handbook for XXXX? I'm running behind schedule and anything I can lift out of yours would be great.

Thanks mate

Fraser

The text circled in red indicates the social patterns within the e-mail; the text circled in black highlights the need for a personal favour. Comparison of this example to the one used earlier in terms of style is marked. Cross comparison confirmed that all instances of Personal power were communicated through social styles.

The two respondents from the pilot study provided interesting comparisons. Respondent A mainly adhered to social patterns when communicating both formal and Personal power whilst respondent B used social patterns only when seeking to use Personal power.

The above illustrations are direct "quotes" taken from respondents; this approach is designed to display examples of coding and content and draws upon the work of Ryan (1999). Ryan has used multiple coders to illustrate typical quotes. In examples where all of the coders apply to the example, then it is regarded as a typical example and represents the central tendency. Examples where only a few of the coders apply, were regarded as less typical and illustrations of the edges of constructs. Within this investigation, each respondent demonstrates a central tendency over a range of contexts. For instance, respondent A's central tendency is to use a social e-mail style when communicating Formal power for within actors within the same department and level. A key factor is the responses of actors to the central tendency used by A and B, this was coded as identification.

Identification for Respondent A

Respondent A's central tendency when communicating Formal power was to use a social style. When respondent A was communicating with actors who lay outside of their department or were of a senior position, the respondent's style in communicating/responding to Formal power was non-social. These central tendencies produced identical styles from other actors. For instance, a social style of e-mail produced a social style of response. The example below illustrates:

Respondent A

Hi Joan,

What are the chances of getting those assignments back by tomorrow? I'm writing this e-mail whilst begging on my knees!!!

Abby

Actor

Relax sweetheart, they'll be ready by the end of the day!!

Joan xx

The above is a typical example. Respondent A sends out a social e-mail and receives a response that mirrors the style very closely, providing the impression that a conversation rather than an exchange of text has taken place. Cross-comparison revealed no negative case examples identification, ie all actors replied in kind to the style that A adopted.

It is also significant that the approach that A adopted when communicating with other actors, was also adopted by actors approaching A. In other words, colleagues within the same department and other a similar level used social styles when communicating Formal and Personal power. Actors who were of a senior level and/or out of the department relied upon non-social styles when communicating Formal power. Naturally, the consistency within the pilot illustrated the need for a wider study in order to examine the degree to which actors are "locked" into certain types of patterns.

Identification for Respondent B

Identification for respondent B differed to that of respondent A. Respondent B chose to use non-social methods when communicating Formal power, relying on social patterns only when seeking to draw upon Personal power. This approach did not lead to the same levels of identification experienced by respondent A.

When B sought to communicate Formal power through non-social methods the responses did not consistently identify with this style. In other words, actors who responded to e-mails sent by B would sometimes reply using a social style concerning formal matters, the example below illustrates:

Respondent B

Judith,
Could I have 4 copies of the XXX module specification by the morning?

Thanks

Actor

Hi Fraser…of course you can!

Bye
Judith

The actor does not identify with respondent B's discursive patterns and instead adopts a social style. Despite these occasional instances of non-identification the central tendency of respondent B was to continue with his non-social patterns of e-mail communication. This approach by B seemed to ignore or rather defer social patterns of communication to non-social patterns. In other words, respondent B preferred to place communication in the hands of Formal power alone. As a means of coding these negative case instances, instances where the central tendency was to non-identify, the code of deferment was created.

Deferment refers to e-mails where a respondent refuses to identify with a pattern of communication and relies instead upon their own approach. In respondent B's case, this was a refusal to identify with social styles of communication when dealing with Formal power. The framing of negative case instances was drawn from the work of Kearney (1995) and Strauss (1992) who argue that deviations from central tendencies help to measure the cultural environment in which the data is collected. In this case it is possible to develop a code for what a respondent does, when they don't identify. Miles and Huberman (1994) support this methodological position, arguing that it is essential to account for emerging changes and deviations in content analysis in order to provide accurate research.

What has emerged from the pilot study is not just what Strauss (1992) refers to as "personal semantic networks". Personal semantic networks are discursive devices that respondents use to frame their sense of the world (ibid); these are personal frameworks for making sense of complex data. Within this investigation the data is not an insight into the personal semantics of respondents but rather an investigation of collective semantics. The data provides an account of how respondents negotiate organisational life as they deal, across various contexts, with Formal and Personal power. In other words, what seems to emerge, are cultural semantic norms and the various deviations from these central tendencies.

Modifications

The FPI model that was used to frame the discourse analysis seemed to provide an accurate account of how pilot respondents A and B communicated power through e-mail. An addition, however, was necessary when instances of non-identification occurred within the respondent B sample. The discursive phenomena of actors not mirroring and identifying with another actor's e-mail style were coded as deferment. This meant an actor would defer another actor's e-mail style and continue using their own discursive pattern. The code book can now be modified accordingly:

Category	Description
Formal	The use of organisational rules and regulations in making requests and responses
Personal	A request or response that exists outside of the formal structure such as a favour or a trade of information.
Social	The use of "friendly" language in making requests or responses. This may include opening with Hi, closing with Cheers and general questions/responses that are personal rather than formal. Has a strong resemblance to a conversation
Non-social	An official use of language that is more akin to a formal business letter than conversation. The e-mail provides the feeling that an exchange is taking place between the organisation and recipient rather than between two colleagues
Deferment	The process by which an actor does not identify with a discursive pattern. This is achieved by a refusal to adapt to another actors discursive style e.g. using only a non-social style in response to social e-mails

[Table 8]

Triangulation

Borrowing from grounded theory, Spradley (1979) suggests that respondents are used to check the validity of the data. This method differs slightly to a classic approach to content analysis in so much as it is not reliant upon mathematically derived methods of validity (see Cohen, 1968, Krippendorff, 1980, Craig et al, 1981 for examples). Methods of this kind are designed to avoid agreement by chance on the allocation of codes to texts; this has particular relevance when multiple coders are used. Due to the relatively small amount of coders being used it was decided to follow Spradley's (1979) argument and use respondents to supply external validity.

This seemed a pragmatic approach, for, as Bernard (1994) observes, regardless of method in validity testing, researchers will ultimately be left with the consequences and effects of their own judgements. Bernard (ibid) does not see anything wrong with this outcome, citing that validity, regardless of rigour, will always be contaminated by some degree of subjectivity.

Each respondent was asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed with the results. This was achieved by fully explaining the coding book and taking the respondent through a series of examples. After each example the respondents were asked to what degree they supported the use of a particular code, in order to assess the degree an ordinal scale was used: low, medium or high. In each case, the validity test resulted in high.

In addition to the ordinal scale, the pilot respondents were asked about what they were aiming to achieve with a sample of the e-mails. This was designed to try and gather a personal perspective of what respondents thought of the contexts which led them to write their e-mails in specific ways. The questioning was conducted in a conversational style and the responses were afterward coded into three broad categories:

- **Beliefs** - how the respondent interpreted the context of the e-mail; for example, whether the respondent recognised a situation as a formal or informal matter

- **Barriers** - the potential problems sending this e-mail presented; for example, if the subject was sensitive, particularly a request, respondents expressed concern over the words that would illicit the desired response

- **Control** - the feeling of control that the respondent had over their e-mail; for example, whether the respondent felt their e-mail use was achieving the desired response.

This coding, which again was agreed with the pilot respondents, provided a useful semi-structured interview schedule which could be used to support the content analysis used in the main research sample.

Summary of Methods

The content analysis conducted during the pilot stage based on the FPI model was able to analyse e-mails and generate themes effectively. In addition, the emergence of the beliefs, barriers and control interview schedule added to the development of triangulation in the study. The main investigation would use the code book themes generated from the theoretical development and pilot study then continue to refine them over the far larger longitudinal study which is the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter Six - Results

Within the last chapter the methods for the main investigation were introduced and discussed. The discussion led to the generation of the FPI model, which guided a pilot study. The pilot study led to the generation of new themes (which were added to the code book) and an interview schedule, beliefs, barriers and control (BBaC), which would add to the element of triangulation built into the study.

The sole focus of this chapter is to demonstrate the results obtained using the methods detailed in the last chapter and outlined above. The codebook, prior to the main study taking place appears below:

Category	Description
Formal	The use of organisational rules and regulations in making requests and responses
Personal	A request or response that exists outside of the formal structure such as a favour or a trade of information.
Social	The use of "friendly" language in making requests or responses. This may include opening with Hi, closing with Cheers and general questions/responses that are personal rather than formal. Has a strong resemblance to a conversation
Non-social	An official use of language that is more akin to a formal business letter than conversation. The e-mail provides the feeling that an exchange is taking place between the organisation and recipient rather than between two colleagues
Deferment	The process by which an actor does not identify with a discursive pattern. This is achieved by a refusal to adapt to another actors discursive style e.g. using only a non-social style in response to social e-mails

[Table 8]

The application and development of this code book is illustrated throughout this chapter.

Results Stage One

Results take the following format. The first two respondent's results are laid out in detail to demonstrate to the reader how the data was used to generate themes and categories. The remaining four respondents are summarised and demonstrate the evolution of themes and categories across the entire sample.

Respondent A

The first respondent (referred to as respondent A in the data analysis) had recently changed positions within the respondent organisation. For the past ten years respondent A had occupied a senior level management position, but recent organisational changes had led him into more virtual working practices. A's previous position had centred on operationalising the purchasing department of the said public institution. Duties involved allocating projects to various members of staff, time-tabling meetings and progress reports and communicating these decisions to the director of the department. In the respondent's own words, his fundamental duty was to ensure "the operationalisation of the legitimate rules, regulations and general compliance of staff within the department" (Reference: Respondent A).

His new role saw him move slightly outside of the hierarchical system, respondent A still remained in purchasing but now as head of an autonomous work group whose aim was to review external tenders in order to streamline operating costs. Respondent A now felt like his "own boss". In general discussion with A he said he would like to be part of the PhD and provided unlimited access to his sent mailbox. Sent mailboxes within the organisation e-mail system all stretched back to a two year maximum. This would be a fixed condition of the investigation; a potential respondent must not only be in a position to grant full unrestricted access to e-mails but also have the maximum two year archive. Such conditions would not only ensure consistency and rigour of method but also provide the essential historic data that was methodologically necessary.

The two years of data was split into four sections of six months. This was done to enable comparisons between respondents at similar times and contexts to be more easily made. Examples of the data (from each of the sections) are demonstrated using a typical schema analysis approach, presentation of direct quotes to illustrate emergent themes (Denzin et al, 2000). Each example is then supported by the responses gathered using the BBaC model.

Section 1

Within section 1, respondent A was within his original senior management position, and during this period e-mails followed a very formal tone. Below is a series of typical requests A is making to subordinate members of staff:

Respondent A

Julia,

Please find attached this months XXX report. I'd appreciate a review by the end of the week; this is in accordance with the Directors quarterly deadline.

Respondent A

Allan,

I am yet to receive your months figures. Please ensure that deadlines are adhered to and that you bring the outstanding figures into line

Respondent A

Peter,

Please find attached my feedback on your figures. Any comments are welcome.

Respondent A

Julie,

I need seven copies of the XXX report, you sent me six.

Thanks

Respondent A unilaterally and exclusively adopted a formal approach when communicating with subordinate staff during section 1. This was denoted by the repetition of formal and distant address. No use was made of openings (Hi, Dear etc) other than first names and requests were made using commands (see above). These interactions within section 1 were coded as context A. Context A indicates that respondent A has been communicating with a junior member of staff. Therefore, with section 1, context A, the respondent communicates using formal/distant commands. The table below illustrates:

Respondent A

Section1	Context A	Formal/distant commands

Respondent A was questioned using BBaC to gather his thoughts regarding the coding structure. In accordance with the BBaC model outline, questioning was separated into Beliefs, Barriers and Controls. Below appear the results regarding respondent A separated into the relevant elements of the BBaC model:

Section 1, Context A, Beliefs

Respondent A agreed that his tone when communicating with junior members of staff was both formal and distant. He believed that this would ensure compliance with requests as it positioned the junior members against his commands rather than against himself the person. Respondent A believed that e-mail provided the opportunity to not be a person, but rather a faceless voice of the organisation.

In face to face encounters, the respondent continued, there is the possibility that personality and emotion creeps in and "things" get diverted or put off.

Section 1, Context A, Barriers

Respondent A observed that there were barriers when communicating with junior members of staff through e-mail. When the respondent first started using e-mail he had adopted a more conversational style, this, he remarked, had invited opinions on his requests rather than compliance and produced delays. Since his adoption of a more formal approach "things tended to get done" and within section 1 there was no evidence of non-compliance from a junior member of staff.

Section 1, Context A, Control

Respondent A believed that the barriers had been relatively easy to overcome regarding e-mail and junior members of staff. In the early stages, he regarded the conversational style as a problem to which he found a solution. In the vast majority of cases, A believed that he had established "control" over context A.

In respondent A's handling of context A, a high degree of reflective thought had taken place. The respondent identified a problem, formulated a solution and initiated it with success. This was demonstrated both within the data and in conversation with respondent A post collection.

The next sample within section 1 was A's communication with actors of a similar or higher position, referred to from here on as context B. Below is a sample of typical requests/responses from within context B. Loops of data, an exchange of requests/responses are separated in the interests of clarity:

<u>Loop 1</u>

Respondent A

Chris,

According to my records your deadline is now over due. I appreciate the current pressures, but the management team are making strenuous efforts to deal with them.

John

Purchasing Officer:

John,

I thought the strenuous efforts included notification to the management team that I would not meet the deadline and expected to hear of the consequential additional resources or a new deadline. What I heard was that we might get someone new in June. Quite a gap. If you define a meltdown as not being able to meet objectives, either we are already there or you can find someone else to do it.

Chris

Respondent A

c.c- Director

Hi Chris,

I do of course understand where you are coming from, but to re-emphasise, I do not have spare resources, and it is for this reason that I need the official sanction of the director before I can proceed with your request.

John

Respondent A

David,

Please be informed of the change in regulations regarding the presentation of monthly reports. I know this seems tedious but unfortunately we are going to be stuck with it.
John

Purchasing Officer

John,

I can reformat these relatively simply, so I wouldn't worry too much about this change.

David

Loop 3

Respondent A

Nigel

Please note the extension of the March deadline. This extension only applies to March however, so lags in following months can't/won't be accommodated. I hope this helps.

John

Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

This deadline extension will require the necessary breather, after March, things should, I hope, fall back into place.

Nigel

Respondent A within the context B sample, seemed to adopt a style that suggested empathy. This was demonstrated in the data by the repetition of a request followed by an almost sympathetic statement. These qualifications suggested an understanding between actors at a similar level. Loops 2 and 3 are particularly demonstrative of this. Respondent A tempers each passage of information with a sympathetic statement. Even within loop 1, respondent A offers as much understanding as possible before having to cc the Purchasing Director into the e-mail. From within, the context B, section 1 sample another code appears: empathy and referral.

Empathy is an acknowledgement of the understanding A demonstrates with the context B sample. The following table illustrates this and incorporates the findings from context A as a means of comparison:

Section1	Context A	Formal/distant commands
Section 1	Context B	Empathy

It is clear from a cursory glance at the above table that respondent A's communication patterns change depending upon the context in which he is engaged. To develop and test these observations the BBaC model was applied.

Section 1, Context B, Beliefs

Respondent A believed that communicating with higher ranking members of staff with the same formal and distant approach was insufficient. The respondent believed that actors of this position were "entitled" to an opinion, and sympathised with the pressures senior members of staff were under. It was necessary, he believed, to maintain good collegiate relations and not seem overbearing.

Section 1, Context B, Barriers

E-mails, respondent A, believed were open to a relatively large degree of misunderstanding. As a result, A argued, when dealing with actors who have similar or greater "power" it is necessary to limit this potential misunderstanding. This was demonstrated within the central tendency of the sample, as A demonstrated large degrees of empathy with his fellow colleagues.

Section 1, Context B, Control

Respondent A, believed that he had managed to maintain a good degree of control over his peer relations. The level of empathy had served him well, and he felt he had fostered a reputation of being an understanding manager whilst being able to "enforce" organisational rules and regulations. E-mail, he felt, played an important part in achieving this by being able to restrict communication to an almost "binary level". *If you get the formula right*, he remarked, *e-mail will increase your efficiency*.

Negative Cases and Central Tendencies within Section 1

The central tendencies within stage 1 are re-capped by the table below:

Section1	Context A	Formal/distant commands	Acknowledgement of facts
Section 1	Context B	Empathy	Acknowledgement of facts

A central tendency is demonstrated by how the respondent communicated within a specific context the majority of times. The table above indicates this, with respondent A (for example) choosing to communicate with junior members of staff using formal/distant e-mails in the majority of cases. Deviations from these central tendencies across both contexts tended to be *acknowledgement of facts* (see table). *Acknowledgement of facts* appears when an actor is looking for confirmation over a matter and nothing more. An example appears below:

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

Did you receive the XXX report on Friday?

Respondent A

Steve,

Yes

Acknowledgement of facts occurred across both contexts with equal frequency. In other words, despite an actor's rank or position confirmations were equally short and strictly functional.

Section 2

Section 2 represents the second six month period within respondent A's data. It has great significance, as during this period A changes position to head a new virtual purchasing centre. Within section 1, two contexts were identified, in order to provide clarity and comparability across the sample, the data is separated into context A and B, with additions and revisions being made on a constant basis.

Context A

The beginning of section 2 began in similar fashion to 1, with respondent A communicating to junior members of staff using the central tendency of formality and distance (examples were typical and indicative, see section 1). However, at the beginning of the third month within section 2, respondent A changed positions.

In the first instances of respondent A changing position he continued to use e-mails that were informal and distant in communication with actors from context A. However, whilst respondent A was able to enjoy high levels of compliance using this central tendency within section 1, it did not continue within section 2. The following examples illustrate:

Loop 1

Respondent A

David,

I will need four copies of XXXX report by Friday.

Junior Purchasing Officer

John,

Unfortunately is Wednesday will the earliest date I can supply you with this report. For clarification please contact central.

Loop 2

Respondent A

Nigel

Ensure that the files necessary to complete my interims are with me Friday

Junior Purchasing Officer

Sorry John, this won't be possible, I'd plan for early next week

Respondent A

Nigel

It is essential I receive those files by Friday

Junior Purchasing Officer

I'm working to a timetable assigned by central, please take up this matter with them.

<u>Loop 3</u>

Respondent A

David

Can you make sure my acquisition order is processed by the 1ˢᵗ of the month

Junior Purchasing Officer

I've just had the schedule through and your acquisition order is down for the 7ᵗʰ. Sorry for any inconvenience but it can't be helped.

Within section 1 the central tendency of **replies** was compliance from the context A actors. Within the mid to latter stages of section 2 this no longer proved to be the case. Although respondent A was able to secure a reasonable level of compliance it was no longer the central tendency. Within section 2 the emerging central tendency of **replies** was to refuse compliance with respondent A's deadlines and tasks. The table below illustrates A's continued use of formal patterns into his new position:

Section 2	Context A	Formal, distance and commands	Acknowledgement of facts

Respondent A's BBaC results appear below.

<u>Section 2, Context A, Beliefs</u>

Respondent A remarked that upon moving positions he paid little attention to his e-mail patterns and simply "reverted to type". Despite his contextual shift, A "assumed" his previous manner of e-mailing would be sufficient to operationalise his requests. The move of **replies** central tendencies away from compliance had not **immediately** occurred to the respondent, expressing surprise at the number of refusals to meet his deadlines.

<u>Section 2, Context A, Barriers</u>

During the latter stages of section 2, A stated that he began to realise there was a problem with his effectiveness viz e-mail. Colleagues who he had direct management over were now "refusing" to co-operate with his requests. The respondent identified the potential problem as a loss of his legitimate authority, which to him, meant a loss of "power" over junior members of staff. He disregarded the idea it may be a type of revenge, citing that despite the tone he adopted in e-mails, he enjoyed good relationships with his former staff.

<u>Section 2, Context A, Control</u>

A admitted that control was poor during this period, however, for a relatively long period of time (the majority of section 2) he was unaware of this. This was realised by a gradual back log of work and frustration. During the end of section 2, A had identified a problem (with his e-mail communication) and his resulting inability to perform to standard and made a conscious decision to deal with it.

<u>Context B</u>

During section 1 respondent A's central tendency was to communicate using empathy amongst his peers. This trend dissipated within section 2, possibly as a result of the position change. During the early to mid stages of respondent A's e-mail contact with context B was restricted to e-mails of a more social nature or acknowledgement of facts with central tendency split between the two. In the late stages of section 2, A's e-mail contact with context B involved increased amounts of chasing resources. The below loops illustrate.

Purchasing Officer

Hello John,

Just checking on how things are developing in your new home. If you need anything let me know

Carl

Respondent A

Carl,

Things are ok, although I must admit it's a little bit strange. I may hold you to that offer of help though!

John

Loop 2

Respondent A

David,

How are you getting on with my old department?

Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

Not too bad, although I'm beginning to see how hard it was for you! I'll keep you posted.

Regards

David

<u>Loop 3</u>

Purchasing Officer

Hi John

How are things over there? Still going well?

Cheers

Nigel

Respondent A

Nigel,

Not too bad, although I'm really having trouble getting my hands on the necessary resources. I didn't think virtual working practices meant completely out of the loop!

John

<u>Loop 4</u>

Respondent A

David,

I'm really having trouble getting my hands on the XXX files in time. None of the junior PO's are cooperating, can you help?

John

Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

I'll see what I can do, but its those central deadlines that are the problem!

David

The empathy respondent A used in e-mail communication during section 1 had now been joined by **social enquiry** and acknowledgement of fact. Repetition of enquiry from the context B cohort suggested that empathy was now been reflected back onto respondent A.

During the latter stages of section 2, respondent A sought to build upon this empathy by seeking help from context B in order to solve his resource frustrations (see loop 4). This did not become a central tendency, but rather reflected an emergent pattern.

Central tendency within section 2, context B, were coded as empathy, acknowledgement of fact and social enquiry. Social enquiry refers to one of the central tendencies within section 2; social enquiries are questions of a social nature. They may relate to work, but are not performance related; instead focusing on an actor's well-being and progress (see loops 1 to 3).

Within section 2, context B empathy can be split into two distinct forms. The first kind is the typical central tendency, sympathy or identification with a situation, the second kind is an attempt to seek empathy. Seeking empathy was evident in the latter stages of section 2 in communication with context B (see loop 4). Developments are illustrated in the table below:

Section 2	Context A	Formal, distance and commands	Acknowledgement of facts	
Section 2	Context B	Empathy given, empathy sought	Social enquiry	Acknowledgement of facts

Negative Cases and Central Tendencies

Central tendencies within stage 2 are recapped within the table below:

Section 2	Context A	Formal, distance and commands (sent) Formal and distance (received)	Acknowledgement of facts (deviation from central tendency)	
Section 2	Context B	Empathy given, empathy sought	Social enquiry	Acknowledgement of facts (deviation from central tendency)

The central tendency between the two contexts can be easily compared. Across context A the central tendency of communication was formal, distance and commands. In response to these patterns respondent A received formal and distant e-mails. Negative cases again fell into the acknowledgement of facts category. Across context B the central tendency was marked by the use of empathy and social enquiry. In response respondent A received e-mails that contained social enquiry and/or empathy. As with context A, deviations from the central tendency were acknowledgement of facts.

Section 3

Section 3 represents the third six month period within respondent A's data. Within this section a significant change begins to take place between respondent A and context A communication styles. In order to provide clarity and comparability across the sample, the data is again separated into context A and context B, with additions and revisions made as the study progresses.

Context A

The beginning of section 3 starts in similar fashion to section 2. Respondent A continued, for the initial third of section 3, to use formal, distant commands. In keeping with the previous section the context A actors responded with formal and distant e-mails, demonstrating a central tendency to refuse requests/commands. The following loops demonstrate how changes began to appear in respondent A's communication patterns throughout this section:

Loop 1

Respondent A

Peter,

Please ensure that I receive copies of the XX reports by Monday 27th.

Junior Purchasing Officer

John…I'm afraid that won't be possible. The report will not be complete until the 24th and first sight must be with central. I suggest the 2nd would be a more realistic target.

<u>Loop 2</u>

Respondent A

Hi Dave,

What is the earliest date I could receive copies of the XX review?

Cheers

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

I reckon I could get you a copy by the 7th is that's any good…official release scheduled for the 9th..

Dave

Respondent A

Hi Dave,

That would be great

Thanks

<u>Loop 3</u>

Respondent A

Hi Graham,

Could you give me a date for the release of this quarters figure?

Thanks

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

It looks like it'll be the 15th, hope this helps.

Respondent A

Hi Graham

Yes it does

Thanks

<u>Loop 4</u>

Respondent A

Hi Dave,

What are the chances of getting first sight of XX report? I've got a tight deadline coming up and those figures would make a difference!

Thanks

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi John…I'll do my best, I should be able to give you an answer by Wed.

Cheers

Respondent A

Hi Dave

Thanks for your efforts, I appreciate it

Cheers

Within section 3 respondent A's correspondence patterns between himself and context A changed significantly. The above loops demonstrate how A moved from a distant, formal command making approach to a socially closer, enquiry making one. Interestingly, context A actors identified with this change and replied in kind.

Within this section, the central tendency, when communicating with context A, changed for the first time within the study. Also of significance is the modification of acknowledgement of facts. The reader's attention is drawn to the above data and the manner in which respondent A acknowledges responses to requests. The short tone adopted within previous sections is replaced with gratitude. Below, the table demonstrates the developments:

Section 3	Context A	Socially close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Gratitude (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (deviation from central tendency)	Formal, distance and commands (deviation from central tendency)

<u>Section 3, Context A, Beliefs</u>

Respondent A stated that he was aware of the need to change his e-mail patterns, and the manner in which he conducted himself professionally generally. The respondent observed that his previous methods of e-mail communication had ceased to be effective, and reiterated that he believed that this was linked to his loss of legitimate authority.

<u>Section3, Context A, Barriers</u>

Respondent A believed that his loss of formal authority had resulted in his ability to secure resources and information. The priorities of his old staff had changed and in order to re-establish an effective means of working he felt the need to approach his old department more as "an old friend rather than the old boss". Respondent A observed that reliance on his previous authority had proven to be his biggest barrier.

<u>Section 3, Context A, Control</u>

Compared to previous experience (within sections 2 and starting points of 3) respondent A felt that he had re-established some degree of control over his effectiveness. The move toward more "friendly" patterns had seemed to fill in the "void that the change of position had caused". In this respect, A felt that he had overcome a "potentially serious problem".

<u>Context B</u>

Context B continued in similar fashion to section 2. The central tendency revealed e-mails of a largely social nature even though correspondence may have related to work as a general matter (ie how is work?). Unlike context A within section 3, acknowledgement of fact remained the same. The data below demonstrates the consistency across context B.

Respondent A

Hi Carl

How are things with you? Busy and frustrated here!

John

Purchasing officer

Hi John

Same as usual here, still busy and frustrated! Are things getting easier re-support?

John

Respondent A

Hi Carl

Not much better, if at all! But I'm working on it!

John

Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

Hows tricks? Central are driving me mad!

Cheers

Nigel

Respondent A

Nigel,

That is just what central do! Things are improving steadily here, although they could always be better!

Loop 3

Respondent A

Carl,

Let me know how you get on with your inventory request. I had a nightmare last year. If your free for lunch next week let me know.

Cheers

John

Purchasing Officer

John…not looking forward to it, especially given your experiences last year! How about Wednesday at 12.00?

Dave

Loop 4

Purchasing Officer

Hi John…hope your well?

Could you tell me how much of your XX budget you allocated to finance? I'm drawing up my annual and struggling. Thought I'd tap the brain of a past hand!

Regards

David

Respondent A

Hi David

I'm well thanks and not envious of you by the sounds of things! I allocated £xxxx to the annual last year. Hope that helps!

Thanks

John

Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

It helps enormously. Thanks!

David

Again, empathy, acknowledgement of fact and social enquiry dominated context B data. Within section 2 it was noted that respondent A had begun to use empathy in order to gain (or attempt to gain) resources. After the initial stages of section 3 this no longer proved to be the case. An interesting observation lies in the occurrence of a rise in social proximity between respondent A and context A at the same time.

Central tendency with section 3, context B were again coded as empathy, acknowledgement of fact and social enquiry. The developments made to coding in section 3, context A, socially close and enquiry making, were used to tag e-mails then used traces of familiarity to make a point, support empathy, or make a general enquiry.

 In difference to section 2, the use of empathy to seek reassurance and sympathy over a situation by respondent A fell in frequency. This may suggest that his (respondent A) improved relations with context A and familiarity with new position resulted in less need for support. Developments are illustrated within the table below:

Section 3	Context A	Socially close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Gratitude (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (deviation from central tendency)	Formal, distance and commands (deviation from central tendency)
Section 3	Context B	Socially close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Empathy given (central tendency) Empathy sought (deviation from central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (central tendency)	Gratitude (deviation from central tendency)

<u>Central Tendencies and Negative Cases</u>

Central tendencies and negative cases (deviations) are illustrated in the table above. The use of socially close and enquiry making joined the central tendency categorisations from stage 2. As with context A, this applied to e-mails that demonstrated forms of social engagement, ie how are you? This differs from and supports empathy which involves a process of identification, ie I know you're busy, however…

Negative cases and deviations were marked by the occasional use of gratitude in place of acknowledgement of fact. Gratitude appears as an extension of acknowledgement of fact, serving to confirm something but then continuing to remark on the help (for instance) that information/resources have provided. An example appears below:

Purchasing Officer

John,

Did you receive the XX report copy?

Steve

Respondent A

Steve,

I did thanks…it came in very useful!

John

Section 3, Context B, Beliefs

Respondent A had little to add or observe regarding his beliefs over context B. The relationships within this context had been given little thought by respondent A, with the respondent remarking that the status of these communications being taken for granted. He remarked that he was unaware of a fall in requests he was making for resources to members of context B.

Section 3, Context B, Barriers

The respondent felt there were no barriers concerning his relationships with context B. E-mail communications between himself and context B were a success, he believed, and this had help the respondent deal with a difficult first period in their new position.

Respondent A felt that he had complete control over his relationships with context B. He felt there was a degree of empathy that allowed communications within the group take place with ease, with their being little or no use for a considered strategy of communication.

Section 4

Section 4 is the final section of respondent A data. The section was a continuation of the patterns established within the latter stages of section 2 and section 3. Again the data is separated into context A and context B in order to demonstrate comparisons and promote clarity.

Context A

Respondent A had now been operating within his new position for over a year. New patterns that began early in section 3 had now become established as norms. Central tendency became established as socially close and enquiry making by nature. Respondent A was able to enjoy far higher levels of compliance through these patterns, particularly when compared to the formal approach adopted upon change of position within section 2. The following loops illustrate:

Loop 1

Respondent A

Hi Craig,

I know this may come at a bad time, but is it possible to get the XX figures by Friday?

John

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi John…no problem, I'll certainly try my best!

Craig

Loop 2

Respondent A

Hi David,

Are there any chances of receiving the XXX copies by next Wednesday?

John

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

That may be tricky I'm afraid. With the new central deadline it'll be hard to do any kind of distribution before the official date. If any leverage appears, I'll certainly do my best.

David

Respondent A

Hi Janet,

Hope your well? When is the deadline for the next quarter figures?

John

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

I'm well thanks, the next deadline is the 24th of next month.

Bye

Janet

Loop 4

Respondent A

Hi David,

Is there any news on the distribution of the quarter's deadlines?

John

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

Unfortunately the only news that I have is the deadline has been put back and so to I presume the distribution dates. I'll keep you posted as and when.

Respondent A

Hi David,

Thanks for the information, I'd really appreciate the updates.

<u>Loop 5</u>

Respondent A

David,

You stated that you could have the figures ready by Wednesday, it is now the following Monday. I appreciate your recent efforts to accommodate my requests, but given your positive answer last week, I have planned my schedules accordingly. Please rectify this situation as soon as it is possible.

John

Within section 4 the central tendency of **replies** from context A moved back to its original form of compliance. This may not be equal to operational effectiveness ie requests were met concretely; however, the central tendency was one of cooperation. It is interesting to observe how context A actors mirrored (post section 1) the e-mail styles adopted by respondent A. The use of formal distance produced formal distance responses; it can be observed within section 4 that the central tendency of requests (socially close, enquiries) is mirrored by the replying actor. Gratitude as a central tendency continued.

An interesting deviation was two instances where A was promised resources that failed to arrive. In response to this, respondent A replied with a stern enquiry. Stern enquiries differed from formal commands as they pointed out the problems non arrival of resources had caused; instead relying on an *appeal* to rectify this personal sounding grievance through a form of empathy seeking ie *this has been a personal problem for me because of your actions*. The table below illustrates developments:

Section 4	Context A	Social close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Gratitude (central tendency)	Empathy (deviation from central tendency)	Formal (deviation from central tendency)	Stern enquiry + empathy sought (deviation from central tendency)

Section 4, Context A, Beliefs

Respondent A believed that his relationships with context B (via e-mail) had improved considerably. Through the substitution of "being friendly" for "authority" the respondent believed that they had been able to overcome their earlier problems. The respondent observed that it had been a lesson, not only of organisational power and authority, but also the "importance of communicating on a level".

Section 4, Context A, Barriers

Respondent A believed that the initial barriers faced when communicating via e-mail had been overcome. However, respondent A believed that a form of "honeymoon period" had ensued once his communication patterns had changed. Following his initial change, he had enjoyed almost unbridled cooperation with context A, however, examples began appearing where support was promised and not delivered and e-mails had become terse (see Loop 5, central tendencies and negative cases). Respondent A believed that cooperation would "certainly dominate" but conflicts over e-mail were going to be inevitability.

<u>Section 4, Context A, Control</u>

Respondent A believed that he had established a degree of control over his relationships with context B. Moving "conversational" tactics had enabled him to secure complete cooperation within section 3 and the majority of section 4. During instances where cooperation was offered but did not materialise, respondent A remarked these episodes had been "tricky" to handle. Not able to enforce formal lines of authority, A had to make what he referred to as a "rational appeal". Respondent A observed that he tried to make the other actor *feel responsible for problems he had endured as a result of their actions*, remarking this method (in most cases) had secured the completion of the original request.

<u>Central Tendencies and Negative Cases</u>

The central tendency within section 4, context A was again socially close enquiry making and gratitude in response to received cooperation. Deviations from these norms took the form of empathy, where respondent A demonstrated sympathy for other actor's circumstances (ie workload), the use of formality and stern enquiry. Stern enquiry has already been discussed, however, the re-occurrence of formality proved to be an interesting deviation. This single episode took place where respondent A came into possession of resources that were needed by the central purchasing department, the exchange follows:

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

As you may know central will need your forecasts to go into the viability projections. I've received an e-mail this morning explaining that the deadline is a non-negotiable 26th of this month. Could you please let me have your forecasts by the 23rd.

Thanks David

Respondent A

David,

Thank you for the information. Could you inform central that my deadlines are now set by executive who request the forecast for the 7th of next month .I will send you a copy by the 5th.

The above exchange marks a very temporary return to formality when dealing with context A, yet it seems the injection of Formal power temporarily restored A's authority. Set out below is a re-cap of the central tendencies and negative cases:

Section 4	Context A	Social close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Gratitude (central tendency)	Empathy (deviation from central tendency)	Formal, distance (deviation from central tendency)	Stern enquiry + empathy sought (deviation from central tendency)

Context B

Context B had produced the most consistent patterns throughout respondent A's data. Central tendency continued along the pattern of socially close and acknowledgement of fact with empathy moving to a deviation joining with gratitude. The loops below illustrate typical examples:

Loop 1

Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

Hope your well? Just letting you know things are pretty much the same over here. How is life treating you as a virtual worker?

Respondent A

Hi Carl

Life as a virtual worker is improving now things have settled down. Sorry to hear that things are still the same over there! Hope Amanda is well, we'll have to meet for lunch soon.

John

Loop 2

Senior Purchasing Officer

Hi John

Letting you know we're probably going to be getting an audit within the next couple of months which probably means that you are too! It looks like executive rather than central will carry this out, so it probably means that you're going to be sitting pretty! Any way thought I'd let you know.

Cheers

Nigel

Respondent A

Hi Nigel,

Thanks for the warning!

John

Respondent A

Hi Nigel,

How is your audit going? I know they can be a pain. Anyway, anything that you think I should need to know?

Senior Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

Well considering that it's being executed by executive, its one of the most painless I've ever been through. Quite a surprise! Hope this calms your nerves, but since your operating an executive initiated department I can't see them being anything other than gentle!

Cheers

Nigel

Respondent A

Hi Nigel,

Sounds too good to be true! I just hope your right. Hopefully I'll see you tomorrow at the departmental and we can catch up.

John

<u>Loop 4</u>

Respondent A

Hi David,

Just wondering how you're getting on with the new guidelines for tender construction? Any tips?

Senior Purchasing Officer

Hi John,

The forms are actually an improvement on the old process and take you through the procedures step by step. No tips really, it's just straight forward. Let me know what you think.

David

Respondent A

David,

Thanks will do!

John

The loops demonstrate how the patterns between respondent A and context B have become ingrained. Exchanges of information, requests and general enquiries are delivered through socially close means. The table below summarises the final section of data for context B:

Section 4	Context B	Social enquiries, social close (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (central tendency)	Empathy (deviation from central tendency)	Gratitude (deviation from central tendency)

Section 4, Context B, Beliefs

Respondent A believed that his relationships with context B were stable and effective. However, respondent A observed that these relationships were built more on friendship emerging from the common ground of occupying similar positions. These circumstances had allowed a degree of empathy to build up within context B that helped "ride out difficult situations". Communication within this group, respondent A observed, did not involve any form of consideration, remarking that it was "natural".

Section 4, Context B, Barriers

The respondent was not aware of any barriers concerning his relationships (via e-mail) with context B actors. The e-mails, he observed, had become indicative of friendships and good acquaintances and these affected the frequency of e-mails. In other words, respondent A tended to e-mail only the actors he enjoyed good relationships with in context B. This seemed to be a subconscious means of overcoming barriers as the respondent observed that it was something that had not previously occurred to him.

In addition, his new position, head of the virtual purchasing department, meant that he received very little information and directives from senior members of staff. His position relied on negotiation between actors of similar rank. This did, respondent A observed, have impact on which actors he chose to e-mail.

Section 4, Context B, Control

Respondent A felt that he had established good control over his relations with context B. His (respondent A) e-mail patterns had proven effective from a professional as well as a social basis. The respondent also felt that this manner of managing his relationships with context B had probably been more strategically focused than he had realised. When confronted with the data, the respondent expressed surprise over the frequency of which actors he had e-mailed some actors, who were considered pivotal within the organisation, hardly at all. Respondent A expressed that the correlation between actor and frequency lay in how well he got on with the person. Thus, respondent A had managed his relationships with context B through a reliance on **social expectation**.

For the first time within the investigation a category emerged post content analysis. Social expectation had emerged through a combination of data analysis, and researcher/respondent interaction. Below it is added to the previous summary of results:

Section 4	Context B	Social enquiries, social close (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (central tendency)	Empathy (deviation from central tendency)	Gratitude (deviation from central tendency)	Social expectation

Social expectation cannot be classified as either a central tendency or deviation. Rather, it is psychological mechanism that drives respondent A's choices.

Central Tendencies and Negative cases

There was little movement in central tendencies, the fall in frequency of empathy continued from section 3 and the rise of social enquiries and socially close e-mail patterns continued. Acknowledgement of fact again provided a key contrast with context A, where respondent A seemed less inclined to demonstrate gratitude to context B.

This observation must be tempered with the high levels of e-mail that contained social content, along with the emergence of social expectation; the respondent felt there was less of a need to thank actors with whom he enjoyed consistently good relationships.

The fall in empathy may be assigned to the fact that respondent A had settled into his new role and increasingly become more effective (performance wise) in his e-mail use; this is particularly prominent within the context A data history.

Respondent B

Respondent B is a male junior purchasing officer within the same department as respondent A and agreed to grant full access to his sent mailbox. During his involvement in the study B moved positions from the central purchasing department to the new virtual department in similar fashion to respondent A. Upon moving to the virtual purchasing department, respondent B was promoted to respondent A's deputy. Respondent B's data again split itself up into two distinct parts, pre change of position and post change of position. The sample again covered two years of e-mails, but only totalled 550.

The two years of data was split into four sections of six months. This was done to enable comparisons between respondents at similar times and contexts to be more easily made. Examples of the data (from each of the sections) are demonstrated using a typical schema analysis approach, presentation of direct quotes to illustrate emergent themes (Denzin, 2000). Each example is then supported by the responses gathered using the BBaC model.

Section 3	Context A	Socially close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Gratitude (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (deviation from central tendency)	Formal, distance and commands (deviation from central tendency)
Section 3	Context B	Socially close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Empathy given (central tendency) Empathy sought (deviation from central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (central tendency)	Gratitude (deviation from central tendency)

Section 1

Within section 1 respondent B was within his initial position as a junior purchasing officer. The respondents' patterns of communication with all staff, regardless of hierarchical position, were of a formal, distant nature as the following loops demonstrate.

Loop 1

Respondent B

Jane,

Could I have copies of the XXX this afternoon?

Junior Purchasing Officer

No problem

Respondent B

Nigel,

When is the deadline for XX report?

Senior Purchasing Officer

24th March

Loop 3

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi Darren…could I have a copy of your XXX report this PM?

Jill

Respondent B

Jill,

XXX report attached

<u>Loop 4</u>

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi Darren,

Any chance of meeting this afternoon to go through tomorrow's meeting?

Cheers

Respondent B

Dave,

2.00?

<u>Loop 5</u>

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

This months deadline is the 27th, reports by the 25th.

Respondent B

Dave,

Noted

The above loops demonstrate the short, socially distant replies and acknowledgements of fact that respondent B used in his e-mail communications. Unlike respondent A, respondent B adopted this mode of communication with actors regardless of hierarchical position.

The patterns are summarised within the table below:

Section 1	All hierarchical positions	Short, socially distant requests and responses	Acknowledgement of facts

Central Tendencies and Negative Cases

Within section 1 of the respondent B data the central tendency was the use of short socially distant requests and responses with acknowledgements of fact. There were no negative tendencies or deviations from the central tendency within the stage. As a result the summary table re-appears below with no additions:

Section 1	All hierarchical positions	Short, socially distant requests and responses (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of facts (central tendency)

Beliefs

Respondent B, at stage 1, believed he gave little reflection to the construction of his e-mail. He (the respondent) did not see e-mail as a strategic feature of his work. However, respondent B also remarked that he kept his e-mails short and "to the point" in order to avoid misunderstanding, referring to numerous incidents where perfectly innocent remarks were misconstrued. Thus, there contained an element of implicit strategy to his comments.

Barriers

Respondent B referred to an awareness of general barriers facing e-mail use that he implicitly applied to his own communication patterns. With reference to his beliefs, respondent B saw e-mail as a communication medium that could easily go wrong if the receiver does not share the same frame of reference. There the respondent seemed to shape his e-mails around an avoidance of potential pitfalls.

The respondent had not faced any problems that had occurred through e-mail. As a result B felt in control over his e-mail patterns within section 1, remarking that his chosen style had produced the results that he aimed for, and relative compliance.

Section 2

Within the early stages of section 2, respondent B received promotion to his new position, deputy of virtual Purchasing Department. This produced a marked change or rather an introduction to a new pattern of communication. The following loops demonstrate:

Loop 1

Respondent B

c.c: Respondent A

Dear Mike,

Following our conversation this morning. I have outlined the difficulties that I face carrying out further purchasing department work.

As you know, I have worked extremely hard to make the new purchasing centre a success, and this is now paying off. This means that I must now devote my time to the centre, as otherwise I will be unable to fulfil my obligations and will be missing new opportunities.
This is compounded by the fact that my contract no longer reflects the work that I have been doing. Clearly I should be on a manager's contract and this anomaly grieves me deeply and needs to be rectified.

I am distressed at the difficulties that this causes, but under the circumstances I have little option but to withdraw from the advisory work.

Best Regards

DLF

<u>Loop 2</u>

Respondent B

Dear David,

I'm sure your aware of the pressures of my own deadlines and as a result cannot commit to commenting on last months figures.

Darren

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

Your e-mail is duly noted. However, may I remind you that you still an employee of XXX, and are required to perform duties that are not unreasonable. I hope we can avoid referring to your employment contract.

* Note: the above response ended the loop

<u>Loop 3</u>

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

Just to let you know I'll be able to revise the quarter figures for Tuesday next. Apologies for the delay.

Darren

Senior Purchasing Officer

OK

Mike

<u>Loop 4</u>

Respondent B

Hi David,

If you'd like help with next quarter's analysis, let me know.

Darren

Senior Purchasing Officer

I will do Darren. Thank you for the offer.

David

<u>Loop 5</u>

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

The quarters figures are in, your input would be appreciated.

David

Purchasing

Hi David,

I'll get some input back in order with your deadline

Darren

The above loops illustrate a progression throughout section 2. On transferring to his new position, respondent B almost immediately adopted a new communication pattern. His response to enquiries concerning the supply of *his* services to his former purchasing department was challenging, utilising the formal, distant and affirmative patterns of respondent A within his early position. However, **responses** from other actors to B's replies did not meet with compliance; they tended to counter challenge which is demonstrated within loop 2.

The loops illustrate how this pattern developed, soon evolving into a socially close method of contact; the table below summarises:

Respondent B	Section 2	Formal, distant and affirmative responses	Socially close responses	Acknowledgement of fact

<u>Central Tendencies and Negative Cases</u>

Within section 2 of the respondent B data the central tendency was the use of socially close responses and acknowledgements of fact. The central tendencies were a "bottom up" pattern in the sense that they evolved out the relative ineffectiveness of the formal, distant and affirmative responses used by B at the beginning of the section. Evidence of negative cases was present only twice, at the beginning of the section, when two responses given by B in response to requests from the same senior member of staff were of a socially close nature. To re-affirm, these two examples ran contrary to the "at the time trend" of formal, distant and affirmative responses. The examples appear below:

Senior Purchasing Manager x

Hi Darren…hope your settling in. Could you browse these XXX reports for me and let me know your thoughts?

Appreciated…Bob

Respondent B

Hi Bob,

I will do, I'll give you some feedback next week.

Darren

Senior Purchasing Manager x

Hi Darren…thanks for your efforts last time, any chance of a repeat? The dead is next Thursday if that is possible within your new schedule.

Thanks
Bob

Respondent B

Hi Bob,

I'll certainly give it a go.

The summary table for central tendencies and negative cases appears below:

Respondent B	Section 2	Formal, distant and affirmative responses	Socially close responses	Acknowledgement of fact
Respondent B	Section 2a:- represents the early stages of section 2	2 x socially close responses (deviation from central tendency)		

Section 2a has been added to point out that the two negative cases occurred within the early stages of section 2 when the central tendency was formal, distant and affirmative responses to requests for work and/or expertise asked for by central senior managers.

Beliefs

Respondent B, during section 2, believed that he gave more serious reflection to the construction of his e-mails. The respondent B felt that he had experienced a degree of autonomy within his new position, and admitted the sensation of being able to refuse work from his old department felt both "empowering" and "good". Respondent B revealed that these feelings had been accentuated by a continuing grievance over his contract which had not been resolved. He remarked that the chance to write curt e-mails felt "almost therapeutic".

When asked about the two e-mails where he had agreed to perform work without question during the initial period of section 2, the respondent remarked that the (Senior Purchasing Manager x) had been "good" to him and tried strenuously to resolve the contract issue on his behalf.

<u>Barriers</u>

Respondent B remarked that the barriers to his e-mail style within section 2 "were obvious". The respondent felt they had over estimated their position in regard to refusing work and responding curtly and the respondent soon found themselves "put back in my place". As a result, the respondent commented that he had to adopt a far more friendly approach; the reasons behind this were two fold. The first reason was to repair what the respondent perceived as damage between himself and senior management caused by his e-mail style and secondly, a realisation that rather than being autonomous, the virtual purchasing department was resource dependent upon central and its discretions. As a result, respondent B remarked there was a real need "to be nice".

<u>Control</u>

Respondent B commented that section 2 (authors phrase) had been "all about control". The respondent felt that his e-mail communications early on within the section had caused considerable damage to his future potential and performance, and thus felt little feelings of control. Respondent remarked that the rest of this section was spent trying to restore and build social capital between him and the central purchasing department.

<u>Section 3</u>

Section 3 began along the same lines as the latter stages of section 2. Respondent B continued to use a socially closer style of communication representing an extension of the respondent's strategy to build social capital. The loops below illustrate:

<u>Loop1</u>

Respondent B

Hi Brian,

Is there a chance of meeting with you next week to discuss how we may use the data for next months recommendations?

Thanks

Darren

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

I'm able to do the Friday early AM if that is any good to you?

<u>Loop 2</u>

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

Are you able to analyse (essentially second glance) over the quarters figures for next deadline, Monday 27th?

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

Yes, I'll certainly try my best, if I run into any problems I'll let you know.
Darren

<u>Loop 3</u>

Respondent B

Hi Dave,

Thanks for the info that you sent earlier. Is it possible to get the previous years XX summary?

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

Attached XX summary

Respondent B

Hi Dave,

Thanks very much

<u>Loop 4</u>

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

Please find attached my comments on the last quarter. Is it possible to receive your comments on XX report?

Senior Purchasing Officer

Hi Darren,

I've attached what you wanted. Thanks for your comments

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

No problem thanks for your help.

<u>Loop 5</u>

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren

I've attached the quarter's figures. Could you take a look and provide comments?

Respondent B

Hi Dave,

I'll provide feedback by next Friday if this fits in with your timetable

Senior Purchasing Manager

Darren,

Friday is fine. Thank you

The above loops illustrate a subtle change in progression throughout section 3. Respondent B had begun to demonstrate a subtle exchanging style of communication. The assertiveness and distance seen within his initial change of position has now been replaced with compliance to received requests. Two important factors have emerged from this change. The first is that respondent B supports compliance with a socially closer style, for example, extending loops to issue thanks for help. Secondly, this change has been mirrored by respondents, particularly those of Senior Purchasing Officers. Respondent B and the Senior Purchasing Officers have entered into a type of exchange relationship; respondent B performs duties (with the minimum of fuss) and in return receives necessary and helpful information.

The table below summarises these developments within respondent B's sample.

Respondent B	Section 3	Socially close responses	Gratitude	Exchanges	Acknowledgement of fact

Central Tendencies and Negative Cases

Within section 3 of the respondent B data the central tendency was the use of socially close responses and acknowledgements of fact. Although these are the same findings to section 2 there is a key difference. The central tendencies within section 2 emerged out of the failure of B's previous patterns revolving around assertiveness. Within section 3 these patterns were now established and begun to evolve to include gratitude, marked by an extension at the end of a loop. The example below illustrates, an exchange takes place, note the way in which the exchange could have appropriately ended at the point marked 1, yet respondent B extends the exchange to point 2:

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

Please find attached my comments on the last quarter. Is it possible to receive your comments on XX report?

Senior Purchasing Officer

Hi Darren,

I've attached what you wanted. Thanks for your comments   **POINT 1**

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

No problem thanks for your help. **POINT 2**

This extension had become common place throughout section 3. In addition, exchange appears as a central tendency. Respondent B began using the effectiveness of a more socially close style to ask for information in return. This in the overwhelming amount of cases was complied with, and instances where it was not, it was simply due to the information not being available to any potential user. Within section 3, the table remains the same as no negative cases contrary to the central tendencies appeared. The table appears below:

Respondent B	Section 3	Socially close responses	Gratitude	Exchanges	Acknowledgement of fact

Beliefs

Respondent B, during section 3, believed that he had adjusted to his new role and the approaches needed to perform effectively. He (respondent B) commented that he was now used to his new role and in order to fulfil it he was dependant on securing cooperation from relatively senior central members of staff.

<u>Barriers</u>

Respondent B felt that the barriers he had previously encountered had been overcome by adopting a "more mature approach" to his role. Building relationships with staff in central became essential, although not a formal requirement of B's job, and this had infiltrated his e-mail patterns. Respondent B commented that he had never thought so much about the content of his e-mails and this had occurred due to the failures of communication within section 2. E-mails, for the respondent, had now become a means to overcome and avoid barriers.

<u>Control</u>

Respondent B felt that he had now gained control over both his role and his e-mail patterns. Although he observed that he had carelessly caused substantial damage within stage 2, respondent B now felt that this situation had been adjusted. The respondent was now able to use e-mail to negotiate deadlines more effectively and exchange information that improved and/or enhanced his overall performance.

Section 4

Section 4 data continued identically to that of section 3. Respondent B continued to use the socially closer style of e-mail that had become established within section 3. The loops below aim to illustrate:

<u>Loop 1</u>

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

The quarter's return forms have just been distributed. I'm hoping you could take a look, possibly by next Friday?

Respondent B

Hi Dave,

I have a really busy week coming up, but could guarantee feedback by the following Monday.

Senior Purchasing Officer

That would be appreciated. Thanks for your efforts.

<u>Loop 2</u>

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

I'm trying to put together a summary of recent activities and could with the data from your last quarters XX report. I'm hopefully going to demonstrate that the new tender system made an impact on the XX cycle

Senior Purchasing Officer

Hi Darren,

The doc you wanted is attached. I also thought you may want to use the summary of last months forecast. For once it was spot on, so if you can establish a link there, it should look impressive.

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

This is an enormous help, thanks! If you need anything let me know.

Senior Purchasing Officer

I'll let you know next quarter!

<u>Loop 3</u>

Respondent B

Hi John,

Is it possible to get some figures relating to last years overall forecasts. Mike Dixon told me you had put together some correlates that may be useful for a cycle report I'm putting together.

Darren

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

Are these figures for a central or virtual report? I ask because there are several correlates, some of which would be more appropriate for a virtual cycle report than the others.

Respondent B

Hi John,

Thanks for the info. The report is for virtual, anything that's particularly appropriate would be much appreciated. Thanks.

Darren

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

Info attached, any further questions, get back to me.

Loop 4

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

Attached are this months returns for the XX report. I'm hoping you could make a contribution. In the meanwhile, if you need input on your cycle report please let me know. My XX deadline is the 27th.

Respondent B

Hi Dave,

I've attached my draft cycle report and would be really grateful if you could take a look. I'll have my comments to you on the XX by the 26th. Thanks for your help.

Loop 5

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

The figures you gave me last month were spot on, thanks for your help. Is there a chance that you could take a look at next months for me, using the same form of analysis.

Senior Purchasing Officer

Darren,

I'm glad the figures were of use and I'm happy to help. However, the only problem is that my ability to help is going to be severely limited by the deadlines I face working within central. The reason I point this out to you is so that you can appreciate that my feedback may be in drips and drabs with varying levels of depth. I hope you understand.

Mike

Respondent B

Hi Mike,

I fully appreciate the commitments that you have and I'm grateful for any support that you can offer no matter how small. Thanks very much.

Cheers

Darren

The above loops demonstrate the continuation of socially focused patterns within respondent B's e-mail exchanges. What has developed within section 4 is the respondent's flattening of hierarchy between himself and the senior purchasing officers within central. Loop 5 is particularly indicative of this as it demonstrates an almost apologetic stance from the senior purchasing officer as he explains why his ability to help B may be limited.

The social proximity of e-mails has continued to produce patterns that demonstrate exchanges. It is commonplace for respondent B and senior purchasing officers within central to subtly negotiate the exchange of information. The exchanges seem to be responsible for building the social capital that has led to the flattening of hierarchy mentioned above. A summary table of section 4 data appears below:

Respondent B	Section 3	Socially close responses	Gratitude	Exchanges	Acknowledgement of fact

Negative Cases and Central Tendencies

Within section 4 the central tendency was again socially close responses, featuring gratitude and exchanges. As with the previous sections (and previous respondent) acknowledgement of fact appeared as a central tendency. Exchanges had become more extended, even more so than within section 3 and this reflected itself within the truncated social distance that appeared between hierarchical exchanges. Section 4 contained no negative cases and the tabular summary reflects this:

Respondent B	Section 3	Socially close responses	Gratitude	Exchanges	Acknowledgement of fact

Beliefs

Respondent B believed that he was now fully attuned to his new post and felt confident in his e-mail communications. He felt he had turned a corner in his relationship with his peers and this relationship had matured to a reciprocal one that existed on "even footing". Respondent B felt that this was an irony; he explained that when he first entered the virtual purchasing department he had felt empowered and did not feel the need to be responsible to the central hierarchy.

This attitude, the respondent felt, had affected his performativity substantially, making him realise the value and necessity of good relations with central. Using a socially softer approach, the respondent observed, had produced relations with senior members of staff far superior to those that he had enjoyed before his entry into the virtual purchasing department. Respondent B commented that he had felt an equal rather than a subordinate to the senior purchasing officers.

Barriers

The respondent felt that he had overcome completely the barriers that he had encountered within sections 1 and 2. Respondent B's e-mail patterns had now reached a point where e-mail was increasing the effectiveness of his work through the development of a network with Senior Purchasing Managers. This network, in contrast with the earlier stages of his virtual role, was a strategic means of overcoming and pre-empting barriers.

Control

Respondent B felt this was the area where he had grown the most; control over position and relationships. The networks had supplied a means of communicating effectively with central and more significantly a means of exchanging important information. The information exchanges, respondent B believed, had enhanced his career in terms of quality of output but also gone someway in "getting virtual off to a good start". Respondent B summarised that the maturation of his relationships with Senior Staff gave him a sense of reward and "a feeling of comfort", reflecting, B remarked that he found it hard to believe that e-mail had been such a powerful tool in accomplishing this.

Respondents A and B have been illustrated in detail. This had been done to ensure that the reader is familiar with the methods that have been used to generate and modify categories. The following four respondent results are illustrated in less technical detail whilst remaining in sync with the four section timeline used with respondents A and B. Tabular summaries of general trends, central tendencies and negative cases will still appear at the end of each time-framed section; however, beliefs, barriers and control interview summaries will appear at the end of each respondent sub section.

Respondent C

Respondent C is a female administrator located within the same purchasing department as the previous respondents. Respondent C granted full access to her sent mailbox and produced two years worth of data spread over 2000 e-mails.

Respondent C relied mainly upon social tactics in order to manage her e-mail relationships. The methods she employed to do this were either social or friendship depending upon the circumstances of the relationship. Of the most significant are the approaches made by C to actors who were unknown or partially known to her. In these instances C would always adopt social tactics in her exchanges attempting to do this strategy regardless of corresponding rank or gender.

The following timeline illustrates the progress of C's discursive patterns. Sections of time are cordoned into six monthly periods, this equates to four periods throughout the two year sample. Within each period an account of e-mail activity is presented along with relevant examples.

Section 1

General patterns, with section 1 were of a far more social nature when compared to those of respondents A and B. These equated to the dominant use of social tactics when communicating with other female administrators of varying levels. However, in numerous cases respondent C would use socially close e-mails when communicating with senior male colleagues. Below is a series of typical requests and responses:

<u>Loop 1</u>

Respondent C

Hi Charles,

Hope your well..i'm enquiring about the meeting notes which you asked me to type…how many copies would you like??

By the way, I hear you're a big cricket fan, I've been a widow of the game for all my married life.. so I can't say I approve!!

Purchasing Director

Hi Jill,

I'd like twelve copies please. Sorry to hear about your bereavement but I can assure you its in a very good cause!!

Cheers

Charles

Respondent C

Hi John,

Hope your well and sorry to bother you!!...Jamie tells me you need a copy of the X report, do you need hard copy or electronic

Bye for now

Jill

Loop 3

Female Administrator

Hi sweetie,

We are all a bit worried about how plan X is going to effect us bods up here- have you any news, are you worried, any news from the big Kahuna?

Respondent C

Hi sweetie…not worried at the mo…not worried about Charles (The Purchasing Director) *I have him eating out of my hand…I'll give you the latest after I mail him this PM!!!!!!!*
Xxx

Respondent C's e-mail patterns were largely of a socially close nature. The respondent would use predominantly e-mails of a social pattern that included general enquiries on a person's health, work load. Socially close e-mails also included a new code identified as friendship.

Friendship occurs where the content was indicative of a more intimate relationship; indicators include openings such as "sweetie" "Darling" and the presence of highly informal language such as "gonna". The table below summarises:

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Empathy given

Negative Cases and Central Tendencies

Respondent C clearly demonstrates the attempted use of social tactics to lubricate and lever her relationships. In the vast majority of cases respondent C made and responded to requests using close responses and these were identified with and responded in kind by the interlocutor. Negative cases came from a minority of senior male colleagues (a total of two) who deferred the social approach, example below:

Jill,

Electronic will suffice

John

As with respondents A and B, acknowledgement of fact also appeared as a negative case within respondent C's data set. Tabular summary below:

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Friendship (central tendency)	Empathy sought (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (negative case)
			Empathy given (central tendency)	Deferred social approach/response (negative case)

Section 2

This period saw a significant increase in the use of e-mail by respondent C. The e-mails centred on the departmental re-structure (which respondents A and B had previously been through in their re-allocation to the virtual centre) and provided strong evidence of social networks being used with senior male colleagues. A large amount of e-mails were enquiries (both formal and informal) about information regarding the departmental re-structure. Respondent C was highly active in trying to collect information and re-distribute to colleagues. One of the main sources of information was from senior male members of the purchasing department. Respondent C would systematically apply social tactics in order to glean information. During this period there was evidence of previous reserves of "social capital" being levered in order to gain information.

Loop 1

Respondent C

Hi Dave…long time no hear!!..how are things up stairs??...any info regarding the re-structure that you know?

Hugs

Jill

Purchasing Officer

Hi Jill,

Things are ok up here. We have a meeting this pm regarding the re-structure, I'll keep you posted.

<u>Loop 2</u>

Purchasing Officer

Morning Jill!

The meeting yesterday threw up a couple of things. Charles is going to centralise XX activity and this should give the virtual units more scope. Not sure what its going to mean for you guys though!! Any more I'll let you know

Respondent C

Hi Dave....your such a star!!

Hugs

Jill

<u>Loop 3</u>

Respondent C

Hi Girls...got some info out of Dave (W)...he says that XX activity is going to become centralised under Charles, so the virtual units have more freedom...if XX is going to become centralised under Charles, then its going to pay to get in with him.

Kisses

<u>Loop 4</u>

Respondent C

Hi Charles,

Hope your well..i'm enquiring about the meeting notes which you asked me to type…how many copies would you like??

By the way, I hear you're a big cricket fan, I've been a widow of the game for all my married life.. so I can't say I approve!!

Purchasing Director

Hi Jill,

I'd like twelve copies please. Sorry to hear about your bereavement but I can assure you its in a very good cause!!

Cheers

Charles

The tabular summary appears below and is identical to section 1, reflecting the consistency in respondent C's e-mailing patterns:

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Empathy given

<u>Central Tendencies and Negative Cases</u>

As with the overall summary, central tendencies and negative cases are consistent with Section 1throughout section 2.

Section 2	Socially close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Friendship (central tendency)	Empathy sought (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (negative case)
			Empathy given (central tendency)	Deferred social approach/response (negative case)

Section 3

Information regarding the organisational restructure was becoming increasingly common place. This was demonstrated in the amount of "for information" executive e-mails being distributed to all staff. It is noteworthy that much of this information had been distributed informally by respondent E. Despite a continuation of increased e-mail based around social tactics activity at the beginning of period 3, the data returned to the patterns demonstrated within period one. The results are summarised in the table below:

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Empathy given

Central Tendencies and Negative Cases

Once again central tendencies and negative cases are consistent with the previous samples:

Section 2	Socially close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Friendship (central tendency)	Empathy sought (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (negative case)
			Empathy given (central tendency)	Deferred social approach/response (negative case)

<u>Section 4</u>

During the final period of data analysis the patterns of respondent C continued in similar fashion. There were two further instances of obtaining information and distributing it into the referent network; an example follows. Respondent C has just received a copy of a report a week ahead of intended distribution, the report and the following text is then sent to four fellow female administrators:

<u>Loop 1</u>

Respondent C

Hi Gals…attached is the XX report…a week ahead!!!...read it and enjoy!!

Hugs

Jill

Female Administrator

Thanks hon…your our very own secret agent!!

Sam xx

Results are summarised within the table below:

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Empathy given

Central Tendencies and Negative Cases

Within section 4 central tendencies and negative cases are consistent with the previous sections data.

Section 2	Socially close and enquiry making (central tendency)	Friendship (central tendency)	Empathy sought (central tendency)	Acknowledgement of fact (negative case)
			Empathy given (central tendency)	Deferred social approach/response (negative case)

Below is a summary of the Beliefs, Barriers and Control interview data for respondent C.

Beliefs

Respondent C believed that e-mail was a highly strategic tool, commenting that "it was great for getting gossip" The respondent felt that e-mail was like a conversation and allowed people to collect and spread information if you "wrote like you were having a conversation". Respondent C, when going through the results remarked that the re-structure phase (section 2) demonstrated exactly what she meant when she talked about "getting gossip".

Barriers

The respondent remarked that the only barriers she could identify were the possibility of someone exposing the confidential information she had been disseminating.

Respondent C felt that e-mail increased the amount of control she had over her job, describing herself as "a great e-mailer". She commented that if you examine the data, it is easy to see how much information she can get ahead of official dissemination and also the amount of contacts she has made. Respondent C remarked that since e-mail she has "never felt so in control!"

Respondent D

Respondent D is a male Senior Purchasing Officer located within the same department and organisation. D granted full access to his sent mailbox which stretched back over two years and provided over 2500 e-mails.

In many ways respondent D was the easiest data to analyse. Throughout the entire sample D repeatedly deferred social interaction to responses of a more social nature and employed perceived hierarchical affiliation and non-social tactics in his e-mail approaches such as the formal and distant commands used by respondent A in his original position. Respondent D's data provided further evidence of how **some** female administrators would attempt to integrate senior male actors into socialised exchanges. Respondent D's constant deferring over social approaches acted as a mechanism to position the female administrative staff in sub-ordinate positions. This approach of managing relationships led respondent D to suffer negative outcomes. On numerous occasions D was forced to enquire about the progress of requests, frequently citing that completion was over deadline. D's results were similar to those of respondent A during the period when A had recently changed positions. To re-cap, this period saw respondent A employ non social discursive patterns that relied on a no longer present hierarchical affiliation; this led to his requests being consistently turned down and ignored.

The structural circumstances that defined A's discursive codes in his later position impacted in similar fashion upon D. D's refusal to enter into socialised discourse produced frustration as requests to female administrators were delayed in their completion or ignored. The data demonstrated that, like A, D was over dependent upon his perceived affiliation to the formal hierarchy of the organisation. A key difference between the two respondents, however, is that respondent A adjusted and evolved his discursive patterns in line with his interaction with other actors. Respondent D, for two years, continued to defer all socially closer responses by junior members of staff.

Section 1

Loop 1

Purchasing Officer

Hi James

Hope your well and fully recovered from your trip…how was it?

Any way back to work stuff…when is the deadline for xxxxx report?

Bye for now Jane

Respondent D

August 24

James

Respondent D

Daniel,

The figures for first quarter are now required. I shall expect yours by the 14th of this month.

James

Purchasing Officer

Hi James,

A quick question: if report X addresses the external purchasing contracts, why is this being included in report Y?

Just curious!

Respondent D

Simon,

Report X is required by executive as a broad overview of purchasing structures. Report Y is for dissemination amongst senior managers at department level. The regulations state this quite clearly.

James

Below is a summary of respondent D's e-mail patterns for section 1:

Section 1	Formal, distant commands	Acknowledgement of facts	Deferring

Negative Cases and Central Tendencies

Respondent D's patterns were totally consistent throughout period 1. Central tendencies were identical to those of respondent A during his initial position change. Interestingly for an organisational actor, the respondent's inability to achieve desired results produced no negative cases outside of the central tendencies:

Section 1	Formal, distant commands	Acknowledgement of facts	Deferring

Section 2

This is marked by the organisational restructure. Respondent D receives an increased amount of e-mails during this period and it also becomes evident that a significant amount of his requests are not met, either in part or totality. The increase in e-mails amounted to requests and information regarding the restructure. Within this period there was a corresponding increase in e-mails utilising social tactics made particularly by female administrators but also by subordinate male colleagues. Only two of these e-mails overtly asked for information regarding the restructure, one from a female administrator the other from a junior male Purchasing Officer.

Loop 1

Female Administrator

Hi James…I was wondering if a man of your influence had heard anything about the restructuring. We're pretty much in the dark down here!!

Ang

Respondent D

Angela,

Matters regarding the restructure will be communicated via the appropriate channels as deemed by executive.

James

<u>Loop 2</u>

Respondent D

Janet,

Where are the fully edited X reports? The Purchasing Department deadline was June 15, it is now the 17th. The department, I am sure, expects a good reason.

Female Administrator

James,

We have no specific designation to any of the units within purchasing. As a result we are required to manage a huge workload as best we can. The deadline, that you set, was not planned in accordance with the administrative team. So, we have had to re-set deadline ourselves. Please consult in setting future deadlines.

Janet

Respondent D's limited use of discursive tactics and reliance on hierarchical affiliation seemed to have locked other actors, regardless of position or gender, into following a pattern of non-cooperation. Within period 2 this seemed to have been accentuated by the proliferation of referent e-mails within this period and respondent D's persistent deferring.

| Section 2 | Formal, distant commands | Acknowledgement of facts | Deferring |

Again respondent D's patterns followed a rigid consistency:

| Section 2 | Formal, distant commands | Acknowledgement of facts | Deferring |

Section 3

This period saw a drop in the amount of e-mails experienced within period 2 data. E-mails followed a similar pattern throughout, respondent D continuing to demonstrate a constant reliance on non social tactics. Period 3 differed to period 1, in the aftermath of the restructure, that respondent D experienced even greater levels of non-cooperation from female administrative staff. When respondent D chased deadlines he was met with the same non social tactics that he himself employed (the example used in period 2, final loop, provides a good illustration). This seemed to be an extension of patterns established within period 2, and a possible consequence of the restructure where D had systematically refused to identify with the rise in social tactics.

| Section 2 | Formal, distant commands | Acknowledgement of facts | Deferring |

Negative Cases and Central Tendencies

Again negative cases and central tendencies remained constant:

| Section 2 | Formal, distant commands | Acknowledgement of facts | Deferring |

Section 4

This period continued along the same lines as period 3. D employed identical non-social tactics and again experienced difficulties with female administrators. It would seem that in the cases of both C and D, the types of power and tactics used by them during the period of restructuring (period 2), impacted upon e-mail interaction through periods 3 and 4.

Section 2	Formal, distant commands	Acknowledgement of facts	Deferring

Negative cases and Central Tendencies

Again this data followed a consistently rigid pattern:

Section 2	Formal, distant commands	Acknowledgement of facts	Deferring

Below is a summary of respondent D's Beliefs, Barriers and Control interview data:

Beliefs

Respondent D believed that e-mail was a fairly un-important piece of organisational life. He acknowledged that many respondents liked to use it to chat but that he, himself, "failed to see the point". The respondent saw e-mail as "strictly functional".

Barriers

Respondent D was amazed at how often he had failed to achieve his objectives through e-mail, commenting "I had no idea things were this bad". The respondent acknowledged that he saw e-mail as a device to keep colleagues at arms length, however, upon examining the data, he claimed to realise that this did not seem to be an effective approach. An interesting observation made by D was his acknowledgment that he seemed to be "over confident" in the authority of his position, commenting that the e-mails demonstrated "the power of informal life".

Control

The respondent felt, upon observing the data, he had little control over his relationships or work through e-mail. Before observing the data, the respondent remarked he had given e-mail very little thought, however, did not feel that the medium hampered his work performance.

Respondent E

Respondent E is a female Purchasing Officer (PO) within the same public sector organisation and purchasing department. E granted full access to her sent mailbox that extended back over two years and contained over 2000 e-mails.

Respondent E's management of female relationships was based around social approaches/responses deploying them through social tactics and friendship. In keeping with the previous data, E seemed to be a member of the referent network, often using it to expedite requests and disseminate useful information. Respondent E did not approach male or senior male members of staff with socially based e-mails, but would reply, in kind, if the response was socially based. Although this demonstrated socialised patterns (between E and male actors) it did not extend beyond the casual. Rather, it acted more as a social lubricant when negotiating organisational rules and regulations.

The data suggests that E was able to act (in the way B {original} did) as a communication black box. This was achieved through the use of two distinct methods: hierarchical based-non-social tactics, and social tactics/friendship. The key feature that separated respondent E from respondent D (who occupied a similar position) was the total absence of deferment.

The following timeline illustrates the progress of E's discursive patterns. As in previous sections, sections of time are cordoned into six monthly periods, this equates to four periods throughout the two year sample. Within each period an account of e-mail activity is presented along with relevant examples.

Section 1

Respondent E's discursive patterns revolved around the use of social tactics. These could be divided into two categories: approaches and responses. Respondent E, when communicating with fellow female members of staff would approach them with social tactics. When approaching male and senior members of staff, E would adopt non-social tactics. However, if the response respondent E received contained social tactics, E would *identify* by replying in kind.

Loop 1

Respondent E

Dear Jon,

Please find attached the required DLW forms. I hope these actually are the ones your looking for, if not, please get back to me.

Regards

Julia

Senior Purchasing Officer

Hi Julia,

These forms are fine, thanks again!!

Cheers

Jon

Respondent E

Hi Jon…anytime!!

Jules

<u>Loop 2</u>

Respondent E

Hi Annie,

I have the X report to finish by Friday, and I'm not going to do it unless I can your sections figure…which aren't gonna be released till Monday!!! Please, please, please be an angel and see if you can get me copy??!!

Jules

Fellow Purchasing Officer

Hi Jules…figures attached!!...and consider me an angel!!!

Annie xx

Respondent E's patterns reflect the fairly wide range of approaches she employs in her e-mail communication. The respondent's patterns range from friendship through to socially distant, altering her patterns as dictated by the perceived context and/or interlocutor:

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given

Central Tendencies and Negative Cases

Given the wide range of tactics employed by respondent E there were no negative cases that appeared within section 1.

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given

Section 2

Period 2, as with the other respondents demonstrated a marked increase in respondent E's e-mail traffic. As with the other samples, the topic of many e-mails was the organisational restructuring. Respondent E was exposed to large amounts of social tactics in order to ascertain any information that she may be aware. In response, the respondent would provide what she knew. Simultaneously, respondent E would send an increased amount of e-mails based around utilising "social capital" in order to gather information regarding the restructure. However, the data from this sample was an illustration of social networks becoming increasingly active. In other words, requests and responses for informal pieces of information took place between female colleagues. There was no evidence of E attempting to increase the size of her network; rather, a levering of existing social resources took place. In other words, E

maintained the use of non-social tactics when addressing colleagues who were male and/or senior to herself.

<u>Loop 1</u>

Fellow Purchasing Officer

Hi Jules,

Have you heard anything yet? Got any goss from this mornings meeting??

Mindy

Respondent E

Hi Mindy,

Looks like Charles is on the up!!...The virtual units are going to eat up some of the spare resources but it looks like Charley boy is going to be the guy to set the future allocations!!

I'll let you have more when I get it…you better do too girl!!

Jules

Results are summarised below:

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given

<u>Negative Cases and Central Tendencies</u>

Respondent E's patterns remained consistent:

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given

Section 3

This period again demonstrated a fall in e-mail traffic, although a slight rise in the amount of informative e-mails sent by executive. Respondent E returned to the e-mailing levels of period 1 and employed identical tactics.

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given

Section 4

Data from this period again proved to be indicative of the patterns established across the preceding periods. Respondent E continued to employ a wide variety of social tactics, adjusting her patterns along with contexts and/or respondents:

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given

Below is a summary of the Beliefs, Barriers, and Control interview data collected from respondent E.

Beliefs

Respondent E remarked that they enjoyed e-mailing, describing it as "fun". The respondent also observed that you need to follow "rules when e-mailing". The need for rules, she continued, amounted to the fact that a person could never be fully sure how another person would interpret the e-mail. When the respondent e-mailed colleagues she had to be "pretty much sure" in advance how the other person would interpret the content. This, she said, accounted for the appearance of networks in the data; they were built on established e-mail relations.

Barriers

The only barriers which the respondent recognised were the possibility of misinterpretation. As such, making reference to the data, the respondent observed that she would only "lighten up" when the "other person had first". Interestingly, the respondent remarked that she welcomed e-mails where the other person was friendly as she enjoyed "being nice".

Control

Respondent E felt in control of her e-mail relationships. She again re-emphasised the need to be careful of the person and situation over which e-mailing takes place and the respondent felt that her data reflected her safety first approach.

Respondent F

Respondent F is the final respondent. She is a Senior Purchasing Officer within the same organisation and department as the other sample members. Again, full access was granted to her sent mailbox that also contained two years of data and consisted of over 2300 e-mails.

The role of respondent F was similar to that of A in his original role as Purchasing Director. F did not possess the legislative authority of the Purchasing Director but did have a decision-making role. This proved to be an interesting contrast as again F was required to defend the legitimacy of her decisions, and whereas A was also required to do this, he did so from a male perspective.

Respondent F's patterns demonstrated a broad use of discursive codes and a variety of tactics. F's application of tactics to contexts, however, was consistent with earlier findings. For example, when F was attempting to enforce or transport organisational rules and regulations the respondent would apply non-social tactics to their e-mails. This served the same purpose as earlier findings of absolving the respondent of personal qualities whilst creating a dialogue between actors and the organisation. In situations where an actor did not agree with F's application of rules and regulations, the respondent would make more detailed reference to organisational legislation and cc'ing their line manager. This choice of tactics mirrored the discursive patterns of respondent A (original position) when faced with similar circumstances.

Respondent F's results are of particular significance due to the variety of power bases and tactics that the respondent employs. F was able to convey various levels of social proximity through changing discursive patterns in accordance with context. This approach differs to other respondents who have occupied senior positions. To illustrate, respondent A (original position) and D would continually apply non social tactics when communicating with less senior members of staff. Respondent F, by contrast, would frequently employ social tactics when communicating with less senior members of staff.

This did not represent membership of any social network. Long term maintenance of relationships through e-mail was not demonstrated within the results, the tactics were dependent upon social tactics rather than friendship. Social tactics and the use of referent power were particularly apparent when respondent F was making requests outside of their legitimate authority. These were applied by respondent F more as social lubricants rather than attempts to establish more enduring referent relationships.

The use of social tactics (in this instance, taking the formality out of the task by creating a conversation style of exchange) by F is used in a way that is distinctly not used by respondent D. Respondent F is prepared to close down social space in situations where sovereign authority is unnecessary or can easily be substituted for social tactics. Although F is not a part of any social network this does not prevent the respondent from benefiting the use of social influence. This is evidenced when the data from other respondents is contrasted.

The following timeline illustrates the progress of F's discursive patterns. Sections of time are cordoned into six monthly periods, this equates to four periods throughout the two year sample. Within each period an account of e-mail activity is presented along with relevant examples.

<u>Section 1</u>

The data quite quickly demonstrated the breadth of respondent F's e-mail discursive patterns. Throughout this period dealt with a large amount of incoming requests whilst simultaneously making a similar amount of requests. Requests were made using social tactics:

<u>Loop 1</u>

Purchasing Officer

Maddie,

I feel that the deadline for this quarters XXX report is too severe. Given my current obligations I don't see how I can hope to meet it.

Daniel

Respondent F

Daniel,

The executive decision requires that all PO reprioritise their work in light of the tight quarterly deadline. Current obligations will be deemed by executive, as secondary activity to the production of the report. Re-plan your current workload in light of this information.

Maddie

<u>Loop 2</u>

Respondent F

Hi Janet,

Hope your well! I'm wondering if you can run off the attached document on letterhead? No big rush, I know how busy you are!

Thanks so much

Maddie

Administrator

Hi Maddie,

Yes I'm fine thank you…the letter is in your tray, I had a spare couple of minutes!

Bye, Janet

Loop 3

Purchasing Officer

Maddie,

I feel that the deadline for this quarters XXX report is too severe. Given my current obligations I don't see how I can hope to meet it.

Daniel

Respondent F

Daniel,

The executive decision requires that all PO reprioritise their work in light of the tight quarterly deadline. Current obligations will be deemed by executive, as secondary activity to the production of the report. Re-plan your current workload in light of this information.

Maddie

Results for section 1 are summarised within the table below:

Section 1	Acknowledgement of facts	
	Social enquiry	Empathy given

Negative Cases and Central Tendencies

Within central cases and negative tendencies the only instance of the respondent replying out of character was in a single instance of a male colleague (similar position) making a social based request to which F offered a single word response "yes". Below is the tabular summary:

Section 1	Acknowledgement of facts (central tendency)	Defer (negative case)
	Social enquiry (central tendency)	Empathy given (central tendency)

Section 2

As with the previous respondents' data, period 2 was marked by an increase in e-mail traffic, with the increase attributable to the organisation restructure. Respondent F received an increasing amount of both formal and informal requests for information but sent out only formal requests to senior staff herself. This represented a minor break in F's discursive patterns. Within period 1, F had exclusively made requests using social tactics. A pattern between the amounts of requests F was receiving for information and F making formal requests to senior staff appeared. It is significant that this change in F's request making patterns was confined to one pathway: F to senior staff regarding the organisational restructure. In other words, for a non-social request to take place the recipient had to be senior and the topic organisational re-structure. In all other cases F's requests defaulted to type: social.

<u>Loop1</u>

Junior Purchasing Officer

Hi Maddie,

I was wondering if there is any news regarding the re-shuffle? Sorry to bother you over this but we are all bit curious as what the future holds!!

Tom

Respondent F

Hi Tom,

No apology needed, your interest is fully understandable and as you can imagine I'm getting a lot of requests for info! I shall make some enquiries ASAP and get back to you.

Maddie

<u>Loop 2</u>

Respondent F

David,

I'm receiving an increasing amount of e-mails from staff concerning the restructure. I'd like to receive the official position regarding this matter asap.

Thanks in advance

Maddie Thomas

HR Director

Maddie,

Please find attached a statement for distribution.

Regards

David

Patterns remained consistent during this period with the exception of formal, distant commands appearing as a central tendency, the table demonstrates:

Section 2	Formal, distance commands	Acknowledgement of facts
	Social enquiry	Empathy given

Negative Cases and Central Tendencies

Within section 2 there were no negative cases, with patterns remaining consistent:

Section 2	Formal, distance commands	Acknowledgement of facts
	Social enquiry	Empathy given

Loop 3

Indicative of the previous respondent's data, this period demonstrated a marked fall in e-mail traffic compared to period 2. Respondent F data within period 3 returned to the familiar patterns established within period 1; socially based requests and identified responses ie F would respond to social patterns with social patterns. The presence of non-social requests to senior members of staff disappeared within this period.

Section 3	Acknowledgement of facts	
	Social enquiry	Empathy given

Central Tendencies and Negative Cases

Patterns remained consistent throughout period 3:

Section 3	Acknowledgement of facts	
	Social enquiry	Empathy given

Section 4

This period was again indicative of patterns established within period 1. F continued to base their requests around the use of social tactics; the following examples provide an illustration of the consistency in respondent F's request making:

Loop 1

Respondent F

Hi Anne,

Can I get some dates to go through the corrections on the X paper? Any time to suit you in the next couple of weeks would be great!

Thanks!

Maddie

Female Administrator

Hi Maddie,

Next Tuesday at 11.00 or the Wednesday at 10.00 would be great…hope to see you next week.

Anne

<u>Loop 2</u>

Junior Purchasing Officer

Maddie,

I believe the XX deadline is due this month. Could you supply the exact date so I can organise my workload accordingly?

Jane

Respondent F

Jane,

The deadline is due 24th

Maddie

Tabular summary appears below:

Section 4	Acknowledgement of facts	
	Social enquiry	Empathy given

Again patterns were consistent:

Section 4	Acknowledgement of facts	
	Social enquiry	Empathy given

Below is a summary of the Beliefs, Barriers and Control interview data collected from Respondent F:

Beliefs

Respondent F believed that e-mail was a medium that required careful management. The respondent believed that it could either enhance or damage your relationships, so it was a process that required "some degree of thought". She commented that a lot of people are careless in their e-mailing and that it can prove costly. From the respondents own perspective, they tried to keep things "friendly", building on good relationships but commented that e-mail was also a good tool when you needed to space.

Barriers

The respondent felt that provided e-mail was handled carefully, it should present no barriers. However, she remarked that over "immovable bureaucratic" disagreements it was sometimes near impossible to progress she would simply be receiving pages of rules and regulations, rather than being able to enter into debate. She described this process as being "closed down".

<u>Control</u>

On reflecting upon her data, respondent F felt that she demonstrated "very good" control over her e-mail relationships. She attributed this level of control to the fact she gave careful consideration to the content of her e-mails.

<u>End of Data</u>

This concludes the respondent data. Following, are tabular summaries of the data collected from all six respondents across the four time frames:

Respondent A

Section 1 Context A	Formal, distant commands			
Section 1 Context B	Empathy			
Section 2 Context A	Formal, distant commands	Acknowledgement of fact		
Section 2 Context B	Empathy given and empathy sought	Social enquiry	Acknowledgement of facts	Formal, distant commands
Section 3 Context A	Socially close and enquiry making	Gratitude		
Section 3 Context B	Socially close and enquiry making	Empathy given	Acknowledgement of fact	Gratitude
Section 4 Context A	Socially close and enquiry making	Gratitude	Empathy	Formal, distant commands
Section 4 Context B	Social enquiry	Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy	Gratitude

Respondent B

Section 1	Socially distant requests and responses	Acknowledgement of facts		
Section 2	Formal, distant and affirmative responses	Socially close responses	Acknowledgement of fact	
Section 2 a Represents early stages of section 2	Socially close responses			
Section 3	Socially close responses	Gratitude	Exchanges	Acknowledgement of fact
Section 4	Socially close responses	Gratitude	Exchanges	Acknowledgement of fact

Respondent C

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Empathy given
Section 2	Socially close and enquiry making	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Empathy given
Section 3	Socially close and enquiry making	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Empathy given
Section 4	Socially close and enquiry making	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Empathy given

Respondent D

Section 1	Formal, distant commands	Acknowledgement of facts	Deferring
Section 2	Formal, distant commands	Acknowledgement of facts	Deferring
Section 3	Formal, distant commands	Acknowledgement of facts	Deferring
Section 4	Formal, distant commands	Acknowledgement of facts	Deferring

Respondent E

Section 1	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given
Section 2	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given
Section 3	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given
Section 4	Socially close and enquiry making	Formal, socially distant	Friendship	Empathy sought
			Acknowledgement of fact	Empathy given

Respondent F

Section 1	Acknowledgement of facts	
	Social enquiry	Empathy given
Section 2	Formal, distance commands	Acknowledgement of facts
	Social enquiry	Empathy given
Section 3	Acknowledgement of facts	
	Social enquiry	Empathy given
Section 4	Acknowledgement of facts	
	Social enquiry	Empathy given

Collectively the categories that were identified during the investigation appear in tabular form below with corresponding definitions:

Formal, distant commands	The use of organisational rules and regulations
Empathy given	Offering identification with a colleagues circumstances
Empathy sought	An actor seeks identification with their circumstances
Socially close/enquiry	The use of social language in making requests/responses
Gratitude	An expression of thank you for anticipated or completed task
Acknowledgement of fact	A very short e-mail that merely acknowledges that something has been completed
Friendship	The use of a personal relationship
Deferring	The refusal to mirror another actors conversational patterns

[Table 9]

Within this chapter, the data and analysis has been presented. The following chapter reviews these results.

Chapter Seven - Discussion of Findings

This chapter aims to discuss and develop theoretically the findings presented within the previous chapter through engaging with the e-mail literature; this leads onto a critical review of the methods. The following categories were generated from the investigation:

Formal, distant commands	The use of organisational rules and regulations
Empathy given	Offering identification with a colleagues circumstances
Empathy sought	An actor seeks identification with their circumstances
Socially close/enquiry	The use of social language in making requests/responses
Gratitude	An expression of thank you for anticipated or completed task
Acknowledgement of fact	A very short e-mail that merely acknowledges that something has been completed
Friendship	The use of a personal relationship
Deferring	The refusal to mirror another actors conversational patterns

[Table 9]

These categories are indicative of the patterns used by the six respondents over a two year period to negotiate their organisational e-mail use. The question that immediately arises on the categories examination is: are they representations of power? Realistically, the answer appears to be no. Rather, the categories that have been generated seem to be strategies and tactics that operationalise two forms of power: formal and informal. Actors within the investigation broadly chose to employ a formal or informal approach in all instances. The use of a formal approach required the use of legislative power derived from organisational rules and regulations and this form of power brought with it a set of particular strategies and tactics. These particular strategies and tactics manifested themselves in socially distant e-mail patterns whereby the actor affiliated themselves with the formal authority of the organisation. The use of an informal approach relied upon the use of referent type power that sought to appeal to an actor as a discreet individual as oppose to a passive organisational actor. To operationalise this type of power socially close strategies and tactics were employed with an emphasis on building up and levering personal relationships.

The obvious issue arising from this analysis is how the conclusions merely mirror Foucault's historic analysis of power; the organisation contained both sovereign and Machiavellian power. However, it was also the manner in which respondents saw power themselves, as either formal and through affiliation, or informal and referent.

Affiliation and Referent Power

These two forms of power represent the informal (referent) and formal (affiliation) discursive codes that permeated the organisational e-mails. It is worthwhile re-capping their theoretical and empirical relationships especially in light of the data. The following table was used to demonstrate two perspectives on organisational power: Hobbes (sovereign) and Machiavellian.

Hobbes	Machiavelli
Emphasis on causality	Emphasis on "strategy"
Science and the Monarch each Constituted as authoritative origins of action as it should be	Pragmatic advice and ethnographic orientation towards forms of action actually encountered
Adoption of the role of "legislator"	Adoption of the role of the "interpreter"
Emphasis on mechanistic metaphors	Emphasis on military metaphors
Emphasis on a source of prime motion behind action	Emphasis on the contingent nature of action
Problematic of legitimacy lending the account of power an implicitly "moral" stance, with a stress on the legitimate identification (in terms of science) of the means of power as well as a concern for good order in the ends that power serves	Problematic of strategy lending the account of power an implicitly "amoral" stance, with a stress on the efficiency of means rather than the goodness of ends
The use of the myth of political community	The use of myths in political organisation

Machiavelli and Hobbes' metaphors for modernity, Clegg, 1998, p34 [Table 10]

When actors have communicated through e-mail (throughout the investigation) it appears that influencing and re-enforcing the perception of other actors is fundamental. Actors within the sample have utilised some form of strategy to shape the perceptual legitimacy of their requests and responses. The most consistently effective have generally been those of a referent, informal nature.

Referent strategies ranged from social lubricants to covert information networks but either way outcomes were not always aimed at fulfilling self-interest, as suggested by authors such as Pfeffer, (1981). Rather, the referent strategies act as organisational shortcuts; bypass systems that compensate actors without the Formal power to action requests. Of course, there are clear instances where referent power is abused, but the line between legitimacy and illegitimacy in referent cases is hazy. Its own affiliations are practical Machiavellian realisations.

The above is explained by the electronic actions of the actors within this study and the contrast between Machiavellian and sovereign metaphors. Actors who used referent strategies were organisationally positioned in a way described by Clegg's (1998) commentary on Machiavellian power:

"Power is not any thing nor is it necessarily inherent in any one; it is a tenuously produced and reproduced effect which is contingent upon the strategic competencies and skills of actors who would be powerful" (Clegg, 1998, p33).

Power, in its referent guise, was a not a consistent sum of power that an individual actor possessed. Referent power, as Clegg (ibid.) infers above, was a contextually created device. Actors attempted to create the conditions whereby the use of referent power was contextually appropriate through the reduction of social space. This would play out into a language game (Ducheneaut, 2002) whereby actors would attempt to conduct exchanges upon a contextual level that they deemed appropriate. The potential strength of referent power was its ability to bypass the game and set the context on a consistent basis between cooperating actors. This served to empower individuals through networks in a way observed by Knights et al, (1985) by forming consistent identities that delivered sometimes-privileged information.

Referent power of this nature created agents that relied upon the "efficiency of means" in collecting information for the wider network, demonstrating a clear link between Machiavellian strategies and referent power.

Referent power, and its various modes of deployment, represents an interpretation of the organisational game that is underway within the investigation. The actors themselves, especially those, who lack formal authority (power) and/or are aware of the contingent nature of power and authority itself, conduct this interpretation. They interpret it in the strategic management of space, creating forms of power that negotiate the formal, affiliation, sovereign face of organisation. Data of this nature suggests that actors themselves use metaphors to analyse and interpret organisational structures. Some actors seem to demonstrate affiliation/sovereign dependence whilst others seem to rely on more psychologically astute means, Trist (1983) provides a very similar picture:

"(Organisations) are cognitive as well as organisational structures…once can only too easily fall into the trap of thinking them as objectively given, quasi-permanent fixtures in the social fabric rather than the ways we have chosen to construe various facets of it" (Trist, 1983, p273).

Trist's (ibid.) words apply equally to the lens organisational actors take to e-mail construction as they do to the theories of power research. Of course, most actors within the investigation were able to use both the key types of power at some point and in varying frequencies (referent and affiliation). The difference is in the "efficiency of means". Respondents who seemed to be contingently aware of the relationship between power and context, would, as Clegg (1998) suggests, be focused on the "forms of action actually encountered". In other words, they would align context, power and tactics in a political motion.

Machiavelli observed that very often the securing of consent is of a far greater strategic benefit in the deployment of power than the application of rules and regulations (Wolin, 1960). The investigation has certainly demonstrated this theory.

For the hierarchically distant actors, the ability to use referent power has compensated (if not more than compensated) their lack of formal authority. By contrast, actors who relied strictly on affiliation power, especially when this application did not perceptually align with a respondent and context, did so to their detriment. Affiliation/sovereign power held only limited and contextual power as it relied on an actor's view that power and the route to how to get things done could be a fixed and constant variable.

Respondents who took this approach employed strategies that psychologically distanced themselves from other actors. In a manner reminiscent of Gains (1999) non-attribution of agency, respondents adopting this approach would employ a discursive code that created a dialogue that seemed to take place between organisational rules and regulations rather than between individuals. This approach to power reflects views on an organisation with the same lens argued by authors such as Pfeffer, (1981), Mintzberg, (1983), and Gray and Ariss, (1985). The crux of these arguments suggests that power is the centralised ability of the organisation to distribute legitimacy in order to fulfil organisational objectives (Pettigrew, 1985, Mintzberg, 1983 for instance). These theories are themselves reflected in the use of affiliation power as actors rely upon the central fixing of power over their decision making and requests/responses. This belief that reliance on organisational language would diffuse sovereign power between interlocutors across all contexts was mistaken. Within the earlier section, in order for actors to construct their e-mails it was suggested that the forms of power are not only representations of types of power but also the lens. Whereas actors employing referent based strategies often demonstrated a contingent interpretation of organisational power, actors employing affiliation demonstrated a far more centralised view of power.

A reliance on legitimate authority, the affiliation of an actor to the organisation's rules and regulations, fails to recognise the inherent cognitive structures that intertwine with the formal (Trist, 1983,Knights and McCabe, 1999, Hardy, et al, 1998). Data within this investigation demonstrates that actors who neglected psychological proximity (informal discursive patterns) were unable to gain co-operation with objectives to the same degree as actors who did.

This creates an interesting point regarding organisational power. Mintzberg (1983) observes the following:

"Distilled to its essence, therefore, politics refers to the individual or group behaviour that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all, in the technical sense, illegitimate- sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise (though it may exploit any one of those)" (p172).

When Mintzberg argues such a stance on informal structures he neglects not only the cognitive structure of an organisation but as demonstrated within this data, the potential power in itself of using social and psychological proximity in e-mail use. In other words, to be more political, Machiavellian approaches to e-mail discursive patterns does not necessarily qualify as illegitimate behaviour. Respondents who engaged in referent activities did not always pursue active and solipsistic self-interest.

As such, many referent exchanges were social lubricants. Given the contingent nature of power within organisations, the shrewd respondents would seek to build social reservoirs that could be used when circumstances changed over time and affiliation power was no longer available. Studying e-mail historically allowed the latter finding to be demonstrated quite vividly. Respondent A (original position) for instance, followed Mintzberg's route quite rigidly. E-mail patterns used by A relied entirely on the use of affiliation power; due to his position with the hierarchy he was able to manage space and objectives effectively. However, when his position changed so did his circumstances and consequently his context with other actors. With no reservoirs of social and referent power his position was compromised in its effectiveness. The lens of sovereign power, in this case, seems to see only the formal structure with no regard to possible contingencies; Ducheneaut supports this well:

"Those who are in a position of authority threatened by e-mail have different options at their disposal to re-establish the status quo, different potential games they can play. In the first one, individuals whose power is threatened by e-mail's introduction can use another source of power to counter its effects: organisational rules. For instance, it is possible to imagine managers using their formal hierarchical power in the form of policies limiting electronic communications to certain pathways" (Ducheneaut, 2002,p74)

It is clear within this investigation that supposing Mintzberg's (1983) comments are a depiction of power in organisations, then they are only a snap shot depiction based on hierarchical charts and formal lines of authority. A reliance on sources of power that merely reflect current circumstances, for individual actors, seems to be a shortsighted approach.

Political, more Machiavellian behaviour needs not be the opposition of authority that Mintzberg (1983) and Pfeffer (1981) suggest, and the data demonstrates this. Rather, the current investigation demonstrates that more informal and political modes of communication are necessary in achieving organisational goals. These are practical observations based on an organisation's e-mail exchanges through the "windows" of six respondents. Hardy and Clegg (1998) ask how relationships will be formed in the modern organisation where face to face exchanges are reduced in favour of virtual ones. The respondents and related actors within this investigation seem to take two clear pathways.

Actors seem to exert and interact with organisational power using referent and affiliation relationships. The data has produced discursive patterns that reflect either psychological proximity or psychological distance. These patterns reflect a tendency for actors to construct e-mail along personal, social lines (known as referent power) or official, rule bound lines (known as affiliation power). What appears to facilitate these two primary patterns is actor interpretation of context. In other words, referent and affiliation power acts as interpreting mechanisms through which actors navigate e-mail and social space, thus establishing a context.

Interpreting mechanisms of referent and affiliation power reflect rather closely the methods used by literature to analyse and explain power within organisations (see Clegg, 1998, Hardy and Clegg, 1998, Knights et al, 1985, Mintzberg, 1983 for examples). It seems that actors based on their own perceptions of relative power share these mechanisms, therefore making these stances empirical psychological processes as well as theoretical notions. These interpreting mechanisms then become approaches to space management as actors seek to negotiate the formal structure of the organisation either by reliance on its sovereign authority or through its cognitive, more informal structures (Trist, 1983). These pathways are not exclusive *modus operandi,* but rather tactical tools that contextually sensitive actors will move between depending upon their interpretation.

A Formalised Model of Power within this Investigation

A diagram [diagram 1] of how referent and affiliation concepts relate to the e-mail data appears below. The display is based upon the summary of Machiavellian and sovereign power used by Clegg (1998). This approach is chosen to represent how closely dominant organisational notions of power (sovereign and Machiavellian) mirror the empirical data on the mechanisms of affiliation and referent power used in e-mail communication within this investigation.

Sovereign/Affiliation	Machiavelli/Referent
Emphasis on causality	Emphasis on "strategy"
The organisation as authoritative legislator of action as it should be	Ethnographic orientation towards forms of action actually encountered
Adoption of the role of "legislator"	Adoption of the role of the "interpreter"
Use of formal organisational rules and regulations	Emphasis on informal, cognitive structure
Emphasis on a source of prime motion behind action	Emphasis on the contingent nature of action
Emphasis on formal structures of language based on the notion that organisational goals are of a higher order and should be accepted regardless of discursive code	Emphasis on informal structures of language based on the contingent nature of affiliation power, seeks to build social reservoirs that supersede formal structures
The use of myths of political organisation	The use of myths in political organisation

Ducheneaut (2002) in a similar study of how power interacts with e-mail and organisation concluded that the e-mail structure reinforced the organisations current power structure. Ducheneaut (ibid) argues along with Agri (1998) and Perrin (1991) that e-mail patterns return to type and reflect the concrete state of power relations, producing e-mails that are indicative of formal status relationships. These types of conclusions tend to represent an exclusive, sovereign and formally structured view of power shared by Mintzberg (1981, 1983) and Pfeffer (1981). The data within this investigation suggests that power, during e-mail exchanges, tends to reflect more contextually determined dynamics such as suggested by O'Sullivan et al (2003). Ducheneaut (2002) and the broader objectives of Agri (1998) and Perrin (1991) do not account for sub-groups, cognitive structures and situational changes on an individually experienced level. As a result power, as a dynamic within e-mail tends to have restrictive definitions (see Pliskin, 2000, Pliskin et al, 1997, Romm 1999). The factors of sub-groups, cognitive structures and situational changes have defined the data collected within this study, and although power in the form of linguistic pathways can be identified, the use of them has not been confined to simply reflecting formal structures, Lamerichs et al (2002) observe:

"Instead of becoming salient, which suggests that people select their identity from a pre-established, and therefore limited, set of possible identities, social categories are locally built and re-built so as to manage a great deal of mostly subtle interactional work" (Lamerichs et al, 2002, p468).

Discursive codes are tools to negotiate formal structures, usable regardless of hierarchical position. These results have a common element with Kiesler and Sproull (1992) who argue e-mail has a democratising effect on organisations by allowing lower level actors the chance to communicate with higher level actors (see also, Romm, 1999).

The democratising effect within this investigation has not, though, had the same effect as that experienced by Kiesler and Sproull (1992). The use of referent power has allowed hierarchically weaker actors to engage in discourses (through e-mail) with hierarchically superior actors that otherwise may not have taken place. However, there existed counter strategies in order to prevent space being shortened between hierarchically separated actors; the deferring and non-socialisation tactics used by respondent A (for example) under the umbrella of affiliation power.

The contingent nature of power and actor reflexivity within this investigation prevents e-mail's role in relational power being largely democratising (see Brigham et al, 1999 for a similar observation). Data was of a far too complex nature. In order for the "democratic process" to take place **identification** needs to occur. Referent strategies and their related tactics can only close social space between hierarchically diverse actors when both actors identify with the discursive context. Rather, the dynamic is far too contingent. Findings suggest a focus upon the discursive tools employed by actors will provide a more detailed picture of e-mail and its democratic role.

These tools of manipulation were identifiable as referent power and affiliation power. Actors either sought to close space or open it, sometimes this would evolve into long term and consistent discursive patterns in the form of networks, which would in turn, seek to incorporate other members into it. This process was largely contingent on identification, which is now discussed in the following section.

Tactics of Power and Identification

The tactics of power referred to the shape of the e-mail. As the investigation progressed the tactics become traces in sequences of interaction. Postmes et al (2000) stresses the importance of context when attempting to understand the local dynamics of e-mail interaction:

"Although a message might seem rude to an outsider examining it out of context, it is not certain that rudeness was either intended by the sender or perceived by the receiver. This underlies the importance of looking at the context and meaning of messages" (Postmes et al, 2000, p357).

As e-mail exchanges were analysed in detail local norms emerged between actors and groups. This resulted in tactical options appearing at different points throughout exchanges. Building this theory around the management of e-mail and the naturally occurring social space, the data demonstrated that actors would have to **identify** with the tactics used by another actor in order to make a another set of tactics available. In other words, if actor A attempted to reduce social space in approach to actor B, this form of management could only proceed if B identified with the approach. Below is an example:

Assume the following linguistic options are available to actor A:

Referent	Friendship
Affiliation	**Socially close**
	Socially distant

Assume that actor A has chosen the options appearing in bold (above). Actor B receives this e-mail, the options open to her are as follows:

Identification	**Affiliation**	Friendship
	Referent	Socialisation
		Socially distant
		Defer

Again, the bold text represents actor B's choices. In this instance B does not identify with A's discursive pattern and instead defers. O'Sullivan et al (2003) locates something similar during their e-mail investigations. These authors argue that norms between e-mail interactants only become established on a trial and error basis, a form of identification. If identification is broken this can result in norm violations:

"...norm violations can be entirely unintentional. Unintentional violations can be understood as a misalignment of norm sets: individuals (say, newcomers to a social network) hold their own set of understandings about appropriate and effective communication that may not overlap substantially with those of the social network. Socialisation (or trial and error) is the means by which norm sets can become more accurately aligned to avoid unintentional negative violations" (O'Sullivan et al,2003,p79).

Therefore, not all tactics will be immediately available to an actor. The data demonstrates that as actors identify and continue identifying with various levels of social proximity the tactical options available will increase. Identification appears first before any e-mail has been sent or received as it relies on a tacit assumption by the writer on the relative relationship between themselves and the intended recipient. An example of this is the way in which e-mail attitudes developed toward respondent A when he changed positions. Data suggested that actors no longer perceived A as a legislator of rules and regulations. Difference in e-mail responses to A was marked from the outset of the change. The only explanation available was the tacit assumption of other actors in the change of relative power in A's position. A new context had been created.

Identification becomes more pivotal when exchanges enter the electronic domain. At this point the amount of social space designated as appropriate will play out in order to establish norms. Returning to respondent A as an example, the lack of identification with his discursive patterns within his new role resulted in him seeking to reduce social space and establish an effective norm. Space reduction in this instance increased A's ability to use social power as it was more readily identified with amongst the wider network of actors. In other words, as Postmes et al (2000), O'Sullivan et al (2003) and Mallon (2000) point out, contextual identification seems to be the key in effective space management.

Brigham and Corbett (1997) argue that any investigation of organisational structure will either be an implicit or explicit study of power. E-mail tactics are indicative of this as actors within the sample either sought to re-enforce their structural power or by pass it by building up social capital.

Researchers have produced accounts of power in organisational e-mail investigations, either implicitly or explicitly (see Brigham and Corbett, 1997, Pliskin et al, 1997, Pliskin et al, 1995, Romm 1999, Ducheneaut, 2002, Perrin, 1991, for examples). However, no study has yet produced an account of the micro dynamics of power in organisational e-mail in such detail over such a sample (see Ducheneaut 2002 in particular for a close example). It is important to note that the tactical elements of the methodology and analysis require application to extended time-based samples in order to be effective.

The tactics sit under the broader umbrella of the binary system of power introduced within this chapter: referent and affiliation. Power is the chosen facilitator of psychological proximity. This is based around an actor's particular identification with a context, will they choose to re-enforce structural power or bypass it using referent power? The tactics represent the longer-term picture of how the electronic relationships develop as actors form networks, use socialisation, or instead defer in order to maintain or re-enforce their perception of relative power. Application requires detailed reading of every e-mail and the constant cross-referencing of individual actor interactions in order to track and account for changes. The following section is an example of how to apply the methodology to future studies.

How To Use the Methodology

The following is a structured methodological approach to the analysis of e-mails.

In order to begin analysis of e-mail small adjustments have to be made to the tactical elements of the methodology presented here. The reason for this is that the methodology is driven and evolves as findings arise that are specific to the data. Therefore certain methodological developments within this study would prove irrelevant (at least during the initial stages) if applied wholesale to another study. Below is the process of analysis used and developed within this study. Built upon the experiences of this investigation, and the reading of other studies empirical data (see Mallon et al, 2000, Gains, 1999,,Barron, 2000); a two type model of power can be applied to the initial mapping structure of e-mail in most organisational settings (see the methodology of Gains, 1999, for strong support).

It is therefore suggested to remain, during the initial stages of data analysis, with affiliation and referent power. This will determine the context of the e-mail: social or formal.

The tactics need to be separated into core elements and idiosyncratic elements. Within other studies of organisational e-mail there is strong evidence of actors using the tactics appearing in the table below (See Gains, 1999, Pliskin et al, 1997, Mallon et al, 2000, Romm, 1999, Ducheneaut, 2002, English-Lueck et al, 2002 for good examples). It is highly possible that the array of tactics in previous studies but without standardised methodologies and sampling the assumption is too large. For this reason, if a researcher is seeking to replicate this methodology in another organisation/setting, it is suggested that they begin with the core tactical elements. To reiterate, there is enough implicit support for these elements in the wider literature to suggest that they are common features of e-mail construction.

As analysis progresses it is important to allow the emerging data to evolve the methodology. In a way outlined by Mintzberg (1981) in his study of management time, it is important to expand the categories in line with the findings rather than marginalise the data by a reliance on a restrictive coding system (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). This will allow the expansion of knowledge in accordance with the idiosyncratic of the research setting. The concepts that are suggested for the initial stages of future investigations appear below:

Formal, distant commands	The use of organisational rules and regulations
Empathy given	Offering identification with a colleagues circumstances
Empathy sought	An actor seeks identification with their circumstances
Socially close/enquiry	The use of social language in making requests/responses
Gratitude	An expression of thank you for anticipated or completed task
Acknowledgement of fact	A very short e-mail that merely acknowledges that something has been completed
Friendship	The use of a personal relationship
Deferring	The refusal to mirror another actors conversational patterns

[Table 11]

In line with the above, the concepts generated through this investigation are the suggested starting points for data analysis. Below is the structured methodological process. It is separated into primary and secondary processes:

Primary process of analysis:

- Examine content
- Break down the structure of the e-mail using the following method:

1. cc'ing: who is copied and what position are they?
2. Opening: Does it say Hi, Dear, no opening etc
3. Main body: The tone of each sentence and its stylistic qualities:
4. Purpose: is it making a request?
5. How is the request made? (is the structure formal, affiliation, or social, referent)
6. Closing: Does it say Regards, CU, and Cheers, no closing?
7. How does the closing "amplify" the main body - what purpose does it serve?
   - e.g.: Sentence structure is formal throughout and there is no closing, this appears to "amplify" an association with organisational structure.
   - e.g.: Sentence structure is a formal request throughout, however, closing is "Cheers", and this appears to shorten the social space. Note and cross reference
8. Power base: What is the underlying tone?
   - e.g.: Is the request made using non-socialised language (style) with reference to organisational process (structure)? The e-mail may draw upon rules and regulations (structural arguments justify request on positional merit, and can include cc,ing a superior).
9. The signature: Has the signature changed? It may indicate a change of position for instance

NOTE: The structure of sentences, the power base employed, the recipient (sub ordinate, super ordinate for instance), the purpose, any cc'ing and who to.

Secondary process of analysis-

The secondary process is in response to "mapping" the patterns that emerge as the analysis gathers "shape".

- Map respondent key characteristics, these could include:

    1. Patterns in making requests to subordinates:
    2. A general use of "affiliation"
    3. No closing (employing "distance")
    4. Opening is always "Dear" (employing "distance")
    5. Re-enforced with the use of cc'ing a superior
    6. Patterns in making requests to superior:
    7. A general use of socialisation
    8. Closing is always "Cheers" (reducing "distance")
    9. Opening is always "Hi"

- Breaches in discursive patterns:

    1. Is the breach quantitative (only occurs once or twice)
    2. What reasons emerge from digital exchanges?
    3. Is the breach qualitative (results in a permanent change of discursive patterns relating to one or all actors/positions)
    4. What reasons emerge from digital exchanges? (a change in position for example)
    5. Are new patterns and tactics emerging?

When using the above system it is important to remember the more theoretical concept of space management. Analysing an e-mail whilst keeping in mind how much social space seems to exist between respondents helps to determine the tactics and overall use of power.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the results of investigation and identified that there were two types of power; referent and affiliation. The categories generated through the investigation were in fact tactics and strategies that empirically represented these two forms of power. The findings were discussed in light of the wider literature both on e-mail and organisational power. Concluding the chapter, a process of how to use the methodology was presented.

The following chapter discusses the theoretical development of the thesis. It aims to achieve this by returning to the authors who inspired the original theoretical base.

Chapter Eight - Theoretical Discussion Based on Results

The following chapter seeks to develop the theoretical content, in light of the investigation, of the thesis. It aims to achieve this by returning to Foucault, and examines the role of context within the investigation; in addition, the concept of context is compared and contrasted with the work of Althusser and Derrida to examine how their notions of interpellation, centre and play relate to that of context.

Foucault

The following section is an analysis, based on the conclusions derived from the investigation, of the relationship between the theoretical arguments of Foucault and e-mail, power and organisation. It aims to extend and develop the discussions of Foucault conducted in chapters 3 and 4.

Foucault played a significant role demonstrating the structural qualities of discourse and its relationship with power. Within the host organisation, power, in a manner described by Foucault, operates in a way that cannot be defined as a singular, encompassing strategy (Foucault, 1984). Indeed, Foucault's following words are somewhat indicative of e-mail relations within this investigation:

"the multiplicity of force relations immanent in a sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunction and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallisation is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies" (Foucault, 1984, p92).

Foucault's notion of power is focused upon its shifting networks and alliances, the concept's ability to manoeuvre and change, demonstrating a strong affinity with the work of Machiavelli (Clegg, 1998). Machiavelli's ethnographic concerns tended to focus on the role of the individual in manipulating and navigating the formal structures of power. For Foucault, power was the manipulation and navigating of the individual as they regulated themselves, like drilled bodies, in the face of social and legislative norms (Foucault, 1984). Within this investigation it is difficult to judge the role of legislation. In the earlier stages of this thesis it was suggested that the greater visibility of textual patterns and the networking effect (Romm, 1999) of e-mail may offer a form of liberation from the type of relational power upon which Foucault writes.

The longitudinal focus of this investigation has presented individuals whose discursive patterns are regulated by norms; however, these individuals are able to manipulate these norms in a strategic way. These findings, to a degree, are consistent and demonstrative of Foucault's conception of power rather than a liberation from it. Townley (1994) illustrates the point, she describes Foucault's work as offering:

"a relational and dynamic model of identity. This individual is continuously constituted and constructed through social relationships, discourses and practices" (Townley, 1994, p11).

Certain actors within the investigation were able to re-construct their own "organisational identities" through e-mail dependent upon the notion of context. Other actors had their identities regulated by the perception of others (respondent A), whilst actors held a narrow perception of identity and deferred any exterior regulation or approaches. The organisation "gave" hierarchical identities to actors and with these carried a perception.

The perception of hierarchical identity by other actors defines (to a degree) the discursive patterns that other actors can use effectively (Clegg, 1998). This is a sovereign representation of formal, structural power, similar to that found by Ducheneaut (2002). However, the data has also demonstrated that organisational e-mail identity is not necessarily fixed; it may also be fragmented and contested (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000).

Examining the data holistically, actor choice seemed to define the approach taken in transferring power and notions of identity between respondents. Actors either relied upon a solely unified and structural approach to communicating power or a fragmented strategic approach. Again, the point of legislation arises. It would appear that actors **choose** one of two pathways. They can attempt, under all conditions and contexts to represent a structural hierarchical identity, or they can use a contextually specific notion of identity, shifting between formal and informal methods. This makes the nature of communicating via e-mail seem superficially Foucauldian:

"Membership in a category, as a particular type of subject, is regarded as the effect of devices of categorisation; thus identity is seen as contingent, provisional, achieved not given. Identity is seen as always in process, as always subject to reproduction or transformation through discursive practices which secure or refuse particular posited identities. Identities are not absolute but are always relational: one can only ever be seen to be something in relation some other thing" (Clegg, 1998, p151).

It seems particularly Foucauldian when the contingent nature of identification and context are factored into the findings. This produces the "achieved and not given" elements of Cleggs (1998) commentary on the sweep of Foucault. However, legislation of discursive patterns within the organisation, although organisationally produced, structured and maintained, is very much in the hands of actors; it then becomes a matter of how actors choose to approach this.

The discursive patterns of Respondent D, for example, used the defined, structurally ordered, and socially maintained pathways. Although she replicated and was subjugated to these forms of linguistic control, she possessed, as Giddens (1981) would point out, a creative capacity to use these discursive patterns as she chose. In other words, respondent D made use of the organisationally produced structures. Giddens (1984) comments on Foucault to help illustrate the argument:

"There is no need to accept the whole sweep of Foucault's' arguments to acknowledge that the "disciplinary power" becomes associated with a range of organisations involved in regularising activities in time- space...We may regard disciplinary power as a sub-type of administrative power in general. It is administrative power that derives from disciplinary procedures, from the use of regularised supervision, in order either to inculcate or to attempt to maintain certain traits of behaviour in those subject to it...But Foucault is mistaken insofar as he regards "maximised" disciplinary power of this sort as expressing the general nature of administrative power within the modern state. Prisons, asylums and other locales in which individuals are kept entirely sequestered from the outside...have to be regarded as having special characteristics that separate them off rather distinctively from other modern organisations...the imposition of disciplinary power outside contexts of enforced sequestrian tends to be blunted by the very real and consequential countervailing power which those subject to it can, and do, develop" (Giddens, 1984, p183-6).

From this perspective, structural obligations encountered within organisations have a reproducing and ordering effect, similar to those described by Foucault. Within this investigation discursive pathways have been structurally ordered into two distinct forms: affiliation and referent. The creative and effective potential of these two pathways rests with the individual involvement of actors. Those actors who have relied on salient and stable organisational identities have tended to do so to their detriment, particularly in cases where identification did not take place. Actors who have tended to be more creative in their use of e-mail have used the linguistic structures in place to their advantage.

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Foucault has been criticised for tending to repress the creative capacity of individuals within his power/knowledge framework. As a result, power as seen through Foucault's lens, has tended to enmesh individuals in a spider's web of inescapable complexity (Buchanan & Badham, 1999). These are not rejections of Foucault's notion of power and its relationship to discursive practices and knowledge. Within this investigation it is apparent that e-mail discursive patterns are produced, re-produced and maintained in an organisational/social relationship. Actors are subject to them and in a manner reminiscent of bio/disciplinary-power (Foucault, 1981), as they regulate themselves and others in line with their perception of organisational reality. Gains (1999), Mallon (2000), Pliskin et al (1997) and Ducheneaut (2002) have all uncovered norms and patterns in their organisational e-mail analysis that suggests self-regulating and structural power acting over actors. E-mail has tended to offer opportunities to actors that allow them to fragment their organisational identities to a greater degree (Gergen, 1991). Alvesson and Deetz (2000) observe:

"As society becomes more fragmented and hyper real and virtual, the identity stabilising forces are lost. Such a position suggests the possibility for freedom and opportunity for marginilised groups and aspects of each person to enter the discourse, but also insecurities which lead to normalisation strategies in which people voluntarily cling themselves to consumer identities offered by commercial forces or organisation selves through the orchestration of corporate cultures" (Alvesson et al, 2000,p200).

The above comments share many similarities with the findings of this investigation. The fragmentation of organisational identity caused by the increased visibility and production of discourses by the e-mail system has created opportunities for actors (see Hakken, 1999, Escobar, 2000, Castells, 1996 for examples). However, these discourse opportunities, as Alvesson et al (2000) point out, order themselves into defined pathways. In other words, identity can be fragmented and manipulated by actors, but only upon ordered, limited lines. For these reasons, organisational studies of e-mail communication tend to contradict slightly, the findings from larger cyber communities. For instance Lamerichs et al (2003) observe:

"Instead of becoming salient, which suggests that people select their identity from a pre-established, and therefore limited, set of possible identities, social categories are locally built and re-built so as to manage a great deal of mostly subtle interactional work" (p468)

However, the production of routine and custom in discursive patterns, even within creative actor involvement of the e-mail system, is built around structural obligations. Within organisations, and within this host organisation, e-mail discursive patterns are navigational tools which are used to complete objectives. Accordingly e-mail patterns, as Alvesson et al (2000) point out, offer visible, fragmented but ultimately structured discursive tools. The regulation and construction of these tools may look, upon the surface highly Foucauldian, but the ethnographic reality is that these tools, despite their limited numbers, have huge social potential for actors. This observation however is not something that necessarily contradicts the work of Foucault; rather it may demonstrate that new communication technologies represent a progressive move toward some of Foucault's ambitions around the future of relational power. For instance, Foucault within the *History of Sexuality, Volume II*, makes it clear that he does not deny structure:

Singular forms of experience may perfectly well harbour universal structures: they may well not be independent of social existence (1984, p335).

Although Foucault remained consistently opposed to foundational and universal truths, explaining that his methodology only produced contingencies and ideological discrimination, he acknowledged that their exist 'footholds' (Olssen, 2004). May (1994) expands upon this in a commentary on methodological aspects of Saussure in which May, like Foucault, argues for an embracing of multiplicity and the respect of independently operating groups or 'footholds':

"If meaning were merely the product of difference, there would be no meaning, only noises unrelated to each other. In order for meaning to occur, identity must exist within difference, or better, each must exist within the other. To speak with Saussure, if language is a system of differences, it is not only differences but system as well; and system carries with it the thought of identity…to posit a concept whose function is to be given primacy to difference is to violate the necessary chiasmic relationship between unity and difference" (1994, p46-47)

This calling for an acknowledgement of differences and the recognition of systems that create identities is representative of how Foucault wished society to progress (Foucault, 1991). Foucault may have rejected that it was possible to have ideal communications in society such as those argued for by Habermas (1989), suggesting it was impossible to have communication that was free of power. Foucault went onto to argue that what society should strive for is communication that is 'the practice of the self'. This notion is taken up by Poster (1984) in his re-reading of Foucault in light of recent technological developments and recognising that new communication technologies provide potential for the decentralisation of power. Poster's notion of discourse/practice, his re-working of Foucault in light of technological developments, was introduced (by Poster) as a response to what he saw as a potential decentralisation of power due to the changes technology was making to economic and communication systems; Poster (1984) explains:

"the couplet of discourse/practice…enables (Foucault) to search for the close connection between manifestations of reason and patterns of domination. Foucault can study the way in which discourse is not innocent, but shaped by practice, without privileging any form of practice such as class struggle. He can also study how discourse in turn shapes practice without privileging any form of discourse." (p16-18)

It has been my contention that a similar conceptual couplet to discourse/practice has been achieved within this thesis.

Power within discursive practices is more de-centralised and actors are able to create the conditions whereby they are effective (through e-mail) without the sanction of Formal power. This observation is in line with Foucault's notion of practices of the self and Poster's discourse/practice couplet. A theory of power that follows these lines allows actors to episodically (as oppose too permanently) possess power in order to fulfil aims and objectives whilst maintaining and developing their "self" as a discourse/practice; maintaining a critical and creative capacity whilst both being subject to and drawing from power to achieve this. However, this conclusion has not been reached by the application of discourse/practice it has been reached, it is argued, through a couplet that has emerged within this investigation that of discourse/context.

Within chapters 3 and 4 it was argued that context and the corresponding concept of identification would provide a means to analyse power whilst recognising that not all exchanges may be due to power. Within this study actors were able to apply to choose which discursive pathways they used or responded with whether this was to their benefit or detriment. E-mail provided a means in which actors chose or not to identify with each other and it was actors' perceptions, the sum of their identity that produced these choices in a process of discourse /context.

Poster (1984) argued (for the purposes of this study at least) that Foucault would prove a highly appropriate methodological guide in the analysis of new technologies. E-mail communication offers the means within which power and identity can mix in greater equality, it seems of benefit to focus on the local, psychologically created contexts in which relational power plays out in a process of discourse/context.

To theoretically explore the notions of context and discourse/context further, the work of Althusser is used in the following section to contrast Althusser's structuralism with the more dynamic notions of power put forward in this investigation.

<u>Althusser</u>

Althusser has provided, as Elliot (2000) observes a link between structure and psychological, actor interaction during his work on ideology. Ideology (S), Althusser argued, was a perennial super-structure, within this structure, over time, developed various ideologies (s). Ideologies will change over time and space but the structure of them will remain the same. For Althusser this was like language, always obeying fundamental structures but the meanings and application of the words that filled them, changing over time.

Language was the medium through which ideology permeated actors in society. This was achieved through interpellation. As discussed earlier, interpellation is a statement/discursive practice that hail individuals. This creates relationships where actors recognise themselves, and their relative positions through the symbolic order of language. In other words, language *places* actors; it calls them into relative positions. Althusser's (1971) *essays on Ideology* us the example of a knock on the door to illustrate. The author (Althusser) describes how when a knock is heard on the door we ask who it is - the respondent answers and when we open the door it is the person they said it was. This is how language interpellates individuals. Althusser's theoretical basis is highly relevant to the study of e-mail, not only for the reasons that Escobar (2000) describes:

"Human interaction through computers must thus be studied from the perspective of the transcultural/transinstitutional principle and "discourse strategies" governing any type of human interaction, but also from the specificity of the communicative and linguistic practices that arise from the media involved" (Escobar, 2000, p65).

Althusser provides, inadvertently, through hailing and interpellation, an accurate account of e-mail dynamics. The links between Lacan and Freud that Althusser uses to frame his psychological arguments may be more explicit within this investigation as opposed to Escobar (ibid), however, as empirical cases of actor interaction with language and power are used.

Ideological super structures, for Althusser, were invisible networks of power that actors spoke and identified with on a subconscious level. In order for an actor to be interpellated and recognised by other actors they would be required to speak the appropriate language. This condition becomes self-regulating and acts rather like Foucault's discursive practices and to a degree, bio-power.

Whilst ideology worked on an unconscious level and was subjugating, the e-mail system within this investigation has demonstrated both productive and creative qualities in a process of discourse/context. Findings have suggested that actors must follow structured linguistic codes, but their involvement works on a duality; a process whereby it is difficult to reduce a phenomenon to a single concept. This is demonstrated by the difference between the concepts of *identification,* introduced within this investigation and Althusser's *interpellation*. Returning to Althusser's framework and the example used within chapters 3 and 4 of this study, interpellation was analogous to a knock on a closed door:

"We all have friends who, when they knock on our door and we ask, through the door, the question "who's there?" answer (since it's obvious) "it's me". And we recognise that "it is him", or "her". We open the door, and it's true, it really was she who was there" (Althusser, 1970, p46).

As Elliot (2000) observes, by referring to the symbolic order of language as the mechanism for interpellation, Althusser suggests that discursive patterns situate actors in relative power relationships sub consciously. Indeed, as Horrocks (1999) comments, interpellation creates language patterns whereby actors must occupy certain places in an almost invisible process. Within this investigation there are many similar elements. Remaining within Althuserian terminology, on appearance the organisational super structure (S) legitimises appropriate discourses that actors may use (s). However, whilst this applies to a degree, the results also demonstrate the creative involvement with the various discourses. In other words, interpellation, in Althusser's sense of domination in words, is not a whole sale condition within this study.

The informal networks and patterns of this investigation can supersede positional relationships, which are represented by the more formal patterns of e-mail communication within the host organisation. This relies on the concept of identification ahead of interpellation and ultimately discourse/context. It runs contrary to Althusser's argument as it places psychological choice or agency at the centre of its account. As Abercrombie et al (1980) observe, Althusser's theoretical basis relies on a linguistic system that places individuals in relation to structures, who unknowingly to them, perpetuate this structure through language. Identification, by contrast, is the primary condition with which an actor **knowingly** accepts or rejects a particular discursive approach or structure.

Actors, as they choose to close, increase or defer social space rely on a process that can be more intimate than their relationship or position within the organisational super structure. For instance, the emergence of referent power and its associated networking is built around a form of identification with other actors based on gender and social perspective. These are discursive developments that intertwine with the organisational superstructure rather than being subject to it. At the same time, these communication strategies and their discursive patterns happen not only upon a group level but also an individual one. They are available to actors to use as they see fit. The effects of these choices are demonstrated within the empirical stages of this thesis. Relational power within the organisational e-mail system is far more complex than Althusser's structural arguments will allow due to the economic limits he placed on his theoretical work. However, this does not mean that interpellation and structural processes do not or did not take place.

Once discursive patterns have been identified with, then a process of interpellation takes place. Althusser (1971) argues that ideologies can develop outside of organisational interests but these ideologies still have consequence for organisation. Within this investigation the latter point finds support. Various linguistic structures developed alongside the formal e-mail structures and these structures certainly held consequence for the organisation. Lamerichs et al (2003) observe that actors who engage in virtual discourse negotiate identities in a reflexive process:

"Instead of becoming salient, which suggests that people select their identity from a pre-established, and therefore limited, set of possible identities, social categories are locally built and re-built so as to manage a great deal of mostly subtle interactional work" (Lamerichs et al, 2003, p468).

Within the host organisation various discourse patterns emerged in a process of discourse/context. Actors, in a similar process to that described by Lamerichs et al (2003) above, were able to negotiate discursive patterns outside of formal hierarchical notions of identity. However, a structural process of interpellation that regulated the form these discursive patterns took place. Despite the ability actors have to use these patterns in a reflexive manner (subject to identification) the patterns themselves still followed rules. As in the case of Foucault, this is where actor creativity and embracing rules act simultaneously and appear when findings are contrasted against the backdrop of Althusser.

Actor creativity co-existing with restraining rules is recognised implicitly and explicitly within the wider e-mail literature. For example, authors such as Postmes (2000), McCormick & McCormick (1992), Gains (1999), O'Sullivan et al (2003) all demonstrate how, despite the potential freedom offered in virtual communication due to displaced time and space (e.g. Clegg & Hardy, 1998, Pliskin, 1995) a form of integration takes place. This integration is the structured norms of language communities explained by O'Sullivan et al (2003) and likened to interpellation by Zickmund (2000):

"Individuals who propagate this discourse are unified complex structures of a shared subversive ideology. They are "interpellated", a phenomenon Althusser defines as the discursive process of evoking collection of individuals into a group through an ideological screen" (Zickmund, 2000, p237).

Using the data from this investigation to illustrate, what are being demonstrated are the restrictive and creative capacities of e-mail that seems to occur in cyberspace and are reflected in the host organisation in a process of discourse/context. Althusser spoke of statements and ideologies that unconsciously interpellated individuals into structures. The data within this investigation supports that there exist distinct and structured pathways of appropriate e-mail discursive patterns, similar to those identified by Zickmund (2000) in cyberspace. The pathways interpellate actors into them by restricting their discursive patterns into recognisable qualities (Althusser's example of a knock on a door). However, unlike the findings of Saunders et al (1994), McKenney et al (1992) and Orlikowski (1996) these pathways do not necessarily reflect professional and hierarchical identity. Rather, they are more dependent, long term, upon identification.

The pathways are strategic social tools that are "at hand". They may act as power over actors but can also be used to reflect power back, or take an alternative route. The pathways are creative additions and modifications to the organisational super structure and in accordance with this, the actors within the investigation behaved in this way. Not always were actors locked in hierarchically represented discourses as found by Ducheneaut (2002), Orlikoswki, (1996), Saunders et al, (1994). Instead actors applied discursive pathways on numerous occasions in a strategic manner that bypassed or attempted to bypass formal structures of communication. This depended upon actors' strategic and social *identification*. Actors that could only identify with formal structures saw their objectives compromised.

Visibility of the e-mail structure and creative involvement with the e-mail structure by actors set the findings from this investigation apart from the theoretical basis of Althusser. Interpellation does take place, communities' form; norms and regulations become subconsciously adhered to, changing subtly over time and context. This represents "a power acting over" actors as common interests and social approaches hail individuals in an almost ideological way. However, this process happens on a psychological and creative basis. Actors give rise to underlying and strategic processes of interaction that move beneath the dominant super structure and give rise to new forms of "ideology".

Althusser differentiates between ideology (S) and ideologies (s), the first a perennial structure that is a condition of existence (Clegg, 1998) and the second, the various, contextually shifting manifestations of it. E-mail discourse patterns have ordered themselves in a similar way within the investigation. Discursive patterns show order and structure and these semiotic rules represent the substantial structure within the investigation. The contextually shifting (s) are the various discourses that permeate the host organisation; the difference is that actor choice is at the centre of the (s) rather than organisation. At the centre of actor choice and context is identification. This is not domination "in words" (Althusser, 1971) but creative agency in words. Actors have the option to shift between ideologies (remaining with Althusser's terminology), create new ones or submit to old ones, all based upon their ability to identify. The theoretical key to this investigation is strategic identification. An actor within the investigation lost their ability to "make a difference" due to their failure to identify with other actors and less formal discursive patterns. In operational terms, this means the ability of an actor to contextually shift and change as the organisations formal structure moved through the various contingencies of its "life".

Semiotics, Jackobson and Derrida

This investigation has examined the work of Semiotics, Derrida and Jackobson to develop and analyse the role of context within e-mail communication. Derrida, as with Poster, acknowledged the way communication technologies were impacting upon the social sphere.

Derrida observed the vast changes in both communication and writing facilitated by e-mail:

 "The analysis of public space today must take into account so many spectral effects, the new speed of apparition…of the simulacrum, the synthetic or prosthetic image, and the virtual event, cyberspace and surveillance, the control, appropriation and speculations that today deploy unheard of powers" (Derrida, 1994, p54).

The results of this investigation support this view if only upon a local level. Within the earlier stages of this thesis the relationship of Derrida with e-mail was discussed. It was suggested that the reader/writer relationship during virtual exchanges might be changed with respondents being both the reader and the writer. This raises the question of where the centre of the text now resides.

Derrida acknowledges within *Archive Fever* that the dynamics of reading and writing are changed significantly by e-mail. The concept of archive contributes to this. Within this investigation networks of communication are built upon the concept of identification, a semiotic-based recognition of words matching perceived social context. As these exchanges unfold and develop they form the potentially psychological mechanism of archive (Derrida, 1995). Borrowing from Derrida, archives create not just a record or history of relationships between respondents, but the future potential of them; classifications of past and future conduct. This provides interlocutors with the capacity to review previous communication in order to continue the process of identification. Archive, as drawn from Derrida, can reduce the ambiguity in interpretation highlighted by Ryan:

"They must be constructed through an activity far more transformative than interpreting sensory data. In the case of texts, the process of actualisation involves the such highly individualised operations as filling in the blanks in the text with the information drawn from the reader's knowledge, memory, and experience; visualising in imagination the depicted scenes, characters, and events; and spatializing the text following the threads of various thematic webs, often against the directionality of the linear sequence" (Ryan, 1999, p96).

Within the investigation, actors dealt with Ryan's observations through either social gambling (in the absence of formal affiliation power), strict communication of formal matters and then (eventually in some cases, see respondent A) identification. Creating identification is dependent upon the actors involved "fixing" on types of text that match the context, in other words developing the *archive* and classifying the discursive pattern.

Who controlled the context was dictated by the relative amounts of referent and affiliation power involved in the exchanges and how well respondents translated this into e-mail through the management of space. Actors could not develop e-mail relationships without this process of identification first taking place. This is similar to the Derridean concept of centre:

*"(...) any organised thing must have a point that can be regarded as its centre, and which limits the **play** that structures may be subject to"* (Philips, 2000, p149).

By **play** Philips refers to Derrida's notion of signs and text never being fixed, but always open to interpretation or play. Within the e-mail investigation play was limited through the creation of "social centres", the point of identification between respondents over a certain context. For Derrida, the centre of any text always lay outside of the text itself:

"With a text any number of possible readings, based upon the substitutions that the language of literature (for example) *particularly suggest, can be limited and qualified by the notion of its centre"* (Philips, 2000, p149).

It lies outside of the text because the centre, the limiting factor, is the author, ideology or context etc, who exist: outside of the text.

These e-mail social centres, including the various networks, are, in a similar way, outside of the text itself. They are dependent on a variety of external factors, power, position, prior relationships but one essential factor, social space. Social space differs from the ideological centres observed by Derrida in his earlier work. Actors within the investigation are taken outside of the text by e-mail and into an imaginary psychological situation. Power acting over actors can influence choices, a referent or affiliation identification with the context. Both ways, actors are taken outside the text and placed in perceived psychological proximity with the respondent; this facilitates a feeling of closeness or distance with corresponding actors. This is the centre. In certain cases organisational hierarchy and ideology affect it, but the data from this investigation suggests that social proximity can transcend these factors.

Returning to *Archive,* Derrida comments how e-mail is transforming both the public and private domains of life:

"But the indicative value of E-mail is privileged in my opinion for a more important and obvious reason: because electronic mail today, and even more than the fax, is on the way to transforming the entire public and private space of humanity, and first of all the limit between the private, the secret, and the public and phenomenal" (Derrida,1995, *Archive*).

The corpus of Archive Fever implicitly comments on the role of e-mail in changing spaces, focusing upon its possible effects on psychoanalysis. Derrida argues that e-mail provides an immediacy and ability to classify (archive) "things as they happen" that more traditional media cannot provide. The author's (Derrida's) analogy with letter writing and the fax is demonstrative, as they do not change the nature of space. To draw from Derrida's example, once Freud wrote and published his psychoanalytic theories the reader/writer relationship becomes involved in the arguments of centre and play. These conditions affect the development of psychoanalytic theory in relationship to Freud's peers. This is due to the concepts such as centre and play, without an archive the reader cannot know the additions and subtractions. E-mail on the other hand is an interactive mechanism of communication. For the first time (in the history of technology) text can develop into a conversation, an archive of constantly evolving and settling text. In other words, as Derrida himself argues, space has been transformed. If space had been different during Freud's era (Derrida argues) so would have been the development of psychoanalysis.

This reading of Archive Fever is supported by the data produced from this investigation. Results suggest that the transformation of space can transcend formal notions and configurations of power, at least within the host organisation. This creates, as Derrida suggests, an archive that has a transformative capacity. Within the investigation, the referent networks of actors, the discursive developments of A and the covert actives of E are good illustrations of how e-mail and its archive can develop social conditions within an organisation.

The concepts of Centre and Play that have been discussed in light of the investigation's results are enhanced by reference to their semiotic roots which have informed Derrida's work. This is best achieved by linking with Jackobson's two-axis theory which has underpinned both semiotics and Derrida's key theoretical concepts.

The thrust of Jackobson's two-axis theory focuses upon the relationship of the symbolic order of signs (words) with the context in which they are used. The syntagmatic axis is the visible combination of words used to form a sentence where the paradigmatic axis is the context in which they are used:

"The two axes together thus allow addressees to understand an utterance by decoding the sentence along the combination axis with unconscious reference to the selection one" (Philips, 2000, p135).

The decoding process must include some form of identification, and locating this concept (identification) has been a chief strength of applying Jackobson's semiotics. Jackobson refers to the terms of metaphor (paradigmatic) and metonymy (syntagmatic) to illustrate how discursive patterns becomes normalised in general discourse and the same terms can be applied to e-mail within the investigation. The terms are useful as explanatory mechanisms.

Throughout the research actors relied upon two chief forms of power to legitimise their discourse: referent and affiliation. These terms are the metaphoric context of e-mail communication, the sovereign versus Machiavellian approaches that are used to manage the social space between respondents. Metaphorically the social space is either opened or closed and in order for it to be effective or legitimate, the respondent must identify with the context that it creates. Metonymy (syntagmatic) is the visible words that operate in order to create the metaphor; they actualise the intention of metaphor. Again, this must be de-coded by the respondent correctly; they must identify. Good illustrations of the theory are jokes. Respondent E for instance was able to shorten social space with the Department Director through the use of a sports based joke (below):

Respondent E

Hi Charles,

Hope your well..i'm enquiring about the meeting notes which you asked me to type…how many copies would you like??

By the way, I hear you're a big cricket fan, I've been a widow of the game for all my married life.. so I can't say I approve!!

Purchasing Director

Hi Jill,

I'd like twelve copies please. Sorry to hear about your bereavement but I can assure you its in a very good cause!!

Cheers…Charles

The joke involves placing the Director in a negative context in an attempt to close the social space. This involves something of a social gamble on the part of E as it relies on the Director identifying with the context. E achieves her goal as the Director reads and identifies with the e-mail along the metaphoric level, if it had been read along strictly the lines of metonymy; it is safe to assume the outcome would have been quite different. At this point it is possible to clearly link the relationship of Jackobson's work with the conclusions of this investigation.

Actors write and respond to e-mails by a reliance on metaphor and metonymy. Those actors who choose to use referent power tend to write with an emphasis upon metaphoric context, an attempt to shorten psychological distance by creating perceived proximity. Actors who seek to convey affiliation power tend to write with an emphasis upon metonymy; a strict literal use of words that creates psychological distance.

For these approaches to be successful they must be identified with. In other words, the recipient must read the e-mail with a corresponding reliance on the appropriate axis, if not, communication either breaks down or space is deferred. As can be seen from the results of the investigation, unless hierarchical positions are clearly defined, e-mail use can become something of a "social gamble", dependent upon an unseen respondent identifying with the appropriate axis.

The diagram below is designed to theoretically model the process; the headings represent the two-axis system used for analysis.

Metonymy

Social space

Identification
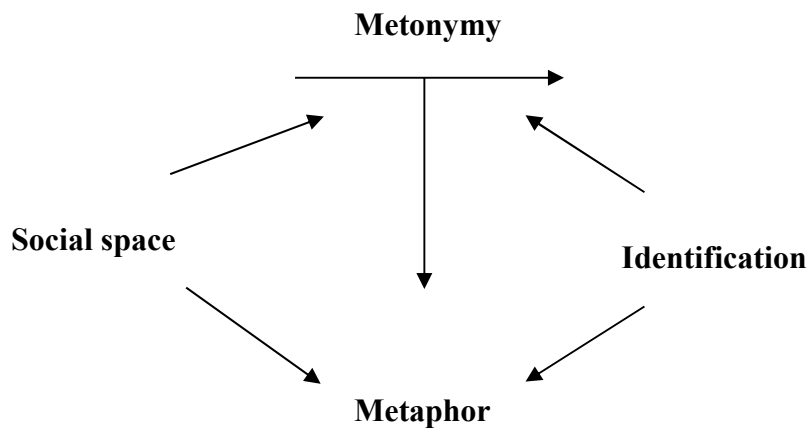
Metaphor

Social space appears on the left side of the table between the two-axes. The reasons are that the writer has two choices at their disposal, to either open social space or close it. This choice is operationalised by a reliance on either metaphor or metonymy in e-mail design.

The axis of metonymy moves across e-mail, the exact syntax construction. Within this construction are choices of words designed to convey the intended metaphoric context (psychologically close or distant). This appears below the line of metonymy (below the words) as it is something that is always visibly absent, it is something that is tacitly implied. In order for e-mail to be effective it must identified with and read with an emphasis along the intended axis.

Identification appears on the table between the two-axes, when the e-mail is sent, it is an undetermined factor as to how the recipient will respond. This is the epicentre of e-mail communication, the process of discourse/context, creating an appropriate and mutually acceptable social context from which working or social relationships can be built; identification.

Summary

It has emerged from the theoretical discussions presented within this chapter that the subject of e-mail is influenced by structure but actors have freedom within the structure in a process of discourse/context. In Foucault's terms no one is without power or potential power, but certain conditions must be met to "activate" it. These conditions surround the effective (or non effective) process of identification. Actors are able to bypass formal channels of power if they can manage, through e-mail, to identify with actors who have access to resources. In the following chapter the thesis is summarised and brought to a conclusion.

Chapter Nine - Concluding Comments

The aim of this chapter is to summarise and conclude the findings and theories that have been developed throughout this thesis. This study sought to achieve the following aims and objectives:

1. To identify and critically analyse the strategies of e-mail deployment generated and used by actors
2. To develop types of strategy for the investigation of organisational e-mail
3. To develop empirically and theoretically the notion of managing space in e-mail exchanges
4. To empirically develop and critically analyse the role of relational power in e-mail exchanges
5. To investigate and analyse the relationship between hierarchical position and e-mail discursive patterns
6. To investigate, develop and critically analyse the theoretical linkages between the notion of context and the research findings of this investigation

To identify and critically analyse the strategies of e-mail use, operationally, the thesis has sought to achieve this through the analysis of six respondents' sent mail boxes providing two years worth of data. Data from the sent mail boxes was analysed using a content analysis and respondents were used as coders to add external reliability and validity to the results. In addition, the respondents were interviewed using a semi structured interview schedule (Beliefs, Barriers and Control) to provide data on the thinking that generated the e-mail patterns which the respondents used.

The types of strategy were developed from these methods and two forms of power were located within the host organisation: Referent and Affiliation. The two forms of power represent the formal and informal patterns of e-mail communication and give rise to a variety of discursive strategies. These strategies were generated from the discourse analysis, and formed the final code book which appears below with definitions:

Formal, distant commands	The use of organisational rules and regulations
Empathy given	Offering identification with a colleagues circumstances
Empathy sought	An actor seeks identification with their circumstances
Socially close/enquiry	The use of social language in making requests/responses
Gratitude	An expression of thank you for anticipated or completed task
Acknowledgement of fact	A very short e-mail that merely acknowledges that something has been completed
Friendship	The use of a personal relationship
Deferring	The refusal to mirror another actors conversational patterns

[Table 9]

The notion of managing space became developed into the concepts of context and identification. Broadly, context referred to the psychological process of actors determining their relative position regarding an e-mail and identification referred to whether actors agreed with these relative positions. The manner in which actors judged context and whether they chose or otherwise to identify, were the components of space management.

Underlying the code book (above) the theoretical arguments of Foucault were used to critically analyse the role of power within the host organisation. Reviewing the theories in light of the results, actor agency and their ability to identify with other actors appears to be (within this investigation) the significant factor in e-mail communication and its relationship with power and the organisation, these observations were developed into the theory of discourse/context. The role of hierarchy was explored and critically examined through the concepts of context and identification commentating on how these concepts were used by actors to negotiate with formal authority, deploy it or bypass it.

The application of Foucault has helped develop a picture of e-mail communication that is based on fluid notions of power, the concept of identification and the ability of actors to engage creatively with these concepts in order to effectively make and respond to requests. Actors, when using e-mail, seem to have greater creative freedom than would appear in strict or narrow interpretations of Foucault manipulating power as much as being subject to it.

However, the critical element of this thesis has sought to establish that Foucault's scope, particularly within his future agenda for power relations, can assimilate the creative use of power without wholesale suppression of identity. Adopting Poster's (1984) stance that Foucault provides a highly relevant framework for analysing developments in communication technology, the thesis has adapted his (Poster's) notion of discourse/practice to acknowledge the role context and identification plays in shaping relational power through e-mail to produce discourse/context. The thesis has also critically examined the methodological underpinnings of Foucault's work and has applied structural theories (as he did, Foucault 1994, 1969) to search for logical relations.

E-mail is a relatively new domain for power relations and Foucault's notions of micro-strategies have found empirical support. It seems whether the argument is concerned with cyberspace (Mitra et al, 2002, Lamerichs et al, 2002, for instance) or organisation (Ducheneaut, 2002, Plisken and Romm, 1994) there appears the discursive pulling together of groups and the empowering of individuals. These conditions, within this investigation, have seen individuals bypass Formal power and achieve their aims through informal strategies. It is interesting to note, as an aside, the implicit role of gender in these interactions.

Gender, although not a research theme within the investigation has been implicit throughout the findings and warrants a short note. Female respondents demonstrated a more strategic use of e-mail within the investigation. They (female respondents) were able to assess contexts more swiftly and shorten social space more efficiently. Drawing from the notion of shape shifting (Barry et al, 2006), it seems that females are able to move identities far more fluidly than males. The use of referent power also appears to be a more naturally feminine discourse, evidenced by the distinct lack of formality used by female respondents in e-mail exchanges.

On an explicit level, the investigation has differed from other studies in that it has located the capacity of individual agency in the use of e-mail. Other studies have tended to locate homogenous patterns based around professional groups (Ducheneaut, 2002 for example) or groups based around events and specific circumstances (Romm,1999, Pliskin, 1999). Within this investigation the focus has been not only on the discursive behaviour of groups but how single actors navigate and handle social space over a variety of contexts. The distribution of Formal power can be challenged and transcended by various tactics used by groups and actors, making e-mail and power a creative dynamic between actors and structural constraints. However, the organisational super structure still holds a strong grip; regardless of the tactics employed by actors they need to be operationalised through identification to be effective. The theoretical model presented at the end of the previous chapter, drawn from the work of Derrida and semiotics captures this notion well:

Metonymy

Social space

Identification

Metaphor
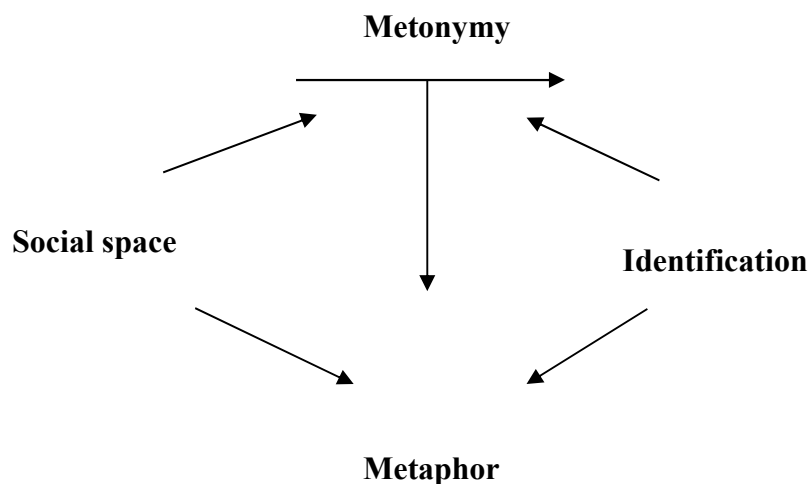
To summarise from the previous chapter, the line of metonymy is the actual written content of the e-mail, the visible syntax. The downward arrow is the potential reservoir of meanings these words or metonymy could create. On either side of these concepts is social space and identification. The words can either open or close social space but either way they will be contingent on the process of identification.

The choice of words used when constructing an e-mail must match the perceptions of the respondent. The overarching organisational structure and its related culture, shape, to a degree, the extent to which respondents identify with an e-mail. An actor simply cannot bypass (in all circumstances) the Formal power structure if a resource holding actor refuses to identify. What e-mail does provide to the actor is a potential tool for closing social space, enhancing or creating relationships and levering these to improve their organisational position, both formally and informally.

Future investigations with similar objectives may wish to apply the methods, concepts of power and final codebook of this investigation as a starting point. Using fewer concepts of power and strategies enables for more accurate analysis of e-mail patterns and locates changes over time. However, context is the crucial dynamic in e-mail investigation (O'Sullivan, 2003) and therefore if the concepts do not account for the data accurately then additions and subtractions (to the categories) should be made. This is a similar process to what took place within this investigation with the recommendation that future studies of this type begin with concepts as merely a starting point rather than be anything definitive.

The sampling of six sent mailboxes containing two years of data was crucial to the success of the investigation and for access reasons it may be hard for other researchers to replicate. However, the use of large samples of e-mails spread over extended periods of time from multiple respondents is recommended if possible. Through this sampling approach changing contexts, the formation of groups, subversive behaviour and the development of electronic relationships can all be located and analysed.

Future research may wish to consider adopting some of the theoretical approaches used within this investigation. The emergence of discourse/context and identification has cleared away some of the questions that have been asked within this thesis such as the degree of freedom and expression actors would have over their discursive patterns. With so much resting upon actor choice and identification, it is recommended that future research adopts the concepts of context and identification (in some form) as a theoretical mechanism. Identification acts as the axis between the sources of power, referent and affiliation and the strategies (see the code book) they generate.

This axis helps to explain why certain applications of e-mail succeed and others do not, actors must share the perception of context. There are, of course, no absolute rules to securing identification with an actor. The successful respondents within this investigation, those who were able to secure themselves relational power, were those that quickly adapted to changing contexts. These respondents were able to identify quickly with other actors, adapting their discursive patterns to suit circumstances. In this sense, although identification is a reflective choice, if actors wish to achieve aims and objectives consistently they in fact have no choice but to identify.

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