Doing cultural fit in job interviews: the challenge of diversity in recruitment practices

Doing cultural fit in job interviews: The challenge of diversity in recruitment practices

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I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this research project is entirely my own.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Previous studies have identified several factors that lead to unsuccessful job interviews amongst candidates of minority backgrounds in Britain and other parts of the west. These include: ideology-based prejudice, power, limited knowledge of institutional discourse and lack of linguistic capital (Gumperz 1999; Roberts 2011). There is an underlying assumption that there are certain norms that outsiders need to comply with. However, in superdiverse recruitment interview contexts, it is unclear whose cultural norms these are because interlocutors bring with them a "briefcase" (Gordon 2011) of: expectations, norms, values, and interpretations resulting in the negotiation of meaning-making processes and the co-construction of the interview outcome.

Focusing on the under-researched context of recruitment, where recruitment agencies work with companies to find suitable candidates for their vacancies, this research aims to further understand how cultural fit is performed within a superdiverse setting. It draws on the data collected from 30 real video-recorded recruitment interviews that took place in one of the world's largest recruitment agencies.

This study argues that recruitment interview success is heavily reliant on "cultural fit." The analysis from this study contributes to the literature in the field by addressing how cultural fit is an interactional accomplishment, achieved collaboratively by aligning in the "9 areas of cultural fit." The nine areas that are drawn from the analysis of this study include: linguistic alignment, world views, power dynamics, performed identities, levels of formality, positioning, shared knowledge, similar backgrounds, and emotional connections. Recruiters *enable* the performance of cultural fit by facilitating a good rapport and providing an equal opportunity for candidates to *demonstrate* cultural fit in the interview. Candidates are invited to participate in a power game through the "faking friendship" dynamic. Candidates that are unable to play the power game are put at a disadvantage.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Personal experience

Drawing on my own personal experience, the subject of cultural diversity has always fascinated me. Starting with my own background, I have Moroccan and Mauritian heritage with strong ties to both India and France. Despite being born in the UK, I grew up speaking English alongside French and was exposed to Mauritian creole. My husband is Italian and sees himself as having somewhat Italian views and values. I grew up in west London and attended schools that were culturally diverse, where I made and maintained friendships with people from various backgrounds, to name a few: Somalia, India, English, China, Pakistan, Spain, the Philippines, various parts of Africa and several Arabic speaking countries. All of which, in some way or another has shaped my own way of seeing the world.

Moving on to my career, I have always worked in London. My career commenced in recruitment, where I was interviewing candidates and working out whether they would be a good fit for open and potential vacancies. However, at times it became apparent that opinions of a good candidate differed amongst us recruiters. Using opinions of CVs as an example, some recruiters were more accepting of written mistakes, whilst others would disregard the CV completely. In some cases, there were oral English tests where one recruiter would not tolerate any obvious forms of Londonisms, whilst another recruiter would not mind it at all. During my own training I noticed that some interviewers were appreciative of a candidate's academic background and engaged in conversation around this topic. Contrariwise, others paid more attention to skill sets. Once in the role myself, I questioned these differences in views of an ideal candidate. What is it that I can see in a particular candidate that someone else might not, and vice versa? Why do I feel trust towards certain candidates? Later in my career I moved into operations and compliance management roles where I was still responsible for recruiting and building my own teams. I later understood that a good candidate meant different things to different people in different contexts.

Not so long ago, my mentor asked me interview questions in a job interview role play. It was noticed that I answered the questions by providing context first. This was somewhat different to what I had learned from my own experience as a recruiter. To some, this form of response could be described as a collectivist way of answering a question. However, by attempting to pinpoint this form of response to a particular group, proposes an essentialist perspective that does not capture my diverse backgrounds. This exercise made me realise that I too looked for context heavy answers from candidates in job interviews as I found straight forward answers too direct. In the same way, other London based recruiters or hiring managers who come from different backgrounds and various walks of life may prefer answers that are straight to the point. These differences in views, values and communication styles index subjectivity in the hiring process, where in practice, there is more than one perspective of what constitutes a good candidate. This falls outside of a one British way of thinking that is associated with the concept of a "British interview." In this respect, national grouping does not seem to take cognisance of the interactions and ways of working in a superdiverse context. Shifting away from the concept of diversity that is centred on specific groups, superdiversity captures additional groups that impact language, interaction and the meaning making processes. This perspective fuelled me to want to understand how such differences in views manifest themselves in a recruitment interview context, and what can be done to successfully work the differing views and opinions. Whilst it is true that not everyone will experience diversity in the same way that I do, this does not mean that the complexity of diversity does not exist, nor should it be overlooked in today's globalised world.

1.2 Overview of the study

1.2.1 Rationale

The recruitment interview is a backdrop for social injustices and occurrences of inequality that through its wide locational reach, can impact organisations and local working communities. This research suggests that it is possible to work effectively with diversity provided the right training, awareness, and framework is in place. Furthermore, by highlighting such injustices it *is* possible to create change. In the words of Foucault (1987) "where there is power, there is resistance." In today's Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) context, there is social resistance to inequality. *This* is where one can find power. Through this research, I hope to find an achievable way to promote equality through an unequal process that most people will go through in their lifetime.

In the context of cultural diversity, London is a fascinating area for sociolinguistic and inter-cultural research due to its rich diversity and multilingualism. This cosmopolitan city encompasses a cocktail of: codes, languages, ethnicities, values, and ideologies. According to Bhatia and Ritchie (2012) "the last 50 years or so has seen a variety of interdependent processes associated with globalization, including greater geographical, demographic, social and information exchange and mobility, leading to an exponential increase in contacts and communication between cultures and languages. As a result, many more people, especially in large urban areas are affected daily by intercultural and multilingual contacts" (p.392). This is especially true in communities where speakers of hundreds of languages can be found in largely populated urban locations worldwide. London is an example where there are around 230 languages.

To name a few, this linguistic phenomenon has been described as 'metrolingualism' [1](Pennycook and Otsuji 2015) and 'translanguaging'[2] (Garcia and Li 2013). Large urban areas such as London, where 55% of its population are BAME groups (Roberts 2021) has been described as "superdiverse" due to the diversification of diversity (Vertovec 2007; Blommaert

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[1] Metrolingualism: "Metrolingualism describes the ways in which people of different and mixed backgrounds use, play with and negotiate identities through language" (Pennycook and Otsuji 2015, p.246)

[2] Translanguaging: "Translanguaging is the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential." (García 2009, p.140)

& Rampton, 2011), where diversity as a concept still "categorises people and still positions them on an essentialising template" (Tremlett 2014, p.831). The widely debated term superdiversity, has been described as "a constant reminder of the complexity of job-seekers' experiences and background, and how this contrasts with the relative uniformity of institutional procedures" (Roberts 2021, p.45). It is clear from this phenomenon that the term "culture" has become far more complex. It has moved on from static notions of culture to the extent where the term "British interview" becomes questionable. In this study, diversity is not referred to as a newly emerging phenomenon because "diversity has always been central to the human experience," (Piller 2016b) but instead, it's a phenomenon that cannot be ignored when researching businesses, making it imperative to promote fair recruitment practices for strong workforces. This stance is echoed by Roberts (2021) who emphasises that the findings of UK and international employment research show the discrimination and disadvantages that BAME candidates encounter in the labour market, for example, the unemployment rate in many EU countries are more than double than that of the non-migrant population, whilst many new migrants are "more highly educated than their UK Peers" (Roberts 2021, p.46). This highlights a major issue in the gatekeeping practices that are required to be fair and equal.

Differentiating the recruitment interview from a business job interview (which is not always made clear in the surrounding research), where a recruiter attempts to match the candidate to one of their client's open or potential vacancies, this research aims to understand "cultural fit" in a superdiverse recruitment interview context. It is understood through the literature that recruiters, therefore, have a strong role to play in promoting practices of diversity, equality, and inclusion in their interview processes. They must ensure that equality practices are embedded within their recruitment processes so that they can enable the right talent to make it through the funnel. The recruiters act as gatekeepers for their clients. Recruiters are in a position where they hire for multiple organisations (mostly in their designated patch/ local area) and as a result, their gatekeeping decisions are imperative to the workforce. It is crucial for local businesses to embrace diversity for more than legal reasons. In order to bring on more diverse hires to reap benefits such as: flexibility and creativity in workgroups, reduction in feelings of intercultural threat resulting in increased competitiveness, Hofhuis (2016) highlights how recruiters are integral in achieving equality within the workforce.

Recruiters "play an important role in the process, which lead to workplace inequality. In selection and assessment procedures, the recruiter may display positive bias towards candidates who share the same worldview or background and may subconsciously reject individuals who in some way deviate from the norm" (p.1320). This highlights an interesting and particularly complex phenomenon. It is highly likely that a recruiter within diverse settings may also come from a diverse background. As a result, their view of a good candidate relies upon *their* understanding of a candidate and may have a distinct bias towards those who display that they share the same views. It is also noticed that those who deviate from a recruiter's norm are dismissed based on fit, for example it was found that migrants who "choose to maintain and express their unique cultural heritage are generally viewed by recruiters as having a lesser person-organization…fit, thus reducing their chances of being offered employment" (p.1320). Where a recruiter's bias could have an impact on their selection process, this research questions what this means in culturally diverse contexts that are under the umbrella of what is currently described in the literature as the "British interview."

Taking a social constructionist stance, this research draws on the data taken from 30 real video recorded interviews and pre-and-post interview questionnaires obtained within this ethnographic study. The findings from this study suggests that the concept of a single "British" interview does not conform to the actual workings of recruitment in this superdiverse setting where different recruiters come from different backgrounds. Furthermore, there are distinct qualities of a recruitment interview that sets it apart from a business job interview, which are not well defined in the literature. In particular, this study illustrates that the requirement of "faking friendships" to demonstrate marketability as being specific to the recruitment interview in addition to the less formal style of interaction, which makes it different to the business job interview (which is described in this thesis as the client interview). Moreover, the findings address the requirement for alignment in nine particular areas that allows for interlocutors to display cultural fit in super-diverse context. This research names these 9 areas "the 9 areas of cultural fit." This is the main contribution of this research that aims to provide key commonalities in areas of alignment that can help recruiters provide a fair and equal level playing field to minimise the actions that may come from having a personal bias,

whilst providing a simple tool for candidates to utilise to demonstrate cultural fit in the job interview.

1.2.2 Research questions

Deriving from such a complex phenomenon, the following research questions were addressed using a mixed method approach:

1) How do interlocutors perform cultural fit in a superdiverse recruitment interview context?

2) As a result, what makes some recruitment interviews successful and others unsuccessful? More specifically, what are the key considerations in relation to the linguistic and paralinguistic features?

Through the use of ethnography, close attention will be paid to what makes a job interview successful and how interlocutors perform cultural fit in a culturally diverse recruitment interview context. Additionally, through the analysis that incorporates Interactional Sociolinguistics, specific attention is paid to identifying whether there are any similarities between the successful and unsuccessful recruitment interviews and how this relates to the alignment/ misalignment of interview performances. This study will also draw on both pre- and post-interview questionnaires. The pre-interview questionnaires provide an insight into the interlocutors' backgrounds. The post-interview questionnaires allow for a more comprehensive view by providing an insight into the recruiter and candidate's own perspectives and views of: the interview, the interlocutor's performance and their own performance.

1.2.3 Thesis outline and structure

Chapter 2: will provide an overview of the literature in the area, highlighting the inequalities within the recruitment interview gatekeeping practices process. The research gap is addressed, where companies may have relevant diversity policies and strive to illustrate diversity in their workforce through statistics. However, a framework that devises how to work effectively in diverse contexts is missing.

Chapter 3: will provide an outline of the methodology used, in particular, the use of ethnography.

Chapter 4: is dedicated to the qualitative analysis of five case studies, divided into 5 sections.

Chapter 5: will provide a discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions. In particular, the 9 areas of cultural fit are introduced from the themes that have derived from the ethnographic research through use of Interactional Sociolinguistics. This will then provide further insight on how this could be practically used in superdiverse recruitment context to demonstrate cultural fit.

Chapter 6: This chapter concludes the thesis by contextualising the findings, presenting the current and future challenges, suggesting avenues of future research before summarising the key findings of this research. The key findings of this research include: the emergence of the 9 areas of cultural fit from this study, the findings that are specific to the recruitment interview where candidates' are invited to play the power game and the issue with previous research referring to a one "British interview" in the context of superdiverse London.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter reviews the existing literature surrounding recruitment interviews. It commences with the theoretical framework used in this research and provides an overview of the job interview and its characteristics. It then focuses on key concepts such as: identity, language, power, superdiversity and culture that are pertinent to this field of study. When discussing the literature surrounding culture in the job interview, this chapter differentiates the recruitment interview from other forms of interview and discusses the research that investigates both culture and cultural fit in this setting. This chapter draws on the various recurring themes within this field of study. Themes such as: power, language currency and injustice arise in relation to culture and ethnicity in interviews when hegemony is addressed in a British interview context. Themes of co-construction and rapport building can be found in the literature that surrounds the workings of cultural diversity in interview contexts. Overall, it is evident that a framework is required to address an effective solution to working with diversity in the recruitment interview. Finally, this chapter emphasises the need for more research in this field before addressing the study's rationale.

2.1 Theoretical framework

This research takes on a social constructionist stance, understanding identities and culture as: fluid, emerging and dynamic in the process of co-constructing cultural fit in recruitment interviews. The framework used for analysing the empirical data derived from the videotaped employment interviews is Interactional Sociolinguistics. Gumperz (1982a) developed Interactional sociolinguistics (IS) as a theorical framework that draws on methodological approaches used in the study of linguistics while also considering the cultural approaches used in anthropology. This allows for the blending of: linguistic, sociological, and anthropological perspectives. Using this method, it allows for the unpacking of how language indexes both social and cultural interaction as well as being used as a method for

comprehending the function of language and social relationships. IS can also be used as a method of finding interactional issues and the interactional strategies used to communicate and accomplish interactional objectives (Gordon 2011). The study of culture and communication, communication turbulence, and how this can result in an unsuccessful outcome are all made possible by IS. For instance, diverse meaning-making processes may exist even if English is a common language between the interlocutors. When this occurs, communication may break down. This can result in misunderstandings. Therefore, it is asserted that when interlocutors engage in communicative exchanges, they each bring their own "unique interpretive frame," some of which may result in the misalignment of situated inferences when specific prosodic elements are misunderstood.

According to Van de Meiroop and Schnurr (2018), studies on job interviews historically relied on: simulated job interviews, questionnaires, and data gathered through experimental research methods, therefore "only relatively recently have scholars begun to explore authentic job interviews" (p.35). In line with this movement, this research draws on 30 authentic, video recorded recruitment interviews, where the videotaped job interview serves as the foundation for the analysis of: interactional turn-taking (Rampton 2007), understanding of contextual cues and the situational inferences (Gumperz 1992), whilst allowing for further observations from post-interview questionnaires. It offers both an emic and etic understanding of the activity (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng 2008). Gumperz (1992) highlights the analytical features such as: prosodic features, codeswitching, syntactic and lexical features that can illustrate how intended meaning making is negotiated and how either mutual understanding or miscommunication occurs in the interaction. In this respect, contextualisation cues are analysed, and this can be described as being both verbal and nonverbal (e.g. stress, intonation, tempo, laughter etc).

Interlocutors are understood to bring their own views, opinions and expectations, as well as what they consider to be acceptable international norms (Gordon 2011). This can be analysed through the way in which individuals choose to express themselves and how they frame the interaction (Goffman 1974). Goffman's contribution to IS shows how the speaker's sense of self and the larger context of social interaction are tied to the context or the society that the activity is taking place in (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). While Garfinkel's (1967) work emphasises the importance of background knowledge when drawing conclusions from

conversation, it is important to note that: the background knowledge of the interlocutors, their expectations of the conversation's activity or context, and the rules governing that activity, all have an impact on the conversation and the conclusions that are drawn. Similarly, a variety of conversational queues can be used to understand: repertoires, shared knowledge, and community norms. Holmes (2013) asserts that IS can address the importance of the interlocutors' repertoires and having shared knowledge that can be used to support effective communication and interpretation in situations where conversation is employed to further a communicative goal.

More recent movements in the field of IS illustrate the multifaceted, non-fixed, nature of identity, whilst also investigating how identity within the context of the employment interview are dynamically constructed through discourse (Roberts and Sarangi 1999; Roberts and Campbell 2005; 2006). As a result, this indicates a social constructionist perspective that focuses largely on construction and negotiation. The dynamic and fluid (Halford and Leonard 2006) forms of identity construction is highlighted by Reissner-Roubicek (2012) as forms of judgment "of whether interviewees' professional identities are legitimate or not may be formed and reformed in the course of the interaction of the basis of the interviewees' use of verbal and non-verbal resources" (p.234). In the same way, this research takes on the social constructionist approach when exploring how identities are dynamically co-constructed, by emphasising the co-dependant, co-created and negotiated identity construction that dynamically takes place in the interview activity.

2.2 The job interview

The subject of job interviews and culture has received much interest within sociolinguistics and applied linguistics in the west. This has been from the perspectives of: language and ethnicity in interviews (Roberts 2021; Campbell and Roberts 2007; Gumperz 1992; Roberts 2013; Auer 1998; Auer and Kern 2000; Akinnaso and Seabrook Ajirotutu 1982), narratives in interviews (Gumperz 1999; Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz 2010), contextualization cues (Gumperz 1982), cross-cultural communication (Griffin 2015; Roberts, Davies and Jupp,

1992), trust in job interviews (Kereskes 2006; Van de Mieroop, Clifton & Schrueurs 2016), humour in interviews (Van de Mieroop & Schnurr 2018), the bond between candidate and recruiter (Lipovsky 2008; Erickson and Shultz 1982), language practices in job interviews (Scheuer 2001), identity work & stories (De Fina 2009, Georgakopoulou 2003, Van de Mieroop 2018), and so forth. The topic of job interviews has proved to be a worthy area of interest and remains current and relevant today.

The job interview can be characterised as a tool used by companies to ascertain whether a candidate has the necessary skills, ability, and knowledge to do the job and to evaluate whether the candidate is a suitable fit for the business. In a similar vein, the candidate must present themselves in "best possible way and show how their profile matches that of a company in order to be selected" (Van De Mierrop 2019, p. 61). Typical of this activity type, candidates are invited to provide a narrative about themselves and their work history through the question-answer format (where candidates are required to respond to questions), with an evaluation based on the compelling "stories" (Roberts and Campbell 2005) that candidates present through specific examples taken from their experience (Akinnaso & Ajirotutu 1982, p.20).

Akinnaso and Ajirotutu (1982) describe interviews in its simplest form as being "manifested as an interrogative encounter between someone who has the right or privilege to know and another in a less powerful position who is obliged to respond, rather defensively, to justify his/her action, to explain his/her problems, to give up him/herself for evaluation." (p.119 – 120). A job interview in particular, can be seen as one of the most persuasive types of interviews, as the encounter takes place in the context of asymmetric power differences within bureaucratic settings where "the job interview has become a major gate-keeping situation where several potential candidates compete for limited economic rewards through intense, face-to-face, verbal interaction usually with unknown persons" (p.120).

The job interview is also described as "perhaps the most crucial face-to-face encounter in ethnically mixed industrial societies" (Akinnaso and Ajirotutu 1982, p.120) and as such, it is very relevant today as the job interview has become a key encounter where "social inequality is ritually dramatized, where basic differences in: class, ethnicity, access to power and

knowledge, and culturally specific discourse conversations mediate the interaction between participants" (p.120). According to Button (1992), the interview differs from conversation as "one speaker, the interviewer, governs the interactional norms, allocation of turns and speaking roles, (s)he is able to use this interactional asymmetry to construct the candidate as successful or unsuccessful" (Roberts and Campbell 2005, p.46). Within this context, interviewees are seen to be almost powerless when compared to the interviewer, as the interviewee is restricted to the question-answer sequence led by the interviewer. More specifically, the interviewee is only able to ask questions when permitted by the interviewer. The interviewer's right to ask questions structures the interview in a way that shapes the narrative, allowing for the candidate to answer questions and through their narrative construct their desired identities.

2.3 Identity construction

Identity construction in job interviews is significant as the interlocutors aim to present their best selves. The candidate presents themselves positively, while the recruiter presents both themselves and the company in a positive light to attract the candidate's interest. Van de Mieroop (2019) found that the candidates' use of "narratives of vicarious experience" occurred when a candidate's identity of being a "good candidate" is threatened due to either discrepancies in their CV being highlighted by the recruiter or their questions perceived as unsuitable. This depicted a need for candidates to "present themselves in the best possible way and show how their profile matches that of the company in order to get selected. They aim to construct a professional identity that is oriented towards the company's expectations in terms of professional skills and experience" (p.61). Similarly, Campbell and Roberts (2007) emphasise the requirement for candidates to convincingly synthesise professional and personal discourse in order to produce acceptable identities. Candidates construct their identities through storytelling as they illustrate being suitable for the role by being both knowledgeable and professional as they convey the best version of themselves.

Being understood as trustworthy (Kerekes 2006) and convincing (Roberts and Campbell 2005) has been identified as essential to the interview outcome (Kerekes 2006). The way in which

this is enacted is through the negotiation and co-construction of suitable identities. For example, the recruiter assesses the candidate on behalf of the company. The professional identity is the company's expectations of professionalism (Lipovsky 2006), whilst the personal identities are constructed between the recruiter and the candidate. It is the construction and balance of the multiple identities that is significant to many researchers. In other words, a candidate's identity work is critical in the interview being successful, however, the acceptance of the performed identity is also important. Insenga (2022) highlights that identity is expressed through performativity, in particular, the actions between the interlocutors and how they communicate and interact in order to leave an impression on the other. During the performance, the candidate must find the right balance (Reissner-Roubicek 2017) and synthesize personal and professional identities to a level that is considered acceptable to the recruiter representing the company. Acceptance is negotiated; however, it is the recruiter who must be convinced of such identities (Roberts and Campbell 2005). Both individual and collective identities are present (Reissner-Roubicek 2017), and with the latter, interlocutors can establish rapport with recruiters and display themselves through commonly recognised humour (Okada 2015; Van de Meiroop and Schnurr 2018). It may be challenging for the recruiter to accept identities, for example, when a candidate's trustworthiness is questioned during the interview (Candlin & Crichton 2013). This can be especially true when there are differences in the meaning-making processes that take place during the co-construction of identities.

2.4 Language and power

The synthesis of professional and personal discourse and the way in which candidates use language to present accepted identities in their story telling illustrates the importance of language use in the interview setting. Language can be understood as a commodity that a candidate can sell for salary, where strong language skills can lead to better opportunities. Highlighting this within the labour process, Holborow (2015) writes "language is a crucial skill and ability that can, if carefully exploited, secure greater profits, in production, in customer care, in after-sales and across the service sector" (p.20). By not having such language skills, it

can be seen as punishable through the interview process itself. Drawing on Foucauldian notion of subjectification that is made punishable through control and surveillance, Roberts (2021) states:

> *"Job interviews are an obvious example of technologies, games and ceremonies that the workplace constructs and through which a certain self is produced, socially evaluated and either rewarded or punished. This self is classified, judged and – in the case of most job interviews – penalised or punished. It is the punitive nature of examinations that requires them to be so highly ritualised and turned into ceremonies of objectification, from which the truth can be determined… The penalty imposed on the individual is mediated through the seemingly objective – because ritualized process of the interview design." (p.13)*

An example of the institutional requirements that are examined in the interview context is the prerequisite for the candidate to use the "STAR" structure in their answers. This is a technique that candidates are required to use when responding to behavior/competency-based questions. By using the STAR approach a candidate must describe a specific job *situation* or relevant event that can be used as an example to answer the proposed question, the candidate must then describe the *task* at hand that addresses the overall goal, followed by the *action* that they took to address the situation and the *result* that details the outcome(s) of the candidate's actions. Described as the "narrative inequality" (Blommaert 2001) due to the "universalization of the Labovian narrative structure" which has been evaluated as emphasising a gap between the "western institutional narrative contentions and those used by many who come under the institutional gaze. Defendant, claimants, and candidates find their non-standard narratives interrupted and dismissed as they do not conform to the internalized Labovian Standards" (Roberts 2021, p.115).

It should be noted that although "communication skills" are frequently alleged to be crucial in interview success, such skills "have not been explicitly designated, nor do we know how they are demonstrated or recognized in an interview" (Bostrom 2011, p.504-505) whilst communication skills generally accounted for "most of the variance in a hiring choice are

nonverbal skills." Thus, as Goodall and Goodall (1982) conclude, specific criteria for verbal competency in job interview needs to be addressed by future research.

The variance could be linked to the perceptions, bias, and differences within the interviews. For example, Shaw (in press) focuses on the candidate's role in the selection process "by examining how taken-for-granted assumptions of applicants" affect the interview process. In Shaw's study of simulated job interviews, it was found that candidates "conformed to notions of what they perceived as interviewers' norms for "appropriate" responses, thereby constraining their communication choices. Apparently, job applicants reciprocated the applicant role as they assumed it to be defined by the interviewer" (Bostrom 2011, p.505). While Ragan & Hopper (1981) explain that there is an impact on hiring decisions that derive from a candidate's verbal behaviour, there are "at least two critical questions that remain unanswered. How do interviewers and applicants actually talk in an interview, and how does this talk affect the outcome? The research reported in this study adds to our knowledge of communicative behaviors in the job interview by describing the message strategy of alignment talk" (Bostrom 2011, p. 505). This alignment in talk has been a strategy embedded within earlier research, for example, Glaser and Stauss (1967) found "conversational alignment" elicit through the requirements of the job interview and later, in Einhorn's (1981) study that surrounded communication behaviors of successful candidates, it was found that successful candidates used more "effective rhetorical strategies" (Bostrom 2011, p.504). Such strategies included displaying a positive self-image, and exhibiting speech behavior that enabled the candidate to identify with the interviewer. As such, though the requirement of acceptable language, decided by the evaluation of the recruiter, where a candidate must adjust their language and behaviors to "fit" the intuitional requirements and that of the recruiter's, it is evident that a candidate's use of language has currency and therefore produces an unequal playing field for candidates across all walks of life. Campbell & Roberts (2005) describes this as a place where "street-level bureaucrats make decisions about candidates' suitability for inclusion in their organization" more specifically salaried work, based upon the candidates' ability to produce 'bureaucratically processable' talk (p.46-47).

2.5 Power & injustice in the context of the "British interview"

The concept of asymmetric power within the job interview, has been a key theme within the context of the "British interview." In this context, Gumperz (1999) highlights the concept of "ideology-based-prejudice" alongside asymmetric power dynamics. Through the interviewer's exclusive right to turn allocation, the interviewer possesses the ability to steer the direction of the interview. In the same way, by having exclusivity to the right of asking questions, the interviewee is expected to understand the "hidden agenda" behind the questions.

Hidden asymmetric power is a concept that arises in the "linguistic penalty" (Roberts 2021) where overseas interviewees may be unaware of the hidden rules within the interview setting. Within Roberts' further research, it is demonstrated that both "cultural knowledge" and "linguistic capital" are crucial to the way in which job interviews in the UK assess communication and problem-solving skills as well as their ability to work effectively in a team (Roberts 2011). Linguistic capital is described as the ability to blend three discourses within the interview: The institutional, professional, and personal discourses, whereby an unsuccessful interview outcome can be linked to a lack of synthesis between these discourses, where for example a candidate could be too personal and therefore too involved or far too institutional and consequently understood as distant (Roberts 2021, p.99-101). The significance of the linguistic penalty is linked to the wider issue of the "Ethnic Penalty" (Heath and Cheung 2006) where minority ethnic groups are still today left at a disadvantage when compared to their "white" counterparts. The labour market has been an area of interest for investigation where sources of disadvantage and discrimination leaves minority ethnic groups doing less well than their white counter parts. It is argued that direct and indirect discrimination still happens today in the workplace, where recent research acknowledges the indirect discrimination in the workplace. This is because "we must 'look for subtle acts of exclusion rather than grand, overt forms of discrimination' …The assumed neutrality of selection process and the lack of recognition of the job interview as a cultural construct" (Roberts 2021, p.47). In a survey conducted in one of the twenty FTSE 100 companies, it was found that some managers expressed concern over whether BAME staff would 'fit in." Narrowing the question further to the recruitment process it was found that "HR managers

did not reflect on the institutional processes and demands of the job interview and its relevance for posts on offer, rather they placed the blame on BAME/AAEM groups themselves, who did not submit enough applications, had problematic accents" or simply being unable to make themselves understood or come across correctly within the interview (Roberts 2021, p.47). Such findings illustrate the issues that are present when there is a lack of diversity on interviewing panels and where hiring decisions affect the general, local workforce, leaving non-British candidates at a disadvantage. Such findings are closely tied to the focus on the "British interview" as standard practice and as a result, non-British candidates are penalised by the system.

This is not so different to the unequal encounters Fairclough describes where "the non-powerful people have cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from those of the powerful people." This is also found within the gatekeeping practices in the job interview, where the "societally dominant cultural grouping controls and encounter which determines whether someone gets a job, or gets access to some other valued objective" this is particularly problematic in areas within Britain where "it is mainly white middle class people who act as gatekeepers in gatekeeping encounters with members of the various ethnic (and cultural) minorities of Asian, West Indian, African, etc., origin" (Fairclough 2015, p.77). The aforementioned literature also heavily relies on the notion of a "British interview."

It should be noted that the previous literature focuses on the candidates and how they approach the interview in relation to a pre-defined, static, structured interview process that relies on the hegemonic notions of the British job interview. According to the literature in the field, the notion of a "British interview" suggests that job interviews in the United Kingdom have a set of characteristics that can be described as "British." On this topic, Rampton, Blommaert and Arnaut (2015) refer to the expectations of the British job interview as "discursive regimes of the British job interview, which value certain styles of presentation, such as the blending of institutional and personal modes of talk and the STAR narrative structure" (p.255). Similarly, Duchene, Moyer and Roberts (2013) argue that "the contemporary British interview increasingly relies on a competency model which is largely derived from the neo-liberal new capitalism or 'new work order'" (p.84). In the same way, Roberts, Campbell, Robinson (2008) emphasise that "those who are least knowledgeable

about the British interview have more difficulty aligning themselves to the interviews and so face additional interactional demands during its course" (p.141). Intrinsically, it is noticed that a hegemonic view of "British" interview practices exists. This does not necessarily address a reality in contexts that can be described as "superdiverse" where gatekeepers themselves can be from different cultures and backgrounds, and what this brings to the interview where candidates are assessed on being a suitable cultural fit.

2.6 The British interview in a superdiverse context

According to Pardo (2018), after the second world war, where post-colonial groups settled in the UK in conjunction with the subsequent labour migration, this pushed the boundaries of the racial, ethnic, and cultural norms. "Great Britain developed a pluralistic model to manage postcolonial migration flows, without explicit interest in assimilating them into British culture" (p.47). Indeed, this perspective does not align with the aforementioned notions of a "British culture" however, it begins to describe a picture of diversity where historical transformations can be understood in the context of immigration and political initiatives that are made to encourage and ensure the coexistence of a greater diversity.

Rampton (2011) suggests that it has been noticeable over the past two decades that globalisation has changed "the face of social, cultural and linguistic diversity in societies all over the world," in particular, since the 90's there has been a "diffuse nature of migration" (p.2) which has led to a shift from the "ethnic minorities" paradigm through its description of multiculturalism and a move towards the concept of superdiversity (Vertovec 2007). Superdiversity therefore can be described as a phenomenon driven by an increase in the "categories of migrants," thus not simply relating to nationality and national culture, religion etc., instead, inviting the characteristics of "motives, patterns and itineraries of migration, process of insertion into the labour and housing markets of the host societies" (Rampton 2011). The term superdiversity is therefore used to describe the continual movement of the semiotic variables that do not always reside in static or stable varieties that index static or stable identities. More specifically, this notion only highlights the issue of fitting migrant categories into specific, pre-specified boxes.

London is a city that can be described as "Superdiverse," a key example of where "the diversification of diversity" can be found (Vertovec 2007; Wessendorf, 2010). London is home to over 2 million people born abroad, where over 230 languages are spoken. Studies of superdiversity in sociolinguistic research has illustrated that language use has moved away from the 'old' multiculturalist model, which associated language varieties with a clearly defined identity (e.g. socio-economic class and associated variety), to a more dynamic view that draws on the use of ethnography (Arnault 2012). Such analysis on the affects this has on language use, can be found in various research from forms of "crossing" (Rampton 2005), where linguistic forms are borrowed, transformed, and deployed as "resources" for communication such as: repertoires (Blommaert and Backus 20111), that are used in polylanguaging (Jørgensen et al, 2011) or translanguaging (Vogel & Garcia 2017). Both polylanguaging and translanguaging can be considered as being more than code-switching due to the addition of other communicative resources such as body language for example.

However, Superdiversity is seen to some scholars as "a means to conceptualise a post-multicultural era" (Tremlett, 2014), however, migration is not a new phenomenon. Although there is a shared understanding of migration not being new, this research does not focus on the period and timespan of superdiversity, but instead highlights the importance that is placed on hybridity. The concept of Superdiversity offers a shift from homogeneity, moving away from nation state ideologies, bounded groups and homogenising discourses and moves "towards the more rapid social transformations that current societies witness today as a result of inequality or social mobility, inter-marriage, migration and transnationalism but also as a result of the availability of resources and repertoires through internet and communication technologies" (Tremlett 2014, p. 847).

Superdiversity has also been criticised as being a buzzword. A term that has been "newly coined" and turned into a "fact on the ground," that is "better suited in advertising than academia" due to it being transformed into a "branding tool" (Pavlenko 2019, p.145). Although there is disapproval of the use of the term, the term itself highlights the existing complexity of diversity in cosmopolitan locations, probing for further investigation within linguistically, culturally and ethnically diverse contexts such as London, where static variables associated with language prove to no longer make sense. In this light, the issue surrounding

superdiversity being used as a marketing tool can also be seen as beneficial. The concept of Superdiversity *has gained interest*. The buzzword has highlighted the significance for further research to be conducted in this area. Moving away from the issue of superdiversity being seen as marketable, the diversification of diversity is a phenomenon that the concept of diversity alone does not accurately capture. The complex phenomenon highlighted through the investigation of a superdiverse context is complemented through the lens of a social constructionist stance in understanding the various forms of identity and meaning-making that is negotiated within this phenomenon.

Superdiversity in this sense lends the view of a British interview context to be problematic. In particular, the concept of a British interview evokes an essentialist understanding of the nuances of the job interview process between a host culture and the participant. In other words, a recruiter conducting an interview in a culturally diverse location may indicate that they may not necessarily be a British national, and a recruiter within a superdiverse context may be British but may have also lived in other countries, speak multiple codes, and may have friends or family members from different cultural backgrounds, where their own ways of interviewing may not be recognised from the textbook perspective as being inherently British. As a result, the interview process within a superdiverse location becomes an interesting topic for investigation because "when people from very diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds come into contact with each other, their interactions are inherently complicated, adaptive, dynamic and emergent" (Toomaneejinda & Saengboon 2022, p.157).

2.7 The constructionist view of "Culture"

In relation to the concept of superdiversity, culture is a key concept that requires clarification surrounding its definition and how it is understood and used in this research. Due to the complexity surrounding the definition of culture, there has been various perspectives and definitions. Dating back almost 40 years, the complexity of the term culture is acknowledged by Williams (1976) as "culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (p.87). Years later, this has remained relevant. The current debate of what culture means differs between contexts, disciplines, scope and so on. To some researchers, culture is seen as embodied; where a number of attributes are shared by groups (Hofstede

2009;2010; Spencer-Oatey 2009). In the 1970's these groups were regarded as: gender, social class, ethnicity and race, and later included nationalities in the 80's. Today this is more broadly defined conceptually to include: religious groups, professional groups, organisations and communities of practice. The compositional approach (culture as things) exemplifies the taxonomy of cultures and allows for the development of assumptions and hypotheses which has been criticised within the cross-cultural comparative paradigm. Alternative approaches such as: the Dialectical approach, which encompasses past, present, static and dynamic notions of culture (Martin et al 2002), the Semiotic approaches to culture, where culture is perceived as a semiotic that later influenced (Geertz 1973), Culture as a process, more specifically, the meaning-making processes (Street 1993), and Culture as power and ideological struggle (Halualani and Nakayama 2010). Given the various approaches to culture, this research aims to move away from the essentialist views of culture by considering culture as a "tool for thinking" (Scollon et al 2012). Drawing on culture as a process enables insight on how decisions are made and the way in which activities are conducted.

As a result, culture in this research takes on more of the constructionist view as culture is used in a fluid sense. Culture in this research is seen as something that emerges, something that is "done," rather than the more fixed national culture. Culture is seen as "a verb" (Street 1993) where people "do culture" through "kinds of communication systems we have available to us." Culture is understood as a tool seen heuristically, for example "a tool for thinking" where "not everybody has the same tools" at their disposal. Tools in this regard can be "borrowed" and cultural tools can "evolve" over time. Culture proves to be important within such inter-cultural exchanges with people of different backgrounds and practices as "speakers rely on their socially generated values and beliefs about their worlds in order to produce and interpret meaning" (Fairclough 2015, p114). On this Bourdieu (1986) states that people should not "position themselves in only national terms." In such situations, culture can be seen as a social construction that is negotiated (Hall 1995).

The construction of culture, where individuals do culture has been closely linked to identity as through this lens it is possible to "reference a number of diverse cultural and social/ personal circumstances – for example your personality; age/generation, ethnicity; religion; gender; social status; heritage; educational influences; your behaviour in different situations"

(Li 2014, p.172). Some may be privileged over others. By doing culture, it highlights that culture is not objective or fixed, but instead it is ever changing and multi-faceted. With this line of thought, this research draws on the concept of culture as being "not static but may be formative, fluid, and emergent, constructed by ourselves and others and negotiated (i.e., challenged and contested) over time and space (geographic and social)" (Li 2014, p.172).

2.8 Culture in the recruitment interview

More often than not, the job interview is used interchangeably with the recruitment interview in the literature surrounding language, culture and job interviews. Distinctions between recruitment agency interviews and the company (client) interviews are not necessarily made, and as a result the two forms of interview are jointly referred to as either the job interview or the recruitment interview. It should be noted however, that there are differences in the interview styles, goals, and requirements. Company (client) job interview questions for example, are unique to a specific role that is being interviewed for, whereas recruitment agency interview questions are broader, focusing on the candidates, strengths, skills, and goals as well as their ability to be successfully placed or marketed to their clients. As a result, identity work is imperative, yet difficult in that the candidate is required to show "fit" with multiple identities, and various forms of company culture. In studies surrounding company fit, there is reference to three forms of culture: "the organizational culture, the national culture and the personal culture" (Gardenswartz et al 2003). However, limited literature exists on the cultural expectations of the recruitment interview, where the recruitment interview, conducted by the agency, includes additional forms of culture such as the company client culture, the agencies culture in additional to the other forms of individual culture (those that are pertinent to the recruiter).

Another particular example of where recruitment culture differs from a company (client) interview is that the recruiter may be working with multiple business across borders in order to fill their job vacancies. In this regard, the concepts of culture and identity are significant to the recruitment interview due to the recruitment agency's wide and cross-territorial reach. Dissimilar to the company (client) job interview, the recruitment interview provides

temporary and permanent staff to a growing number of companies. The global widespread of "transnational staffing corporations" has indicated that "with the international rise of neoliberal workplace relations and the widespread demise of regular work over the past decades, temping firms have become a lucrative market internationally" (Kinnunen & Parviainen 2016, p.16). The temporary staffing recruitment agencies on a global scale is a huge global business "worth many billions of dollars, with the USA, UK and Japan bedding the three largest national markets." Evaluated in 2008, but still very true today, "the three largest players internationally were Adecco, Manpower and Ranstad" (Piller 2017, p.133). With an increase in the number of businesses that rely on recruitment agencies to find suitable personnel for job openings, this proves particularly important as "the pressure to find the 'right' personalities to strengthen customer service and working teams has made staffing decisions critical for companies and public organizations, and outsourcing of the recruitment process is implemented globally to save costs and improve the quality of recruitment" (Kinnunen & Parviainen 2016, p.16). This indicates the growing need businesses have on recruitment agencies, especially in finding suitable candidates for their open roles. The quality of recruitment is important to businesses as they outsource sourcing experts work on specific vacancies. Recruiters are therefore seen as specialists that help companies make the right hiring decisions.

Due to the wide cross-territory reach of these types of interviews and the number of companies that one recruitment agency is responsible for staffing, concepts of culture and diversity is very important. This is because, recruiters in this field are exposed to various forms of culture, whether different business cultures, recruiting in and for different locations, or meeting hiring managers and candidates from different cultural backgrounds, recruiters work within contexts where cultural differences may be present. However, it is not addressed in much of the research in the west that recruiters themselves, particularly in superdiverse locations, come from many different cultural backgrounds and are in positions of gatekeeping power. Differences in such backgrounds play a significant role in the differing processes of coding and decoding meaning. According to Lipovski (2006), this means that "interviewers from different cultural backgrounds may have different expectations about what a job interview consists of (see for example Akinnaso and Ajirotutu, 1982; Roberts and Sayers, 1987; Gumperz, 1992; Bilbow and Yeung, 1998)." (2006, p,1152). In this regard, interviewers

from different cultural backgrounds, may have different success criteria. In today's diversity movement for equality, the highly contested term BAME is often used as an umbrella term that includes most migrants, as well as the more accepted, but not as widespread term, African Asian Ethnic Minority (AAEM)[3] is associated with movements that surround the issues that come from ethnic minorities being at a disadvantage. It is noticeable that diversity and equality mean more than simply increasing the number of culturally diverse placements. Instead, companies must find ways of working with and empowering its diversity numbers, by equipping employees for diversity and inclusion, and enabling diversity to happen in a less complex and more fluid process that strives to work towards equality. Put simply, Pitts (2005) describes diversity as 'a social-psychological phenomenon based in a sense of "likeness" and "otherness." This view of likeness and otherness is a way in which difference or similarity is easier to understand within the complexity of cultural difference in (what can be best described as) superdiverse contexts, where culture is seen as fluid and not static. The following section focuses on the concepts of culture, diversity and "fit" and how this is understood within this study.

2.9 Doing Cultural fit in the job interview

"Cultural fit" is a term widely used by recruiters, which can vary in accordance with the recruiter's understanding of cultural fit. This phrase holds strong ties with the concept of assimilation. This is highlighted by Bye et al (2013) who describe "the notion of cultural fit has been used to examine social and cultural factors in assimilation for individuals, social groups, firms and organisations alike" (p.9). Within this research, migrant accountants in Norway were found to be less successful in their interviews than their native counterparts. The reason provided for their unsuccessful interview is that the migrant accountants conveyed low "cultural fit." However, another study that focused on the IT sector in the United States, found not only ethnic minorities but also women tend to be unsuccessful due to "cultural fit." Women were dismissed for not being a good "cultural fit" due to being viewed as culturally

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[3] As BAME is currently more widely used than AAEM, BAME will be used throughout this thesis.

different by not conforming to the stereotypes that were associated with such IT roles (Guzman & Stanton, 2008).

However, drawing on the concept of identity construction, an added layer of complexity is presented when understanding how cultural fit is enacted. On this Van de Mieroop and Schnurr (2018) report that "identity construction and negotiation are relevant in job interviews because in these encounters candidates tend to try to present themselves in the best possible way, and equally, recruiters have a strong interest in portraying themselves (and their company) positively to attract the candidates' interest" (p.38). Remarkably, this differs amongst different cultures, different backgrounds and their individual, personal views on what constitutes an "ideal candidate" and how the ideal candidate should behave in the interview. In the same way, this extends to their own perceptions based on cultural understandings of what makes "a good company" and how this is perceived. Van de Mieroop & Schnurr (2018) suggest that the candidate does not simply attempt to show that they have a good work-related background and work experience, but more specifically, they are also trying to show that "they are a likable person and would 'fit' in the organization where they are applying for a job" (p.36). The term "fit" described in this depiction is a crucial requirement in the job interview and has been seen as the accepted term with very little definition or specificity. Often, candidates are dismissed for not being a good company or cultural "fit", and this is accepted without the need to elaborate any further. Candidates may understand this feedback as acceptable and, in some cases, a factual evaluation based on an examination through the job interview. But what does it mean when recruiters use this statement? In an attempt to answer this question, it seems that ability to build rapport is crucial to fit "recruitment consulting is all about puzzle solving determining what kind of person-abilities will fit into different working places and teams. In the end it's the chemistry between the client and the candidate that matters" (Kinnuen & Pavianen 2016, p.12).

Within Kinnunen & Parvianen's (2016) research, multiple recruiters were interviewed. One of the recruitment consultants mentioned that "a candidate with 'poor social skills is sent nowhere' because all employees have to be ready to work in some capacity in customer service" (p.11). Similarly, another recruiter stated that even if you have the relevant criteria for the role "you are formally qualified but, in the end, you may lose your chances for

employment because your personality is not a good fit." This view is further elaborated upon by another recruiter's summary: 'your CV gets you the job, but your personality loses it" (p.12). It is evident that there is something more than simply being qualified for a role and meeting the criteria, however it should be noted that there is an element of subjectivity surrounding the concept of good fit. Good fit may differ between recruiters in accordance with their personal views of what constitutes: poor social skills, good fit with the organisation, good personality and so forth. Acknowledging the subjectivity of this term, "fit" in this study refers to meaning to be more than simply being qualified for the role and implies recruiting "employees who are a good match with the company's value system and culture" (Cable & Yu 2013), that can be best described as company fit, in addition to the interviewer/ recruiter's views and understanding of good company fit. Company fit is a term that tends to fall under the umbrella of cultural fit.

 Previous research has made a clear distinction between "cultural diversity" and "cultural fit" in the work setting where recruiters search for cultural fit in interviews, whilst workplaces look to be seen as being culturally diverse and inclusive. More specifically, cultural fit, is described as where "people groups share socio-cultural heritage, beliefs, values and norms which continue their cultural identity, groups from different cultural backgrounds with different identities can disrupt these perspectives" (Cox 1994, p.17). On the other hand, Cultural diversity in the workplace is seen to be "enshrined in policy and compliance mechanisms," and meeting the minimum requirements to stay in line with the applicable laws (Syed 2008, p.37). As a result, it is argued that the recruitment strategies that include processes of "cultural matching" can be seen as a consequence of cultural homogeneity (Rivera 2015). The end result is that cultural diversity in the recruitment process manages to reinforce the idea that "the notion that global educational and occupational mobility (global meritocracy) is tempered by national norms that in Western nations favour highly educated English-speaking migrants for highly skilled jobs" (p.52).

Shifting from the current challenges of cultural fit from the lens of hegemony to cultural fit from a social constructionist stance, Van de Mieroop & Schnurr (2018, p.36) see identities as being "emergent, fluid, and dynamic," where signified meaning, relevant to identity are co-constructed and negotiated throughout the interview process. Identity negotiation plays a

vital role in interview contexts where the interlocutors aim at presenting themselves positively or in the best way possible in relation to desired outcome of the interview. The candidate in this sense aims to be understood by the interviewer as a good fit for the role, whilst the recruiter attempts to gain the candidate's interest by positively portraying themselves and the company. In addition to the candidate's portrayal of their professional identities that fit the job specification and the way in which they convey their expertise to fit the perspective role, there are additional social identities that must be displayed through "attempts at showing that they are a likable person and would 'fit' in the organization where they are applying for a job" (p.36). Fit can be done through the interlocutors evidencing that they share distinct demographics such as gender and ethnicity, their origins and so forth (Erickson and Shultz 1982; Kerekes 2006). This construction of co-membership within the interview has been identified by researchers such as Lipovsky (2008) and Kerekes (2006) as a key contributor to the interview outcome. Illustrating co-membership has been linked to the process of the interlocutors building a good rapport. This is through the process of building and negotiating identities in this context.

The importance of culture in this context is embedded within the interlocutors' ability in finding similarities with an absolute stranger. Rivera (2012; 2015) argues that recruiters are more likely to put forward candidates who have similar backgrounds to their own. In particular, homosociality (same gender preference) and homophily (preference to same personal and behavioral characteristics) are also factored into the hiring decision making process. In this sense, static notions of culture, such as national culture index difficulty in finding similarities in culture and working towards cultural assimilation. Whilst culture understood as a "verb," where interlocutors perform "culture" through various attributes such as: age, gender, educational background, status and so forth (Li 2014, p.172), this facilitates the interlocutors' ability to be able to perform cultural fit, through cultural alignment. In other words, by understanding culture as dynamic and fluid, this indicates that cultural fit can be achieved collaboratively through co-construction.

The concept of co-construction in the interview indicates that the recruiter also plays a role in positive identity construction in the interview. As a result, it should be noted how a lack of knowledge of a person's own cultural bias can be problematic in the interview process. The

problem that arises from not being aware of one's own personal cultural bias can be unpacked in the following example: A candidate's attire may leave an impression on the recruiter as this is the first thing that is noticed. Some candidates wish to be themselves and express this through what they wear, whilst others may dress in more formal business attire. The decoding of a person's dress can be argued as being linked to a person's cultural understanding, the attire being the signifier and the mental concept produced being the signified (Saussure 1983). The signified differs according to a person's associations of what the attire means to them, in this sense, this could be understood as a cultural bias. The issue that derives from basing judgements upon first impressions is outlined by Berman (1997) as "an applicant who creates a strong first impression may be able to influence the final evaluation by this strong favorable feeling. The interviewer should recognize this as an emotional reaction" (p.62). Within the recruitment context in particular, this initial bias may influence how the recruiter interacts with the candidate, whether the candidate is given a fair chance in the interview and as a result, it may impact the type of candidates that are sent for interviews with the recruiter's clients. Accordingly, good candidates can be missed, and the wrong candidates could be put forward for certain roles in cases where the gatekeeper's own personal biases are not taken into consideration. Berman addresses how a personal bias can be noticed and minimised through realisation by stating "if one notices that one has been affected by a strong impression during the interview, the danger of making an error can be minimized" (pp.62-63). Thus, it is evident that by not understanding one's own bias and personal preference, this may impact the overall direction of the interview and more specifically, how cultural fit is performed, understood and co-constructed.

2.10 Cultural fit, Co-construction, and Rapport

Rapport is another key term that emerges from the literature surrounding the co-constructed identities in culturally diverse job interviews. Similar to the concept of "fit" and "culture," the concept of "rapport" has also received much ambiguity through its numerous definitions and descriptions. Prior (2017) states "perhaps much of this ambiguity in the literature is due to the adhoc manner in which researchers have identified interviewer and interviewee behaviours and goals, such that almost any form of participation (or even non-resistance) can

be construed as rapport" (p.3). Prior goes on to describe the various forms of alignment of the following areas that can contribute towards the view of rapport such as: "eye contact, smiles, gestures, frequent responses, openness, trust, respect, synchrony, emotional connection, pleasantness, friendliness, personal disclosure, intimacy, confession, frankness, detailed responses, attentiveness, acceptance of the research aims, reduced misunderstandings, positive post-interview ratings, willingness to be re-interviewed" and so forth. Tsai et al (2018) identify a positive outcome if there is alignment in emotions displayed by the interlocutors, for example, both being calm or both being excited. Due to such inconsistencies within the literature surrounding rapport, "some researchers have suggested discarding the construct of rapport altogether (Weiss 1970)" (Prior 2017 pp.3-4). However, Berman (1997) uses the following definition that incorporates co-construction and the alignment on an emotional level, "rapport refers to a sense of mutuality between interviewer and interview (p.60). The area of mutual interest is in conducting the interview in a satisfactory manner. Both parties must cooperate for this to happen. Rapport is a feeling or an emotion. It does not happen by accident or as a by-product of the structured interview, which will ensue. It must be created" (p.60). Methods in which recruiters can help 'do' rapport in interaction is further described by Berman as "…looking the interviewee in the eye, a sincere interest in the applicant, openness, and candor, listening carefully to the applicant, and showing empathy" (p.60). Even though these elements contribute towards effective rapport building, it does not quite convey the depth and complexity of rapport building in the context of cultural diversity.

Another significant definition of rapport is proposed by Duncombe & Jessop (2012) who uses the phrases "doing rapport" by "faking friendship" in relation to participant interview research methods. This research draws on rapport in the recruitment interview process as faking friendship as it establishes a sense of mutuality, expresses the mutual positive feeling and bond that it created, whilst describing an element of trust. Duncombe & Jessop elaborate on the phrase faking of friendship interviews are conscious about how they come across and the messages that they send to the interviewees. To build a good rapport, it is advised that interviewers should therefore "keep eye contact, speak in a friendly tone, never challenge, and avoid inappropriate expressions of surprise and disapproval; and practice the art of the encouraging but 'non-directive "um"'. If this is 'friendship', then it is a very detached form of

it" (p.110 – 111). The aim therefore is to "minimize social distance and establish rapport and trust" (p.111). Relating this to the recruiter, the recruiter almost deceives the candidate as being their "friend" by building a good rapport with the candidate. In both Berman (1997) and Miller et al (2012) depiction of rapport in the job interview, the common denominator is the recruiters' involvement within the rapport building process. The recruiter can be an enabler of how the interlocutors builds a good rapport. This highlights a need for a shift in focus from the current research perspective (where the candidates' rapport building abilities alone are assessed against interview success), and to move towards the co-construction of rapport building between both interlocutors against the interview outcome. Resulting from gatekeeping power, the recruiter can facilitate the interlocutors 'doing' rapport. The recruiter can also penalise candidates by jeopardising the establishment of rapport, through forms of cultural biases that can arise as early as the recruiter's first impression in the interview. Consequently, such candidates will not be provided with a fair chance to build rapport as the basis and willingness to build a good rapport is lacking on the recruiter's end.

Not only has the research in the area of rapport been interested in defining and describing rapport, but also in understanding *when* exactly rapport happens within the interview. According to Swinder et al's (2011) study that uses 112 undergraduate accounting students to conduct mock interviews. The study looks at the candidate's "image creation" abilities and distinguishes between "slight and "extensive" image creation, deciphered by a how much a candidate admits to "disordered" answers or making up stories to impress the interviewer. This noteworthy study refers to a "rapport building" time frame, which is believed to be only at the beginning of the interview.

Further to the questions of what rapport is and when it happens, other scholars have also been interested in how rapport happens through co-construction. Identifying a particular area of rapport, Van de Mieroop and Schnurr (2018) argue the importance of humor as an attribute of constructing co-membership between interlocutors, and if achieved, this contributes towards the candidate's interview success. It was found that "successful humor" can be considered when the interlocutor responds positively to the humorous attempt after having initially built upon the "humorous frame" and picked up on key cues that are beyond the "surface" (p.44). Whilst an unsuccessful attempt of humour expressed by the candidate may

be construed negatively in relation to a processional and social identity, it is such types of discourse, categorised as "mixed discourse types," that are found in "social talk." However, on the other end of the spectrum where humour and professionalism are concerned, according to Lipovsky's (2006) study of candidates' negotiating expertise in job it was found that candidates "negotiate their expertise in their effort to bond with their interviewers as competent professionals," as such, candidates attempted to "behave like an insider" or use "technical language that highlighted in-knowledge and expertise," enabling them to negotiate and display common identities through their similar values "in an effort to negotiate rapport"(p.1173).

Kerekes (2006) ties down a specific connection to a human feeling of "trust." The co-construction of trust within culturally diverse interviews has been strongly linked with success in building a good rapport, and therefore a positive interview outcome. Displaying untrustworthiness is characterised as the following "supplying inappropriate references, demanding too high a salary and failing to account for gaps in one's work history". In other words, in order to build rapport, there must be an element of trust between the recruiter and the candidate. One of the very basic reasons is the "false" and "unnatural" roles that both interlocutors need to align with particularly in the genre of an interview where the relationship is initially forced so trust between both interlocutors becomes imperative. Trust is seen as co-constructed "due to the highly impersonal nature of qualitative interviewing, it is unlikely that interviewers will abandon their efforts to establish a personal connection (however defined) with interviewees" (p.3-4). The human connection described here, based on the interlocutors' trust to build rapport in addition to the research outlined in this chapter of what rapport is, indexes (through the various definitions and ways of explaining what rapport is and how it is done in the interview) that there is something more than simply fitting into the written criteria of the job role alone.

2.11 Conclusion and rationale for the study

This literature review has illustrated that further research is needed in understanding what cultural fit is and how it can be done in recruitment interviews in particular. The literature review sheds a light on the gap in previous research, where the recruitment interview is not always distinguished from the company (client) interview, and as a result, does not reflect a clear understanding of the: assessment criteria, the process and outcomes. By clearly depicting the context it is then possible to understand the criteria, processes, procedures and what culture means as an assessment requirement in this form of interview.

The literature review also unpacked the role of rapport, power and empathy in these interviews. Although the subject of culture and the recruitment interview has proven to be extremely relevant in today's BAME context, where injustices are highlighted within the recruitment system, the focus of previous research has been on the candidate's performances framed within the British job interview. The concept of a British interview has been argued as being a problematic construct in cosmopolitan areas such as London, where the concept of superdiversity highlights that the recruiters themselves may also come from various diverse backgrounds. In this regard, further investigation is required on how this manifests itself in gatekeeping practices, particularly where cultural fit is assessed. It is noticed that there are limited tools that are presented to recruiters and candidates in order to be able to work with superdiversity to provide a fair, and more level playing field for candidates who are initially seen as culturally different to the recruiter. Stemming from the research in this area, this study sees the recruiters as individuals who carry individual biases that are subjective, yet in a position of power, and who's views can be influenced by the notion of "culture" in its fluid sense. Unlike previous research, this study will not solely focus on the candidate, but instead identifies the recruitment process as a co-construction of meaning making processes, a negotiated activity where both interlocutors can affect the interview outcome. In this respect, *culture* is understood as being fluid, rather than static, and the *recruitment interview* as a context where: cultural values meet, cultural expectations are prominent and meaning is left to interpretation, where in each sequence new meaning unfolds until a conclusion is made from the process. In order to understand to some extent, what co-construction cultural factors stemming from macro ideologies have on the outcome of this interview, it proves

therefore unsuitable to draw on static notions of work-related, tick box ideologies and values, and instead imperative to draw upon understanding from the unfolding events of the interview context.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Methodology Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological choices and research design used to address the research questions of this study, starting with an overview of the methodology and an explanation of the study design that employs ethnography. A summary of the data analysis is included as well as the considerations that were made in relation to the: researcher's bias, ethical considerations, risks, precautions, and limitations of the study.

3.1.1 Overview of methodology

This study aims to address the following research questions through the use of ethnography:

1) How do interlocutors perform cultural fit in a superdiverse recruitment interview context?

2) As a result, what makes some recruitment interviews successful and others unsuccessful? More specifically, what are the key considerations in relation to the linguistic and paralinguistic features?

The ethnographic approach allows for the examination of any similarities between the successful and unsuccessful recruitment interviews and how this relates to alignment or misalignment of interview performances. All participants are required to complete a questionnaire regarding their background. In context, by understanding the interlocutors' backgrounds and focusing on the similarities between the successful interviews it will provide a basis of addressing the key question of how interlocutors can successfully perform cultural fit in a super-diverse context. Following the job interview, the recruiter and candidates will provide post-interview feedback that will enable the interlocutors to reflect upon the interview.

Each of the recruiters that take part in the ethnographic research will have their own criteria and views of the interviews that take place, and such opinions will be elicited through the post-interview questionnaires. This approach ties in with the various layers of complexity that Jenkins (2000) refers to by classifying the social world into the following orders: "the individual order, the interactional order, and the institutional order." Each order can be described as "the first order has to do with the individual and their own reality, the second is negotiated between people, while the third refers to norms and structures already in place" (Holliday 2013, p.34). This holistic view of understanding culture and identity within this context can be approached by Jensen's (2002) multi-perspective approach by taking a sociological, discursive, and social constructionist approach to viewing the event (p.8).

Subsequently, scales and levels will also be drawn upon by exploring the following: the occurrences on a micro level (referring to the individuals), the negotiated (the communicative event) and the indexed external factors that unfold throughout the co-construction (the macro level of structures and norms). The method of data collection will display these levels by: i) obtaining the candidate and recruiter's perspectives on the job interview through post-interview questionnaires (micro – the individual), ii) recording the recruitment interviews and using Interactional Sociolinguistics to analyse the interactions (mezzo – the negotiated), iii) understanding the structures that govern the event and the general norms that surround recruitment interviews by immersing myself within this context as an observer.

3.2 Ethnography

Ethnography is a research method used within social research that "seeks to capture and understand the meanings and dynamics in particular cultural settings. Ethnographers spend time observing and participating in the environments they seek to describe and use… systematic data-collection techniques" (Rampton et al 2004, p.2). Although much debate surrounds what constitutes ethnography (Rampton 2015), and whether ethnography and linguistics can go hand in hand due to differences in their "objects of study" (Rampton 2004 p.4), ethnography has been seen as "enriching a fundamentally linguistic project, as in for example Eckert's research on language change (2000), or Levinson's cultural model of

cognition (1996)" and in other areas of Linguistics has also been "a way of helping researchers with a range of different backgrounds to reach deeper into the ethnographic descriptions of social or institutional processes..(Hymes 1996)" (Rampton 2015, p.18). Moving on from Gumperz and Hymes' (1972) "The Ethnography of Communication," this has opened the door to "fuller interdisciplinary engagement, increasing the scope for combining its powerful techniques and findings on communication with the pursuit of issues and agendas formed elsewhere" (Rampton 2015, p.22).

The research method used within this study follows Campbell & Roberts (2007) and John Gumperz's (1992) use of ethnographic research method as it encompasses an immersed and realistic understanding of the setting and context. Even though there are various sub-traditions within Ethnography, Rampton (2010) indicates that generally Ethnography can be beneficial by being "wide ranging in its empirical scope" by understanding how temporal practices that involve "persons, situated encounters and institutions, networks and communities of practice" are interlinked (p.2). Alongside the positive approaches of ethnography, this research method has also received much scrutiny for researcher's bias and the exclusion of quantitative data.

3.2.1 Debates and mitigations

Ethnographic research has largely been criticised for its lack of hypothesis and the researcher's bias or inferences made, on this Jackson (2016) indicates that "most criticisms centre on the lack of specific hypothesis to direct the study, the duration and quality of fieldwork, lack of generalizability and limited potential for replicability, researcher bias, and lack of validity" (p.248 -249). Not only does the question of validity relate to the inability of being able to repeat the research in the same way in order to check its findings, but it also highlights the issue of researcher's bias. To counter these criticisms it is argued that not all research is concerned with hypothesis-testing due to the nature of the research question (p.165). In relation to the researcher's bias, Dell Hymes (1996, p.13) suggests that researchers can in fact counter this by being aware of any personal views and making them known by declaring "their biases and any personal characteristics that may impact their observations and interpretation of the data" (in Jackson 2016, p.248 – 249).

Another debate that ethnography falls under is the quantitative and qualitative debate. The status of ethnography is questioned for being scientific due to its purpose of identifying cultural patterns rather than scientific laws (Hammersley 1992, p.169). By identifying cultural patterns, ethnography's validity is criticised for its descriptive approach instead of using numbers that are seen to be more precise and quantifiable.

To mitigate the weaknesses that surround the use of ethnography as detailed above, within this research, not only are the researcher's bias declared (see appendix 10 to 14), but the use of different data sources such as the pre-and-post-interview questionnaires can help overcome some of the earlier anticipated challenges.

3.3 The process

The ethnographic research took place in two west London branches for one of the world's largest recruitment companies. The participants of this study consisted of the staff members in each of the branches and the candidates that the recruiters had asked to come in to interview. The candidates and the recruiters were required to provide explicit consent in order to take part in the study. These recruitment interviews were video recorded. All of the recruiters in both branches took part in the study. Dissimilarly, not all candidates that were interviewed wanted to take part in this study. As a result, consent was obtained for thirty-six candidates. Out of the thirty-six interviews, only thirty videos could be used as 6 videos had issues with audio or video.

The purpose of using Ethnography as the main methodological approach within this research was to be able to fully immerse myself as a researcher into the context of a normal working day within a recruitment agency to obtain an in-depth insight into the recruitment processes, whilst understanding the norms and structures that govern this context. Collecting video recorded recruitment interviews enabled me to identify how interlocutors position themselves within the various trajectories, analyse the performed identities, whilst taking an objective approach to the interview outcomes.

My corpus of approximately 30 hours of recordings is taken from 30 different video recorded interviews between 30 candidates and 9 recruiters. This consisted of visiting two recruitment

agencies in west London, twice a week for the duration of three months. During these recordings I was not present in the recruitment interview, however, I was within the same facility. The interviews generally included a few competency-based questions and a series of questions regarding the candidate's: CV, experience, skills, and future goals. Being on site meant that I was able to fully immerse myself in the agency work culture, by having my own desk, wearing formal attire (in line with the company dress code), and being involved with the candidate's registration. I was also able to speak with the candidates and recruiters, whilst having further access to additional materials used within the agency e.g., generic interview guides for the recruiters, candidate test results etc.

3.3.1 The interview - Considerations

In addition to observing the interview process, I felt that it was necessary to trial the interview experience from the candidate's perspective. During my recorded test interview, the recruiter replicated interview questions that they would normally pose to candidates. As a researcher this exercise enabled me to understand some of the emotions that take place when being filmed during a recruitment interview. This process made me realise that having a video recorder in plain sight could be daunting to a candidate. As a result, I decided to move the camera to a more discrete location. One that could still capture the interview without being directly in front of the recruiter or the candidate. I also noticed that by having the video recorder within similar distance between the recruiter and the candidate, there was less concern over one participant feeling more in the spotlight than the other.

3.3.2 The recruitment company's interview process

Upon the candidate's arrival, the candidate is greeted by a recruiter or administrator and asked to complete company forms before their interview. The forms include: an information sheet about the candidate, a contract between and the company and the candidate, a signature sheet for equality and diversity and a final page called "Quick, tell me" that asks questions regarding: career ambitions, previous roles, and positive and negative traits of the candidates.

Once the candidate completes the forms, they are asked to commence the interview with a recruiter. At the interview stage, the candidate is invited to interview because their CV meets the criteria, and the interview is used to understand whether the candidate is a good fit for the position in question or other roles that may become available.

Although the recruiters' objectives were the same, their approach differed. There were key interview elements that took place in each interview, this included: conducting right to work checks, going through the candidate's CV by discussing their previous roles and reasons for leaving, completion of forms and understanding job expectations, however, each recruiter had their own style. Some recruiters preferred not to use any competency questions and instead used more unconventional questions such as "if you were an animal, which animal would you be?" Some recruiters preferred to engage in small talk, finding common ground to get the most out of their candidates. Some recruiters preferred to obtain a detailed understanding of a candidate's work history by going through each role on the candidate's CV. Nevertheless, a general approach (not necessarily in this order) could be described as the following:

1)   Small talk –asking about the candidate's journey to the office and offering a beverage.

2)   Asking for right-to-work documentation and going through the completed documents with the candidate.

3)   Asking candidates about their: salary expectations, preferred location and availability, the type of work that the candidate would prefer, and if they have any preferred job sectors.

4)   Asking the candidate to walk the recruiter through their CV, talking about each role in detail and asking them for their reasons for leaving each company.

5)   (Occasionally) referencing and asking questions in relation to qualifications, skills or related experience.

6)   Where applicable, talking to the candidate about potential, suitable roles.

7)   Answering any questions that the candidate might have.

After observing the full interview lifecycle, I had to understand the optimum point of the candidate's journey that would enable me to appropriately introduce my research. It was

agreed with the agency that I could welcome the candidates in and inform the recruiter of their arrival. In exchange, I would be responsible in providing the candidate with the company's forms. It is after this point that I could introduce the study and ask whether the candidate would like to take part in the research. If the candidate showed interest, I could then provide them with further information, written documentation about the study and consent forms should they wish to take part. The research forms included:

 1. An overview of the research (appendix 1)

2. The consent form (appendix1.3.1 & 1.4.1 A and B)

3. The demographic questionnaire (appendix 1.3.2 & 1.4.2)

4. The post- interview questionnaire, which the candidate was asked to complete after the study (appendix 2)

3.3.3 Demonstrating 'fit' with the company culture

Due to the very recent merge of the two companies, it was difficult to gauge the overall company culture. From the company website it is evident that the company values surround: inclusion, development, proactivity, and long-term vision. Some of these traits were noticeable. Values toward 'development' was fed through the business and could be noticed though the following areas: the recruiters were sent on training days every few months, managers would have either weekly or daily catch ups with their team members, and there were development/ aspiration boards dotted around the room. In relation to 'long-term visions', recruiters had weekly KPIs in order for them to meet their annual targets, monthly rewards for "top billers" and annual prize holidays for the top three "billers," which were ways of encouraging recruiters to succeed. The company had a structured career path with defined targets and KPIs. The other two values of 'inclusion' and 'proactivity' were a bit more difficult to identify within the business during the merge.

Both locations had quite formal dress codes, and this formality was reflected in their ways of dealing with clients. However, the two different locations had different office cultures. The Hillingdon Borough (HB) branch had quite an open, friendly, fun, chatty and sales-driven work environment, which promoted employees to have a work hard and play hard work ethic. By

comparison, the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) branch had less personal interaction between colleagues during work hours and employed a more target-driven, heads down approach to work. Unlike the "team" environment in HB, LBH had more of a top-down management style approach, where there was a clear distinction between the manager and the recruiters.

Through observation of the company culture, I immediately noticed that I would have to portray "fit" within each of these branches. One of the main considerations, was to dress as a company employee. This was not only to be seen as an insider to the recruiters to obtain their trust, but also, to obtain the trust of the candidates within a particularly stressful interview context. I also found that I would have to adapt to the two environments by having a more relaxed, and slow-paced approach within one branch, whilst a more serious, formal, fast moving, on-the-ball approach with the other. This again was imperative in obtaining "in group" status (Eckert, 2000).

3.3.4 Process of getting agency approval

Having previously worked with one of the managers within this recruitment agency facilitated gaining access to conduct this research within this closed setting (Blom & Gumperz 1972). I set up an initial meeting with one of the branch managers to discuss: my project, the process, and the end goal of the research with this manager. Once the manager was happy with the project aims and we negotiated any concerns she had with the proposed study, mainly its impact on the team's time and their targets, she put me in touch with another branch manager so that I could gain access to two different locations. I then had another formal meeting with both managers where I highlighted: the reason for the research, its benefits and a detailed understanding of the process and later discussed the research with the recruiters. My selling points were that their candidates will have an opportunity to get third party feedback on the interview, something that the agency was unable to do. I also stated that as one of the largest recruitment agencies in the world, they would be contributing towards academic research. Another benefit was that as they knew that I had previously worked in recruitment - I would provide a helping hand whilst on site should it be required. Having answered any questions and settled any reservations towards the project, my request was eventually put forward to the UK Executive Operations Director and the Regional Manager.

Any further questions or concerns were discussed with the branch managers and addressed to me via a telephone conversation with one the branch managers, which was then relayed back to either the UK Operations director or Regional Manager. Once all parties were satisfied, the condition was of course, to speak to all recruiters within each branch to see whether they were happy to take part. This required a visit to both branches. During this visit to the branch I was equipped with an information pack (appendix 1) for them to look through and addressed any questions that they had (this pack was later made available to the candidates). I obtained consent from each of the recruiters at this stage. When reporting back to the managers, it was eventually agreed for me to spend one day a week at each branch, for duration of up to 3 months with the condition that the recruiters and candidates were happy for me to film them. In total, the process of obtaining approval took just under two months.

3.4 Sites

The study was conducted at two separate branches of one of the world's largest staffing companies. The agency specialises in recruitment for: general staffing, IT, Legal and Finance, whilst aiming to provide their clients with the "right" candidate. By conducting this research in a leading recruitment agency may imply that the standards and processes in place would be at the forefront of the recruitment sector, where staff training and practices would be of a high standard. Additionally, the use of two sites addressed consistency in practices, policies, and procedures within a global organisation. The two branches of the recruitment agency were both in West London, where they provided temporary, permanent and contract personnel to businesses in the West London area. One of the branches was located in the London borough of Hounslow (LBH) and the other was located in the London borough of Hillingdon (HB).

The arrangement agreed with the agency was for me to come into each branch once a week for the duration of three months. This was perhaps seen as the least intrusive approach to the recruiter's day to day work, whilst also obtaining the benefits of being seen as more of an insider through the extended duration. It should also be noted that once I had commenced

my research with the company, they had undergone a few changes that were not discussed within our initial meetings about the research. During this specific period, the company was going through a company restructure. A few weeks before I had joined, the company that I initially agreed to conduct my research with had merged with their parent company. As a result of the merge, there were clearly two different company cultures working together. There was an interesting phenomenon of where some of the staff members were new to each other; in the process of establishing new working relationships. Due to the very recent merge and having been long-term competitors within the same patch, it was evident through: desk arrangements, candidate ownership squabbles and break schedules that there was still a slight *us* versus *them* separation within the newly formed company.

The sites were very different in terms of presentation, layout, and atmosphere. Upon arriving to HB branch there were wide, grey-carpeted stairs that lead to a solemn, empty, square hall space with white walls and four doors. To the left were doors to the bathrooms and kitchen and to the right was another door with a glass pane that led to the recruiters' office space. This branch had a very energetic, professional, and almost "call-centre" feel to it. As soon as this door was opened the buzzy, noisy, sales-like environment took over. Recruiters were either talking on the phones, between themselves or to other candidates and clients. The office space (appendix 1) was of a rectangular shape where all the recruiters were in one space spread across eight of the desks, with an additional desk left for me to use. The entrance of the office space included a small welcome area, which consisted of a round table with four seats, neatly placed magazines in the middle of the table, a television screen that presented images of the company and an adjacent water cooler. In front of the welcome area there were two computer screens used for candidate skills tests and further down, there was a small box room that was used to conduct interviews with candidates. The "interview room" contained a desk with a computer and phone (which faced the interviewer's seat), and on the opposite side there were two chairs where the candidate would sit. This office had already replaced its previous corporate colours with the new corporate colours: red, grey, and white.

The branch in the LBH (appendix 3) however, encompassed quite a different atmosphere. It was very cosy, relaxed, welcoming, and home-like (juxtaposing the competitive, upbeat nature that recruitment is known for). It had more of a relaxed ambiance to it and almost looked as though it could have been a converted house. Upon arriving to this branch there

were two front doors - providing an implication of extra security. Once the second door was opened, there was a loud beeping sound that alerts the staff members upstairs that someone has arrived. The front corridor was connected to narrow, blue-carpeted stairs that twirl into an empty waiting room. Dissimilar to the HB branch there are blue sofas on either side of the rectangular room and a coffee table in the middle. The walls were green and the middle wall had large-font writing of the old company name. There was also a small computer used for skills testing in this room. This room is very bright and welcoming, and certainly had a very homely feel to it. To the left of this room was the kitchen and lavatories and to the right is a rectangular room where the recruiters were sat. This branch did not have the same buzzy, busy sales feel that the HB branch had. Instead, it seemed calmer and more relaxed with one or two people talking at a time. There was a lot of office space, with six desks around the corners of the room, and a large space in the middle. Behind each of the recruiters' desks there were sales targets written across white boards, with future goals dotted around the room. This branch had not yet incorporated the new company colours and still had the same blue, green, and white colour scheme from the previous company.

It is such observations that derive from the ethnographic research, captured within the recruiter's notes that enable the researcher to have a real feel for the context, the environment in which the candidates and recruiters are interviewing in, that is limited within statistical data alone. Another observation that is noticed here, is the company culture and the struggle that the recruiters themselves are currently settling into a new company culture, whereby the recruiters also aim to "fit" into this new environment with new colleagues and a new way of working.

3.4.1 The Participants

The branch in the LBH branch consisted of four all female staff members ranging from the ages of 26 to 42. The team included one branch manager, two temporary consultants and one permanent consultant. Dissimilarly, the HB Branch consisted of five staff members, two of which were managers: one permanent consultant, one temporary consultant and one contracts consultant. In this branch, one out of the five staff members were male and all varied from the ages of 21 to 35.

The candidates were not controlled demographically. The candidates who participated within the study were those who were invited to interview by the recruitment agency and who agreed to take part in the research. The candidates were individuals who were seeking office-based employment as: mangers, accountants, IT professionals, sales representatives, personal assistants, secretarial and administrative roles, and other office support positions. The candidates were either out of work and actively looking for work or seeking work whilst in employment. The candidates would have also lived or worked relatively close to location of the recruitment agency. The candidates were required to be able to work within the patch that the recruiters were recruiting in. If a candidate lived too far, they were asked to visit one of the other branches closer to the candidate's preferred location.

It should be noted that the candidates taking part in this study have already been vetted by the recruiters. The recruiters had already pre-selected the candidates that would come in to interview prior to the research being conducted on that day. The selection process for the candidates could have happened in the following ways: the candidate's CV could have been found by a candidate application to an advertised position, a recruiter search using an online job board or candidate walk-ins where a candidate would come into the branch and give their CV to a recruiter. The recruiters would go through CVs to find candidates specific to positions or candidates that they believe they could place in certain types of roles that the recruiters regularly have vacancies for. The candidates that visited the branch would have had a previous telephone interview before coming in. During this telephone conversation, the recruiter gets to know the candidate, assessing whether the candidate who looked appealing on paper, could be selected to come into the branch for an interview. The recruiter would then ask about the candidate's availability, suitability for position(s), travel preferences, the candidate's current position. Once the recruiter had assessed the candidate's suitability for the position the candidate would be invited for a face-to-face interview in the branch.

3.4.2 Researcher's positionality

As an observer, the way in which we behave and interact with our informants will have an impact on the quality of the research (Labov 1991). Acting as an action researcher, I was perhaps seen in two distinct ways, as an outside researcher and as an insider. I was very clear

about my purpose in this setting and my involvement in the process as a researcher, however, I did not simply want to watch from afar and take notes. Instead, as mentioned in the previous section, I wanted to immerse myself within the setting to gain the trust of the candidates and the recruiters so that they would feel comfortable and open with me. Therefore, I would describe my stance as an observer who was also a participant.

From the perspectives of the recruiters, I would have been seen as both an outsider and an insider. I had worked with two of the recruiters in the past, and as a result the recruiters seem to have viewed me as more of an insider. Goffman's (1959) notions of 'front stage' vs. 'backstage' is very relevant to the involvement I would experience as a researcher, where front stage refers to the type of jobs and roles that resemble performance on stage and involve communication with the organisation or team. Another dichotomy is 'official' or 'unofficial' duties (such as socialising) as proposed in Mahili (2014), who used this to show that each post comes with both "official and unofficial duties and language choices depends on 'duties' as well as posts and professional expertise" (Zhu 2019, p.56). All of which was crucial to being seen as an insider. Being perceived as an "insider" was demonstrated within the lengthy discussions about recruitment, people in common, work progression, other recruitment companies and their territories and so forth. In both branches I was given my own desk, sitting alongside the recruiters and wore similar, smart office attire to fit in with the team. I managed to maintain a friendly connection with them by engaging in office conversations, debates, and jokes, whilst also partaking in team lunches as well as individual lunches with each of the recruiters and buying the office snacks.

Dissimilar to the recruiters, all candidates were complete strangers, and therefore gaining their trust and asking them to participate within the study was far more difficult. I wanted the candidates to feel relaxed within this setting, so I assured them that they were not the centre of my focus. What contributed to being seen as an insider from the perspective of the candidates was that the company allowed me to welcome the candidates in, sit them down, ask if they wanted a beverage, inform the recruiter of the candidate's arrival then go through my purpose in the agency. I noticed that I gained insider status when being asked about the company's work process e.g. what was meant by certain definitions in the contract with the company? What other roles the company recruits for? How long the whole registration will

take? And so on. It was very clear that as a researcher within this setting, gaining trust was imperative in getting the participants to take part in the study.

3.4.3 The on-site research process

Throughout the research I maintained a fieldwork diary and also updated a spreadsheet with all candidates' and recruiters' gathered information and details of their cultural backgrounds. On the first day at each branch, I spoke to the recruiters individually about the research and asked them all to sign consent forms and fill in the background questionnaire.

The whole interview process for a candidate could take anywhere between forty-five minutes to two hours, depending on the time taken: filling out forms, waiting to be seen or in the interview itself.

I would welcome the candidates and ask them if they wanted tea, coffee or water and provide them with the printed agency packs. These packs included an information page of the candidate, a contract for the candidate to sign and information of the candidate's experience and future aspirations. Having provided the candidate with this information, I introduced myself, explained my purpose at the agency, discussed the research, and also asked questions about the candidate's background and career prospects. After gaining some understanding of the candidate's background and asked them for their own experience of cultural differences in a work environment, I talked them through what I needed from the candidate and asked if they wanted to take part in the study. If they were happy to take part, I suggested that I would provide them with feedback on their interview. If the candidate was not happy to take part, I avoided pursuing the topic and thanked them for their time and asked them to let me know when they have finished completing the agency forms so that I can introduce them to the right recruiter. This in particular was a mode of moving from the outsider as a researcher, to an in-group member of the branch. If the candidate said yes, I would go through the research and the process in detail and ask them to read the information pack (appendix 1). I would then ask whether they had any questions or concerns and if they were happy, I would ask that they sign and provide their consent. Once the consent form was signed, I provided them the post-interview questionnaire to complete after the interview.

As soon as the candidate had completed the company forms and signed the consent forms, I informed the recruiter that the candidate had finished. I then set up the camera in a place that was not intrusive, but also roughly equal distance between the interlocutors whilst it captured both chairs. Once the camera was set up, I pressed record and walked out of the room, leaving the recruiter to commence the interview with the candidate. During this moment, I would write down my own thoughts of the candidate, the way they spoke, any interesting stories they mentioned or anything particularly distinctive about the way they dress, spoke, or come across. Once the interview had finished, the recruiter would notify me that the interview was concluded and ask me to stop the recording. At this point I asked the recruiter and candidate separately of their feelings towards the interview. I normally had the same response where both interlocutors stated that they forgot that the camera was in the room. The recruiters were aware that the candidate had the post interview form to complete, so the recruiters asked the candidates to complete the form and to then give the form to me to go through with them once complete. I checked the forms and asked the candidate to write their email addresses on the side of the consent form if they wanted the feedback and thanked them for their time, wishing them luck in their job search.

3.4.4 Incentives

The incentive provided to the candidates who participated in the research, was that, should they wish, I would provide them with personal feedback on their interview performance. The feedback included information on: language use, answers to questions, formality, attire, projection, turn taking, eye contact, and various other areas that were noticed in their interview. I highlighted to the candidates before they accepted or declined participating in the study, that the feedback is by no means related to, or associated with the views of the recruitment agency.

3.4.5 Ethnography – Post interview questions

Similar to the methodological approach used within the ethnographic research conducted by Gumperz et al (1992; 1999), post-interview questions were used in order to ask the participants to reflect on the interview. Post interview questionnaires were used to illicit understanding of the job interview interaction. Dervin (2016) suggests that speaking to

informants enables researchers to avoid "identity taxidermy" throughout the research process (p.137-138). Accordingly, the purpose of the post interview questionnaires is to understand the perspectives of both interlocutors within the communicative event to minimise the subjectivity within the analysis of the research. To further highlight the importance of post-interview feedback, a perspective is taken from the discipline of psychology where Nikolaou and Georgiou (2018) state that "the employment interview is an important aspect of every employee selection procedure. Therefore, personnel psychology researchers and human resource professionals need to be aware of how applicants perceive it as a process, how they react to it, how they perceive the interviewer(s), and what are candidates' post-interview attitudes and behaviours" (p.108). In line with this perspective, the candidates were asked questions about their general thoughts of the interview, how they felt they performed in the interview and how they wanted to be perceived. The candidates were asked: whether they had prepared for the interview, if they intentionally used verbal language or their body language to come across in a certain way, how they felt the recruiter performed, was the interviewer as they would have expected them to be, was the interview how they expected? This information later enabled me to compare the following: how the candidates viewed the whole interview process, and their views of: the recruiter and their interactions with the recruiter, whilst trying to elicit why they behaved/spoke/performed in particular ways.

In the same way, feedback was also collected from the recruiters. At the end of the recruiters' working day, I asked the recruiters questions about the candidates. Questions included: which candidates they would be putting forward for a client interview and why? How did they feel the candidates performed? Where there any areas of miscommunication? Did they notice any cultural differences? Where there any areas of miscommunication? And so on. It was clear that the recruiters were not willing to provide a full and completely truthful report about their candidate preference on the day that the interview took place. Their answers seemed to be summarised using similar discourse surrounding their views on an unsuccessful candidate. This segment of candidates were described as not being a "good cultural fit," or "the right fit" for the role(s), but they may be useful for other positions. To obtain definitive hard data and to validate those who had been put forward for roles, and other that would not be considered, I decided to return to both branches after three months. It was this decision that enabled me

to obtain the hard data, whilst also, providing further insight on the recruiter's retained and lasting impression of the candidate. It was evident that this later detachment through the trajectory of time and perhaps becoming more trusting of the researcher (as the researcher was perceivably more of a familiar face), seemed to have elicited a forthcoming and open perspective from the recruiters.

In conjunction with the analysis of the video footage, the post-interview questionnaires provided another level of understanding, an understanding on an *individual* level. This method is used to avoid inferences over the reasoning of the interview outcome, by drawing on the participants own thoughts and feelings towards the interview, rather than attempting to provide a subjective and arguably bias opinion on their: choices, thoughts, and behaviours, further mitigating the possibility of researcher bias within the analysis.

3.4.6 Case studies and Interactional Sociolinguistics

Before analysing the data I had to organise and prepare the data by transcribing the video recorded interviews. I started to analyse the turn-by-turn interaction, whilst relating this to the notes taken from the recruiters and candidates.

Reviewing the commonly used methods of analysis surrounding ethnographic research I had the options of using either Dell Hymes' "ethnography of Speaking" or Gumperz's (1982) "Interactional Sociolinguistics" to deal with the ethnographic data by understanding and managing the frames of meaning making and the identities presented. I decided to use Interactional Sociolinguistics due to the ability of looking at "contextualisation cues," "extra-communicative knowledge" and "indexical meaning." Interactional Sociolinguistics enables the researcher to go beyond the conversational analysis approach by being able to incorporate the cultural, social, and general context of the event. It also provides the ability of identifying the different in the participants, factoring in areas such as linguistic capital and institutional/ power relations. Although the approach is criticised by other theories due to its lack "of austerity" (Bailey 2008, p.217) through the use of interpretation, it is particularly relevant and required for this study due to its insights into the cultural norms surrounding the event, which this research heavily aims to understand.

Interactional sociolinguistics is used to analyse five case studies that comprise: two successful interviews and three unsuccessful interviews randomly selected from the 30 interviews. Case studies are used as a suitable approach to obtain an in-depth, "holistic" (Harrison et al, 2017), yet nuanced view of the recruitment interviews that take place in this real-life context. The case study is an approach used to understand real life cases where multiple complex topics such as culture, society belief etc., can be explored (Harrison et al, 2007). These "descriptive case studies" (Yin 2003), delve into the interview encounter unravelling key themes that emerge using interactional sociolinguistics. In each of the case studies the participants are understood as being the experts of their views and feelings of the interaction, and as such, the post interview questionnaires provide an insight on the views of the interlocutors.

3.5 Researcher's bias

Zhu (2016) recommends that by declaring the researcher's potential bias, mitigates the one of the major limitations described in using this methodological approach. As such, there are three main areas that I can highlight as having potential biases as a researcher:

i)   The first potential bias derives from having previously worked in recruitment, at first as a recruiter and later as a compliance and operations professional within the sector. It is therefore clear, that I have my own perceptions and judgments on what makes a good interviewer and interviewee. In order to ensure that this is not reflected in my work, I will avoid making intuitive assumptions and base any conclusions objectively. This entails basing conclusion on: the number of candidates that were successfully placed, the post-interview feedback, the analysis of the transcripts and interview recordings, the field notes and analytic memos as well as any other accessible documents provided by the recruitment agency.

ii)   The second potential researcher bias that should be highlighted is that I have previously worked with one of the branch managers and one of the recruiters in the past. This could perhaps imply that I may subconsciously have favourable preferences to them within the research. However, having thought about this potential bias, I have attempted to minimise this through:

a)   the use of questionnaires that ask for the candidate personal views on the recruiter;

b)   the method of Interactional Sociolinguistic analysis of the transcriptions that derive from the video data;

c)   and finally cross referencing any of my own views with the surrounding literature in the field.

iii)   Finally, I would need to reference my own subjective inferences on cultural differences. This study takes a social constructionist view, that avoids grouping individuals into one national culture. For example, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (1979) & Trompenaars' model of cultural differences (1998) provide understandings of national cultural differences that could affect behaviours in the workplace, I however, aim to avoid the essentialist stance, grouping individuals into one cultural category, minimising what could be seen as stereotyping individuals to only one cultural background. The concept of culture within this work will therefore be taken from a constructivist approach by identifying culture as "socially constructed" where "understanding of culture and intercultural differences is subjective and emerges through discourse and interactions" (Zhu 2016, p.13). As highlighted in the literature review, culture is seen as fluid, a constructed image that interlocutors portray to one another and is accessed through their repertoires (Blommaert & Backus, 2011) and past experiences and communicated in their performances and stories.

3.6 Ethical considerations, risks and precautions

There were potential risks that I had to take into consideration before conducting the study, ensuring that certain preventative measures were in place in order to minimise any risks to the participants. There were four major risks identified within this research:

i) The first risk that was identified and addressed was that as the recruitment interview itself, could potentially be stressful to some candidates. The preventative action put in place was that, if a candidate feels distressed or noticeably uncomfortable, the interview will not be recorded. In this event, further steps will be taken in order to reassure the candidate that

they are able to opt-out or stop the recording at any time. In the unlikely scenario where a candidate may have a break down during an interview, I will need to be equipped with the NHS direct number to provide the candidate with immediately.

ii) The second risk identified was related to data protection. Participants have a right to obtain footage of their interview, however it was imperative, that upon such a request, the other participant visible in the footage will need to be safeguarded. The preventative action taken for this, is to blur or edit the any other individuals out of the footage. The recruiters were made aware of this.

iii) The third risk was with candidate and recruiter anonymity. To ensure anonymity of both the recruiter and the candidate within the research, all candidates and all of the recruiters were assigned a number in order to conceal identity and to keep information anonymous. Recruiters were identified in transcripts as R (number) and candidates as C (number).

iv) The third risk within this study was Information security and dealing with personal information. It was planned that: all data will be saved on a device with a secure password. Only anonymous transcriptions will be shared and disseminated. All recordings will be uploaded on to my own, secure laptop, that is password protected. Any hardware device(s) that will have recordings will be stored safely and securely. Personal data will not be passed on to any third parties. I will transcribe the information to prevent further viewing of the footage. The footage will only be stored/ kept for a necessary length of time that is deemed appropriate for the study. Having streamlined an opt-out and data subject access request process, upon receiving an opt-out request the footage will be destroyed securely.

3.7 Limitations

There are of course limitations with the methodology, the main limitations of the study are: the number of participants involved in study, the longitude of study and observers paradox. It is clear that the thirty recorded videos over the time frame of three months may not be sufficient enough to draw major claims within this field of research. It does, however, provide a basis of understanding that is relevant to the research questions and the aims of the study.

A large limitation to this methodological approach is centred around the observer's paradox. There were three clear indicators of this weakness:

i)   Recruiters were not completely honest as to whether the candidates would have been put forward for positions. Being a recruitment agency, their goal is to put individuals into work. Even though a recruiter may not feel that a candidate did particularly well in the interview, the recruiter mentioned that the candidate would not be suitable for a specific role, however, they would still try to find another position for them. It was noticed on a few occasions where a recruiter was not satisfied with a candidate's performance and spoke about it quite openly with their colleagues. This information was clearly different to the information that the recruiter provided me with in the post-interview meeting. To decipher whether the candidates were successful or not, I decided to return back to the recruitment agency four months later to ask which candidates had actually been put forward for a position and used this as my objective data.

ii)   During my pitch for participation with the candidates, I ask the candidate about: their heritage, their views on the subject, and whether or not they had encountered any cultural differences in their workplace. This may not have worked in my favour as prior to the interview the candidates may have questioned the idea of "British" interview practices and could have provided different answers if they were not aware of the topic surrounding cultural differences. Factoring this in, although culture was a topic of conversation and could have been in the interlocutors' minds during the interview, having experienced the interview myself in the pilot, it is clear that within the short duration of an interview, the interlocutor's interest would be within the interaction and proving answers to the questions.

i)   Gumperz et al (1979) asked each candidate to re-watch their interview and reflect on and discuss what happened in the interview. Where I wanted to obtain both opinions, instead of the candidates' alone, a clear obstacle was the restrictions of time, resource, and space. Prior to the research being conducted, it was agreed with the managers to not take too much of the recruiter's time. The candidates needed to be in and out of the branch in a timely fashion, so that the recruiters could move on to their next interview. As a result, it was not possible to set up an area where the candidates and recruiters could watch and reflect on their performance. Instead, as soon as the interview had finished, the candidates were asked to complete the post-interview questionnaire, which had to be a limited number of questions

which would not take up too much time. Similarly, the recruiter's post-interview feedback was taken all at once, at the end of their working day where they would reflect on the interviews and the candidates' performance.

3.8 Methodology Conclusion

This chapter described the choices of the research design and outlined how the research was conducted. Despite the limitations, the ethnographic approach proved to be most suitable in addressing the goals and aims of the research questions. This chapter also summarised the ethical considerations, risks and precautions taken that were imperative in conducting research that involved participants allowing the recording to take place during a potentially stressful event.

Chapter 4: The case studies

Using Interactional Sociolinguistics, the following sections contain detailed analyses of five case studies that incorporate two successful interviews and three unsuccessful interviews. The case studies include the following sections:

ii) Introduction and information about the participants that derives from the background questionnaires and field notes.
iii) Analysis of the transcripts.
iv) Post interview questionnaire feedback from the participants.

The analysis of the interview transcripts provides the basis for the emergence of the 9 areas of Cultural fit.

Due to the nature of this research and the type of data obtained, it is imperative to anonymise any personal data and company information. As a result, pseudonyms are used to conceal the identity of the participants. Company names are also omitted to ensure confidentiality.

Table 1 Key for symbols used in transcription

Symbol	Meaning
R:	Recruiter
C:	Candidate
(Italicised text)	Action or description
[*inaudible*]	Inaudible
<u>Line</u>	Intonation
[ ]	Overlap
..	Micropause
…	Pause untimed
(1.2)	Timed pause with duration in lengths of seconds
XXXXXX	Company name or omitted lexical item
[sic]	Transcribed as found in original source e.g. with colloquialisms/ errors

4.1 Section 1 - Case study: CA 017 Star & Justin – A successful interview

4.1.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the topic of rapport building in a successful interview that lasts 38 minutes. Through the analysis of the interview, centring largely on the language use of the interlocutors, it is evident that the interlocutors align in areas of: language, views, identities, positioning in order to negotiate trust and build a strong rapport.

This interview has been selected as one that demonstrates how the interlocutors "do cultural fit" within a culturally diverse setting. While demographically, Star – the recruiter, and Justin– the candidate are very different, there are two key commonalities that they share, namely their *West London urban background* and their *professional* identities. It is in terms of these two particular identities that are indexed and displayed in their performances that enable them to achieve trust and build a good rapport. That is not to say however, that the interlocutors do not have any areas of miscommunication or misunderstandings. There are in fact a few instances of both miscommunication and misunderstandings. Nonetheless, this section draws attention to how the interlocutors re-align their communication strategies and negotiate their understandings that enables them to successfully move forward.

Table 2a About the recruiter

About the Recruiter Star					
Age range	25-30	Codes	English London English Spanish	Lived elsewhere?	Yes, lived in the Philippines & moved to West London at age 11 and lived in Spain for 1 year.
Gender	Female	Is English L1?	No, Tagalog	Work:	Sales Customer service Recruitment
Heritage	Filipino, Chinese	Resided in	Philippines	Education	Postgrad LPC

Table 2b About the candidate

About the Candidate Justin					
Age range	30-35	Codes	English London English	Lived elsewhere	No
Gender	Male	Is English L1?	yes	Work:	Sales Operations Logistics
Heritage	English Jamaican	Resided in	West London	Education	GCSE

Justin is 38 years of age. He speaks English and has English and Jamaican heritage. He lives in West London and was born in the UK. He has never lived in any other country and does not speak any other codes outside of the varieties of English. His highest level of education is GCSEs. He has worked in customer service, operations, and logistics.

Dissimilar to Justin, Star is 27 years old. She describes Tagalog as her L1, and English as her L2 alongside Spanish. Star is of Filipino and Chinese heritage, having lived in west London since moving to the UK when she was 11 years old. Before this, she lived in the Philippines. Star studied in the UK, although she did live in Spain for a year during a break in her studies. Her highest level of education is an LPC, which she completed after the law degree that she obtained in London. Since her education, she has worked in: customer service positions, an estate agency and now recruitment.

4.1.2 Interview Introduction

Whilst Justin completes the agency forms alongside the research consent form, Star walks downstairs to where Justin is seated and greets him. She asks him to follow her upstairs to her desk in the open plan office.

Justin first takes the seat that is positioned next to the recruiter and attempts to place the chair opposite her. I stop the candidate and explain that the chair is positioned in this way so that the camera can capture both participants. Justin apologises and moves the chair to its

original position. Once he sits and the camera starts to record, I walk away from the interaction to my allocated desk on the premises.

As Justin settles into his chair, he accidently touches Star with his leg and apologises.

2. C: oh sorry *(moves over)* I've got long legs
3. R: its alright yeh
4. C: *(smiles)* [*inaudible*]
5. R: you okay
6. C: yeah yeah cool

It is noticeable that Justin uses humour in the opening sequence of the interview. Harris et al (2016) state "typically, a single humorous exchange is multi-functional, negotiating workplace relationships, and expressing a range of multifaceted meanings" (p.634). Taking this view of humour being a conscious choice and placing it in the interview context, Van De Mieroop & Schnurr (2018) shed a light on reasons behind choices of humour in interviews as "questions of identity construction and negotiation are, of course, also particularly relevant to job interviews because in these encounters candidates tend to try to present themselves in the best possible way, and equally, recruiters have a strong interest in portraying themselves (and their company) positively to attract the candidates' interest" (p 36).   This could be considered when understanding Justin's following reaction that incorporates humour. Justin firstly reshuffles his seat and apologies for doing so. He then attempts to make himself comfortable and kicks the recruiter. He apologises in line 2 before he blames something that he has no control over – his physical characteristics. By lightly ridiculing himself and the amount of space he takes up, he attempts to avoid any awkwardness by addressing it with humour.

This initial joke enables Justin immediately to begin negotiating the foundations of building a friendly rapport with Star. Humour used as a "self-presentation tactic" helps establish an initial rapport (Harris et al 2016, p.625). The timing of this "self-presentation tactic" could be seen to work in Justin's favour as according to Barrick et al 's (2012) study on rapport building, it was found that "interviewers made quick, intuitive judgements about candidates early in the interview and these initial impressions predicted subsequent evaluations." It was these

initial impressions that created lasting impressions (p.344). Although this study takes the general view that rapport is constantly being negotiated throughout the interaction, rather than solely constructed at the start of the interview, it is evident that through Justin's use of humour (line 2) and Star's smile (line 4) that the interview begins on a positive note, opening the door for solidarity and rapport to be negotiated.

4.1.3 Humour and emotional alignment

Rapport is something that is negotiated and built cumulatively throughout the interaction. In the following extract, humour is also used by the recruiter, however, instead of poking fun at herself, she pokes fun at Justin. It could be argued that this would be quite a face threatening act for two strangers, however, it conveys that there is a negotiated level of rapport that has been built to enable the recruiter to feel that she can use this form of humour. The purpose of this style of humour is understood as being used "to construct and enact many different relationships in the workplace" (Harris et al 2016, p.634). Therefore, humour here is used as a way of signifying friendship.

Extract B

262.R: Okay [Why did you leave]

263.C: [People screamin' buh] erm I think I left der yeah for a new

264.challenge I got kind of so far in XXX XXXXX

265.R: Yeah you got <u>really</u> far I have to say*(laughs)*

266.C: *(laughs)*

267.R: the last one I spoke to lasted six months

268.C: was that recently or back in the day

269.   R: no recently *(softens tone as if she is telling him a secret)*

270.C: *(smiles)*okay

In this example the candidate and recruiter show a connection through ridicule. The emphasis on the adverb "really" in "yeah you got really far," combined with the use of laugher suggests that sarcasm is used for humorous effect. The implication in Star's use of sarcasm (line 265) is that Justin did not get very "far" because in his attempt to leave before being made redundant, he ended up leaving the company in the same way that others did. Justin does not seem to take offence to this as both interlocutors laugh (lines 265 & 266). One of the key

areas that Spencer-Oatey et al (2009) highlight as one of the rapport management competencies is "emotional regulation" which is defined as being "resilient" where a candidate can "handle criticism or embarrassment when things go wrong" (p.102). In this example, Justin shows his resilience by laughing with Star, showing that he has not taken offence but instead can see the humorous side of the situation. By laughing with each other there is an emotional alignment where they indicate that they have aligned with the same emotion.

4.1.4 Positioning through humour

Humour is recurrent throughout the interview. The significance of displaying humour in order to successfully build rapport in interviews is exemplified in a study by Gallaher (2010), where it was found that candidates who displayed a sense of humour were in fact preferred over those who did not show this. A clear example of the link between rapport and humour is illustrated in the following excerpt where Justin positions himself as a friend through his use of humour as a means of getting a point across. In this example, Justin uses humour to make an implicit request, whilst his open use of the lexical field of friendship attempts to define their status.

Extract C

515.   R: we when we look for SAP we struggle so much

516.   C: serious

517.   *R: (nods)*

518.   *C: Wow*

519.   R: you'd be surprised if you would have came last year you probably would'ov

520.   C: yeah

521.   R: been different

522.   C: hahah

523.   R: but erm

524.   C: not going to be my friend now [huh come onn hahaha]

525.   R: [hahahah] no erm so erm senior

526.   progression coordinator

Van de Mieroop & Schnurr (2018) argue that candidates use humour as "explicit attempts at constructing specific identities are not constrained to the candidates demonstrating their expertise and experience in a particular field, but also include attempts at showing they are a likeable person and would 'fit' in with the organisation" (p.36). Justin demonstrates "fit" through the lexical field of friendship. The interlocutors have now established a rapport strong enough for Justin to be able to use humour as a way of defining the strength of the interlocutor's interview relationship.

Due to the rather friendly rapport that they have established within this communicative event, the candidate is able to joke with the recruiter, as she is "not going to be my friend now" (line 524), indicating that there was an element of friendship established to begin with. In this line, Justin asks whether Star will secure him a position, and if so, will remain his "friend," which is followed by a nudge and laughter indicating that he is joking. He laughs and nudges her, pleading "come on" also indicating that he is joking (line 524). Bringing in context to this example, there is a reference to a previous joke that the recruiter made about friendship. Earlier in the interview, Star also used humour that surrounds the lexical field of friendship to make a request. In line 370 Star states "I haven't spoken to your friend in a while to be honest I don't know." Star was in effect requesting Justin to ask his "friend" to secure future business for her with his ex-company. The lexical field of friendship has been used in both jokes, which could reflect on the positive relationship that they have built within this communicative event. Through the humour that surrounds the topic of friendship, it can be argued that the interlocutors are aware that they have built a strong enough rapport in order to joke about their current status and to use this to their advantage in order to make requests.

4.1.5 Linguistic alignment

The interlocutors codeswitch between their shared "professional" language and London English, indexing their "in-group" status between both identities. It is evident in the interview that as Star and Justin progressively build a stronger rapport, their language use collaboratively becomes less formal, using more of their shared London English code.

Justin incorporates lexical items specific to his field of work, displaying his knowledge in his different fields. In Lipovsky's 2006 study that investigated the way in which candidates attempted to "negotiate their expertise" in interviews, it was found that "technical wording" had a positive influence on the interviewers' impression of the candidate. Justin uses lexical fields that are relevant to each type of work that he has worked in. For example, when describing his experience within a British standards company, he uses industry specific items such as "standards," "BSI 7671" (line 411) etc. Similarly, he replicates this style of language use in association with the paging company that he worked for. He uses work relevant terms such as "online platform" and "network" (in lines 298 & 302). The significance of this is that he actively demonstrates that he is: knowledgeable of the areas that he works in, technically competent, and builds a believable and trustworthy identity. Trust is crucial in this interaction. Through Justin's use of professional language, he is able to perform a convincing depiction of a knowledgeable "professional." The successful performance of a "competent" candidate is judged by the recruiter, and therefore the performance of a "competent" professional will need to be *accepted* by recruiter. In this interview example, Star accepts Justin's performance as being "knowledgeable" as she indicates this in her post-interview questionnaire, whilst conveying her trust and faith in him by highlighting that he will be "easy to place."

The candidate demonstrates his knowledge through his use of "high language" (Hodge & Gunther 1988, p.53-54) by using a practical example in the following extract.

Extract D

411.   C: renewing themselves so I would imagine you are on BS is it BS BSI BSI

412.   7671

413.   C: [I think] it is

414.   R: [mmhmm]

The candidate draws on his knowledge of standards to suggest which standard he believes this company would be certified to. He uses 'high language' in line 411, in a way to alienate rather than include the recruiter. This industry specific terminology would be alien to professionals that do not work directly with "standards". The standard "BSI 7671" refers to the "requirements for electrical installation standard," which the candidate has made a conscious decision to refer to in its technical term. To gain further insight Scollon, Scollon &

Jones (2012) state that "corporate discourse systems are goal orientated. That is, they are brought into being to achieve certain purposes and, at least in the beginning, those purposes will dominate the ideology of the discourse system" (p .180). Relating this to Justin's use of discourse here, Justin's goal is to be placed into a new role. Justin's ideology of a "good candidate" is that the candidate should be understood as knowledgeable by the recruiter (*refer to Justin's post interview questionnaire*). Justin's strategy is to perform his idea of a good candidate, in particular, one suitable enough to be placed, is to use language that is specific to his roles to demonstrate this knowledge.

Even though the recruiter's back channelling response (line 413) indicates that she cannot comment on the type of standard the company is certified to as through her experience she may not have had access to this type of knowledge or language, she moves on to another topic. Star's understanding of Justin aligns with how he wanted to be perceived. Star perceives Justin as knowledgeable, which is referenced in Star's interview notes, indicating that Star has decoded the correct meaning that Justin was seeking to encode in his performance.

Unlike the previous example, in this excerpt, Star challenges Justin's high language. Justin demonstrates that he has the necessary 'linguistic capital" (Roberts, 2011) required in this context for a sales role. Justin demonstrates his competency as a sales professional through the language he uses. Star challenges Justin's statement through her own legal understanding of "copyright" terminology, thus indexing her own identity as a law student and business professional. By challenging Justin, Star challenges his linguistic capital by understanding whether he is truly knowledgeable in his field. Through the method of challenging linguistic capital, Star demonstrates her objectives through her role as a gatekeeper in this genre.

Extract E

428.   C: okay so that differs in terms of erm I would deal with companies that would

429.   be selling our standards so erm distributin' our standards so you had companies

430.   erm i e book shops erm and various other companies erm goo- is it not XXXX

431.   what is it the big erm where you buy off the erm web

432.   R: XXXXX

433.   C: Yeah XXXXX sorry I couldn't get the name sorry

434.   R: it's alright

435.   C: XXXXX errr XXXXX sold if you go on there you can buy XXX Standards

436.	so basi'ly that turned from er selling to customers to selling business to
437.	business
439.	R: through XXXXX
440.	C: yeah I I didn't cuz I looked at it and I thought you're not allowed to sell
441.	XXX standards but basi'ly if you sign to an agreement that you would pay us a
442.	certain [amoun]
443.	R: [They can sell] certain [stuff]
444.	C: *(nods)* [you] turn into a distributah which is different
445.	from me sellin' erm standards on Ebay that you're not allowed to do dats
446.	copyright issues an' the copyright team take that up
447.	R: so I guess it's like I dunno how to explain it like Carphone Warehouse
448.	where they purchase a thing from Apple then distributes it
450.	C: yeah but slightly different in terms of I can sell a phone and I won't get in
451.	trouble for it but if you first [sell]
453.	R: *(interrupts)* [yeah] no obviously the pro the product is different
454.	bu like in terms of their chains of [supply its its like that isn't it]
455.	C: [Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah] it's that
456.	R: they've earned the right to [sell it]
457.	C: [Yeah] the way we look at it in te it's called bulk
458.	orders if you're a company and you ring and say I'd like to order a hundred
459.	standards so someone in the customer service team they'll send you through to
460.	a distributah

In this example there is also a clear alignment in the interlocutor's shared professional language. The candidate uses the lexical field of work: "Distributor" (line 460) "company" "standard" (line 429 & 445) "copyright" (line 446) are related to the acquired language pulled from his linguistic repertoire, having worked for a British standards company. The recruiter aligns her language with his by using phrases such as "purchase" (line 448) "distributes" (line 448) "product" (line 453) which also derives from acquired codes that exist in her linguistic repertoire which could have been accessed through her employment experience or educational background.

4.1.6 Informal language & cultural alignment

In addition to the professional identities, there are also more urban identities that emerge. In interview settings "candidates thus not only work on establishing their professional, expert identities, but they also construct specific social identities at the same time." (Van de Mieroop & Schnurr 2018, p.36). Both interlocutors express a shared in-group affiliation with London exhibited through their joint use of London English.

Justin and Star also build rapport through an element of cultural alignment. According to Erickson and Schultz (1982), "differences in the outcomes of gate keeping encounters (successful or failed) have been attributed in part to interlocutors' abilities to develop a positive rapport with one another by establishing co-membership" and as a result this creates "solidarity with one another" (Erickson 2001). One of the ways in which the interlocutors develop a positive rapport is through their alignment of language use and formality. The recruiter who is the gatekeeper in this encounter as suggested by her right to serve "as the ultimate authority figure who judges…the gatekeeper's adequacy" (Kerekes 2006, p.27) is the one who enables the use of London vernacular within the interview. In the first instance where the candidate talks about a previous company and the recruiter in excitement says "oyyy" (line 66) as if to mention some further gossip but instead mentions that "they've got it good in there." The conversation from this point begins to be a bit less formal and more relaxed. There is an element of "communication accommodation" (Giles & Ogay 2006) where the candidate accommodates his speech to that of Star's by signalling that they share a common London identity. The following excerpt shows Justin using communication accommodation to exhibit shared cultural in-group identities to build rapport.

Extract F

267.	C: *(laughs)*
268.	R: the last one I spoke to lasted six months
269.	C: was that recently or back in the day
270.	R: no recently *(softens tone as if she is telling him a secret)*
271.	C: *(smiles)*okay

The recruiter understands that the candidate is being polite and is using sarcastic humour to highlight how long he has been in this company. Following this, the interlocutors laugh at a

joke, where both of their barriers are down, allowing them to be less formal, switching from performing their professional roles and following institutional norms that are required in this setting. Instead, they move from a formal "recruiter and candidate" relationship to a more friendly rapport revealing their non-institutional personalities to each other. On this, Van de Mieroop & Schnurr (2018) state that "candidates often highlight their co-membership with the recruiter on the basis of shared features (e.g. ethnicity, gender), background (e.g. geographic origin) or interests (e.g. hobbies)" (p.36). Arguably, as the candidate is aware of the norms, the candidate challenges this institutional setting by using London English to test whether this style of language would be accepted by the recruiter, in the same way Justin accepted Star's use of London English. The candidate's utterance "recently or back in the day," is significant because it is indexing a period that both interlocutors were around to use this phrase, as it was commonly used in the 90s (Grosvenor, 2012). It is evident that the candidate has been able to make sense of the recruiter's age and the variety that she uses to align himself to his view of her. The recruiter accepts this language and chooses to be an "in" member by aligning her utterance with his. Star says "no recently" illustrating a closer bond as she acts as if she is about to tell him a secret. Rampton's (2011) research on "multi-ethnic adolescent heteroglossia" and "late modern urban youth style" displayed "young people utilise these linguistic styles and varieties in order to perform multiple aspects of their 'youth identities,' and so to achieve friendship and social solidarity across different ethnic groups" (p.278). Though these interlocutors are not within the same eleven to sixteen age bracket, a similar bond has been achieved through their use of language that indexes more urban identities. As such, this interaction shows that both interlocutors have aligned as being individuals of the same time period, with similar varieties used in the same part of London.

This cultural alignment through language is also illustrated through their *use* of language in the following example where the candidate is looking for work quite urgently. Justin seemingly does not want to appear desperate in finding work, and instead wants to convey that he is "wanted" by other companies but will take any opportunity to not be out of work for too long.

Extract G

752.   C: so she knows me so it's kind of eh at the moment a wai'in game li' erm it's a

753.   bit alien for me because I haven't been out of work

754.   R: [for so long]

755.   C: [Since I was] think eigh'een or nine'een and I hay' it it's kind of li obviously

756.   you hear people when ring work sayin it but I just want to get up an an do

757.   oviously I got a little girl as well and my partner goes to work

758.   R: aww

759.   C: so I just want to get our and work

760.   R: oww well

761.   C: haha d - don't do the aww [please]

762.   R: [I don't I would] love to sit at home at watch

763.   Jeremy Kyle buh what I say only jokin

764.   *(Recruiter ruffles papers and neatly taps them on the desk)*

765.   R: its not so bad having a break

766.   C: I don't mind watching a little be of Jezza but

767.   R: haha not too much [ey]

768.   C: [no]

The candidate illustrates another code that could be affiliated with the "London English" vernacular. He omits the /t/ in "eigh'een" and "nine'een" and omits the voiceless velar stop [k] in "like." The recruiter replicates this with by omitting /t/ in "but" and the voiced velar plosive [g] in "joking" and stressing the nasal [n] at the end of the word. The recruiter then uses humour to lighten the conversation as the candidate expresses his need for a job quite urgently. Star attempts to lighten the mood by seeing the more optimistic side of being unemployed – to be able to watch Jeremy Kyle all day – an ITV talk show that airs family feuds. The candidate shows his affiliation with this programme by abbreviating "Jeremy" to "Jezza," which is a very location specific way of naming a friend. The recruiter reciprocates the candidate's smile with his somewhat playful tone by responding with humour "but not too much ey." The "ey" at the end of the sentence conveys her affiliation with the west London vernacular. This is a very clear moment at the end of the interview where they have built a good rapport through their alignment and affiliation with their "we code."

4.1.7 Positioning & identities
4.1.7.1 Knowledge and identities

 As highlighted in the previous examples, the candidate more consistently then not, assumes the role of someone who has gained a lot of knowledge through his work experiences and uses professional lexical items. Lipovsky (2006) states that "technical wording could contribute to highlighting the candidates' expertise." Thus by Justin displaying that he can use "lexical items that have a limited circulation and are only accessible to those with some knowledge of the field" enables him to "negotiate" his expertise, showing that he can "belong as competent professionals" (p.1171). Relating Justin's need to appear knowledgeable to Erving Goffman's work on the "presentation of self in everyday life (1959), where it is described that in work situations a person will present themselves in a way that will control or influence the desired perception of them. Justin not only presents himself as knowledgeable through his language, but also by assuming the role of a teacher that shares knowledge with a student. It is, through Justin's *detailed* explanations that he conveys his expert identity, positioning himself as a teacher, and the recruiter, correspondingly assumes the position of a student by accepting his expert identity by actively engaging in what he says through her use of questions.

Extract H

547.C: okay so bonded and duty paid is when you bring it in to the country it to what we

548.call what we call what's called bonded where you don't erm pay duty paid on it

549.where its kept in wherever the warehouse may be its not sold and it's not gonna be

550.sold its just kept there

551.R: so why is it so

552.C: in terms of when you're going to bring all your stock from a

553.business side all your stock into the UK and then paid all of duty paid on it and not

554.and not it already to be sold dat dat's going out of date out of stock so if you're not

555.shippin it at that time it's just sittin in the where house goin out of date and out of

556.erm you have no need to have paid dat dat money on it because er it losin' date and

557.its losing wear because tobacco goes dry so if you leave it in a warehouse where

558.R: (nods)

Positioning in this example is successful due to Star's acceptance of the positions that Justin has proposed. In other words, the way in which the interlocutors have been positioned has been negotiated throughout the interaction. In this extract Star asks Justin to explain "what is the difference between bond and the-"(line 546). By asking this question she positions Justin as the knowledgeable insider and herself as the learner. Justin takes this opportunity to share his knowledge, assuming a "teacher-like" role by giving by giving inside information on how the business works and additional information on the contextual factors surrounding the business. It is interesting however, that he performs this identity that they have both positioned him to assume by using more formal language. As Justin begins to answer the question in lines 547 & 548, he pronounces his words more in the standard by not dropping the consonants at the ends of his words, which he tends to do more often than not. It could be argued that this would be a more conscious choice, in order to perform a knowledgeable persona. He also uses more of a lengthy description between lines 552 to 557 unravelling his detailed knowledge on the subject matter.

4.1.7.2 Identities and Story telling

In the public discourse, there is abundance of information on interview self-help guides, particularly on how to effectively present and market themselves in the interview. In the Guardian newspaper article for example, it refers to interviews as a setting where candidates can present their "career story" (The Guardian, 2011). Justin uses the interview to provide a "narrative of personal experience" to construct the "candidate's identity as a good and competent professional that is suitable" (Van de Mieroop 2019, p. 62). Justin demonstrates his skills through his work story where he uses key story telling techniques that manage to capture the hearer's interest. In the following example Justin responds to Star's question related to his reasons for leaving. Notice how Justin uses a clear story structure: a beginning, middle and end. It is the structure that enables him to provide a compelling story, whilst the story provides key insights into the protagonist he is seeking to portray.

Extract I

52. R: what's been your what's what's your [inaudible]at the moment?

53. C: erm so really so obviously I've been at XXX for six years erm and it came to a

54. Point tha ermm I was in the erm I'd gone from customer service there and then

55. worked up to distribution and worldwide team so erm it was myself my colleague

56. and my managah erm we woz all kind of in the customer relations bubble if you

57. wanted to call it and then other departments

58. R: Mmmhmm

59. C:now erm I've obviously so in the second role I was der for three years erm came to

60. a point where I kind of knew the job like the back of my hand erm and really from

61. there I was lookin how am I going to move up (pauses for emphasis) I was ready to

62. go to a supervisory role, kind of managerial role just move up now if I wanted to stay

63. in the customer service part of it there was nowhere to go erm all da supervisors

64. where have been there twenty plus years at BSI

65. R: don't people don't leave

66. C: [now I've kind of] (*strong eye contact)*

There is a clear structure to his story, starting with the number of years that he has worked with the company (line 53). By foregrounding the number of years that he has worked with this company he highlights his loyalty as he has been there for a long time. He manages to use this opportunity to display this information without the question being directly asked. Moreover, this neatly provides a structure to his reason for leaving as he forecasts that his reason for leaving will be related to the implications of longevity within the same role. The second reason he gives for leaving is because he wanted to move up the career ladder. Justin uses this as an opportunity to emphasise that he has already "worked up" to the "distribution and worldwide team" (line 55). His use of the phrase "worked up" signifies that he had to put in the work in order to move up the career ladder. The implication for his constructed identity through this story is that he is: ambitious, hardworking, not wanting to settle for a dead-end position and wants to build a good career for himself. The next point he makes is that he stayed in a position for three years (line 59) and knows the job "like the back of my hand" (line 60). This paints the picture of a knowledgeable candidate, someone who can pick up a position and know the role well. This, however, poses a challenge in the story. In line 61 he indicates that he now wants to move up. Justin pauses in this moment giving emphasis to the challenge he encountered. He conveys that the downside to knowing so *much*, is his need to know *more*, and therefore he wants to move up to a "managerial" or "supervisor" position (line 62). This challenge enables him to show his character as being committed to his role and being positive in that he is now "ready" to make that next step in his career. The reason he

provides for not being able to move up is that the supervisors in this company have been there for over 20 years so he is unable to progress. Justin conveys that he does not want to wait years for him to be able to progress to the next level in his career. Within this ending in his story, his character is portrayed as being motivated, career minded and ambitious. His story ends with an open cliff hanger, positioning the recruiter as someone who could complete the story by finding him a new role. The recruiter has aligned her views with the challenge he faces within his story and tries to see if there is an internal solution by asking whether "people leave" (line 65). The implication is that if staff moved on to other companies, Justin would not need to wait so long, therefore, this could be a suggestive ending to his story. As Justin begins to answer, the recruiter holds very strong eye-contact (line 66), indicating that Justin's story telling technique has been compelling enough to engage the recruiter, providing believability to the convincing character portrayal in his narrative.

4.1.7.3 Storytelling - Personal identities and self-praise

In Lipovsky's 2006 study on interviews, it was found that candidates aim to construct their own "personal identity" that aligns with the company's' expectations. Personal identities refer to "personality, attitudes and character" (Zhu 2018, p.213). Through the candidate's story telling of his previous roles he portrays various identities. In the following example, Justin illustrates positive identities through three different perspectives: 1) what he says about himself 2) What his actions say about him and 3) what the actions of other say about him.

Extract J

75. for me it was kind of like I've always done customer service I liked building
76. relationships I lyk tawking to people erm on the
77. phone face to face doesn't ma-ur erm I come across well in terms of dat so I woz
78. offered roles in terms to move upstairs to write standards or deal with the
79. people that ah write standards but that whole kind of day to day facing
80. customers or speaking to customers would have gone so (*looks at recruiter and pauses*)

In lines 75 and 76, Justin emphasises his passion for customer service by indicating that his action of always being in customer service roles validates his commitment to customer service. He furthers this statement by sharing with Star what he thinks about himself. He does this by highlighting the actions of other companies that "offered him roles" (lines 77 & 78), conveying his importance and value through being wanted and held in high regard. Through his own action of rejecting this proposition, he shows that he stands for what he believes in further emphasising his commitment and predilection for customer service.

Spencer-Oatey (2009) suggests that there is this expectation in Britain where "candidates are typically expected to 'sell' themselves, but not appear 'too' proud" (p.108). Justin achieves this balance by allowing both past and current events dictate the perception he aims to convey. In addition to what Justin tells Star about himself or what his actions in his stories suggest, he uses the trajectory of time and historical occurrences to indicate what is happening in the here and now. This enables him to justify the outcome and consolidate the validity of his statement.

Extract K

154. C: and I woz like I am now getting interviews everywhere

In this reported speech (Bakhtin 1986), Justin reveals that in the past he had many opportunities to interview. He interestingly includes the discourse marker "now," indicating that nothing has changed, and he is still getting interviews. He may have found it necessary to include how he is currently getting "interviews everywhere", to increase his value to the recruiter and perhaps create some urgency for Star to find him a role before another company does.

4.1.8 Foundations of trust

Goodman (2013) states "Trust is an important underlying principle for creating social and economic prosperity" (p.78). To trust someone is a firm belief in the person's reliability, ability and/or truthfulness, it can therefore be argued that for any business-related interaction to be successful, there must be an underlying understanding of trust between both interlocutors. Research conducted in interview gatekeeping encounters found that the "candidates who

achieved relationships of trust" were more likely to have a successful interview outcome (Kerekes 2006, p.53). The high value placed on trust particularly in this setting is because it reduces "peoples experience of risk and uncertainty" (Candlin & Crichton 2013, p.2). Understanding trust in this interview example, refers to a high level, where the recruiter will need to trust that the candidate is reliable, telling the truth and would not adversely impact any business relationships with clients. The recruiter will need to trust that the candidate will turn up to the client interview, perform well and not tarnish any client relationship that has been built. Similarly, the candidate will need to trust that there will be a possibility that the recruiter will manage to find a suitable position. In this example, the candidate has already had a conversation with the recruiter on the phone and trusts that the recruiter will not waste his time if he turns up to the recruitment interview.

One of the ways in which the candidate performs the role of a trustworthy candidate is by demonstrating the truthfulness of his work stories. In the following example Justin uses believable work-related stories. Within Justin's accounts he uses what can be described as double-voiced discourse where "in one discourse two semantic intentions appear, two voices" (Bakhtin 1984: 189). Justin speaks his internal monologue out loud, showing his awareness and consciousness of Star's motive. Double-voicing enables him to do this indirectly.

Extract L

276.   C: [yeah] the buildins cuz I woz in – wh – where woz I woz I der *(speaking to*
277.   *himself)* yeah I was der buh it wasn't like it woz it had a whole new refit
278.   R: yeah
279.   C: erm yeah and I've heard they have a new gym and have upgraded

The candidate thinks "out loud" asking himself "where" he was (line 276) illustrating that he is providing Star with the correct information. Through such "dialogic double-voicing" (Baynham 1999) Justin almost communicates how he is visualising the building in that very moment, also vocalising any uncertainty that he has in that moment of time. Justin shows his trustworthiness as he is able to vocalise what he is thinking, making him come across as a person that is transparent. There is a dual agenda present where Justin expresses his views by also accommodating the views of the recruiter. He shows his ability to understand what

he believes the recruiter is thinking and feeling in that moment and tailors his response. Here, Justin is in fact trying to convince the recruiter that he knows where a company is located because he "was der" (line 277), in an indirect way that is mindful of the current asymmetrical power dynamic. In effect, Justin attempts to convince Star that he is sure of the company's whereabouts and the double voicing strategy provides a dimension of believability by allowing Star to visualise the moment with him, but more specifically, demonstrating in a way that allows the recruiter to feel as if she is inside his head. It is through such double voicing that Justin performs transparency and therefore trustworthiness.

Another technique that Justin uses is reported speech (Baxter 2014, p.43), where he performs his role within the call centre. By acting out what happened in a call centre scenario enables Star to visualise the event. This performance is very powerful as this brings a layer of truth to what the candidate is attempting to explain:

Extract M

222.C: and they were there or at hand for people so erm they would call in erm can you

223.do this for me can you get this ready can you get a quote ready

224.er anything to do with an order follow this through erm warehouse

During this utterance the candidate gestures being on the phone, he then speaks as if he were the customer and the customer is calling himself "you." By changing the personal pronoun to the second person, he automatically places the hearer in his own shoes, allowing the hearer to empathise and connect with his story. Acting provides a sense of believability as Justin demonstrates that the event did happen and that he can convey how it happened.

It is however, not just through Justin's single performance that "truth" can be found. According to Bukhtin "truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (Morson & Emerson 1990, p.60). Therefore, truth is unveiled through the interaction of people and their differing viewpoints as truth is "not ready made' but 'born between people and ideas" (Nadella 2011, p.134). In this sense, trust that can emerge from negotiation of truth is further established from Star's attempts to contest Justin's version of the "truth." In other words, even though Justin attempts to put on a believable performance,

Star attempts to test the validity of Justin's accounts. In the following example Star asks for further clarification where she feels that something does not quite add up.

Extract N

228. C: managers could do it themselves   [Soo yeah I was made redundant]

229.   R: *(speaking over him)*   [But weren't you an] account manager den

230.   C: n-

231.   R: *(interrupts)* or not manager *(raised intonation)* buh when you went

232.   when you

233.   C: key accounts support team so you had the key account managers and

234.   den err de key account support team dat would support dem

In this example, Star not only asks a question directed at the validity of Justin's account but also interrupts (line 231) and speaks over him (line 239) to get her point across. Her raised intonation (line 231) makes it very clear that she is trying to catch him out as she makes her question as clear as she can. The abrupt interrogation due to how direct, loud, and quick the question is, signals the importance of trust to Star and for this trust not to be broken. Justin then explains in detail, providing more context without letting her finish her question, almost implying that he was getting there. Following this example, the candidate uses the technique of referring back to what he said in the past to validate the believability of what he is saying.

Extract O

238.   C: [ahhh please] wo serious?

239.   R: yeah *(high intonation)*

240.   C: yeah erm see as I said I don't really jump in and out as give it er

The candidate is being asked why he was able to stay in a position for so long considering that she knows people who were not able to last in that company for very long. Justin refers back to and reiterates what he said previously in order to uphold the validity of him sticking to a position and perhaps this change of method illustrates arguably either annoyance, or at least, him understanding that the recruiter is trying to catch him out, so he tries to perform honesty.

4.1.9 Rapport

4.1.9.1 Rapport- Asking personal questions

In addition to gaining the recruiter's trust in order to build a rapport, the candidate connects with the recruiter on a more personal level by asking her questions. Due to the one-way question-answer characteristic of this genre, the recruiter gets to know the candidate, but in this example the candidate gets to know a bit about the recruiter, helping build their rapport. In the following extract, Justin links his experience working for a tobacco company to the recruiter, by asking her if she is a smoker.

Extract P

107.	C: can't imagine you do [smoke]
108.	R: [Yeah]
109.	C: *(smiles)* oh you do smoke okay *(continues smiling)*
110.	R: *(recruiter smiles and mumbles the following under breath)* yeah
111.	C: okay so I dunno if you know the cigarettes with erm the red Indian on
112.	dem der cigarettes er with-[erm the red Indian on them]
113.	R: [yeaah yeah yeah yeah yeah]
114.	C: they're they're the cigarettes
115.	R: OK
116.	C: that's the brand

Whether the recruiter is a smoker is irrelevant to Justin's work story related to the tobacco brand he had once worked for. However, he asks the recruiter in a way that obtains a more personal connection to his story. By asking this question (line 107) he breaks down a barrier of formality, whilst also being able to gauge how interested she will be in the topic dictating how much detail he can go into. As the candidate is crossing a formality boundary, the candidate politely makes the request for information. It is a powerful moment as the candidate has managed to find out something personal about the recruiter soon after the beginning of the interview. Justin also has quite a playful response to Star being a smoker (line 109) as smiles at her. In the same way, Star responds by smiling back at Justin (line 110). In

this moment, there is a connection that is exhibited through the emotion they express in their smiles, contributing to the interlocutors building a rapport.

In addition to Justin applying his work experience to Star's personal life, Justin also talks about a broad range of topics that are relevant within his work, giving opportunity for Star to remark if she has anything to contribute. Using this technique Justin finds out more about Star. For example, not only does he find out that the recruiter smokes, but he also finds out that the recruiter knows information surrounding pagers. This is now *shared* knowledge between the interlocutors.

Extract Q

289.   the man but in de end it was just for show but yeah pagers still do do go

290.   around in terms of in terms of [hospitals and all the bl-]

291.   R: [Oh bleeps] *(raised voice)*they're called

292.   bleeps now aren't they

293.   C: [blue light services use them]

294.   R: righ [Yeah yeah yeah yeah]

Star was given the opportunity to share her own knowledge on the pagers being called "bleeps" in the hospital environment. Her enthusiasm is expressed in line 291 as she interrupts Justin in excitement and raises her voice to share her knowledge of pagers now being called bleeps. Star previously worked for the NHS as a receptionist where she had a personal experience of "bleeps," making her engage with this topic. This is particularly interesting because if he omitted this information, perhaps this would have not been as engaging because she may not have been able to personally relate. Also, by providing her with a topic that she is knowledgeable of there is more of a possibility that the interlocutor will feel that they have had an interesting and positive conversation. Broad topics related to work has proven to be effective in making this interaction more interesting and engaging for both interlocutors.

4.1.9.2 Rapport - Paralinguistic Features

The candidate and the recruiter hold very strong eye contact. Goodman (2013) states "The most common eye behaviour is eye contact." People perceive eye contact along a continuum from overly direct to overly indirect. These perceptions most often stem from their own cultural expectations" (p.63). The interlocutors engaging eye-contact reveals that their perceptions and expectation on eye contact and how it should be received has aligned. A clear connection can be noticed as they lock eyes for long periods of times. When the candidate listens to the recruiter, he holds very good eye contact. The recruiter also has to take notes of what the candidate is saying, but most of the time she does keep good eye contact with him. Both the recruiter and the candidate tend to smile at each other quite often.

Their rapport further unfolds through the different types of interactions that they have, which is illustrated in the varying pace of their exchange. When asking questions, and in raising more serious matters, there seems to be a slower pace and softer tone, however, when the candidate and recruiter lightly ridicule each other, the pace noticeably changes. Both recruiter and the candidate tend to match their speed and tone to each other.

Extract R

73. C: don't get me wrong it's a verrry good company buh for me it was kind of like
74. I've always done customer service I liked building relationships I lyk tawking to
75. people erm on the phone face to face doesn't ma-ur erm I come across well in
76. terms of dat so I woz offered roles in terms to move upstairs to write standards
77. or deal with the people that ah write standards but that whole kind of day to
78. day facing customers or speaking to customers would have gone so *(looks at*
79. *her and pauses)*
80. *R: (gently nods)* it's not what you want to do
81. C: uh uh if I look back…now out of work…okay but for me nah I wanted to do dat
82. so I fink I

In this example, the candidate has a very upbeat rhythm in his voice that matches the topic of the conversation. His pace increases as he provides more context, detailing why he wanted to leave a company that was seen by others as a good company to work for. He stresses certain words such as "very" (line 73) to make his point clear and to emphasise just how good the company is before he talks about his reason for leaving. He also uses repetition of the

word "standards," stressing on the fact that he was given a very good opportunity, which almost comes across as having received a promotion in his career. The recruiter, during the candidate's utterance is fixated on him, very engaged and nods synchronously. When the candidate talks about having to let go of the customer facing aspect of his position, he slows down his pace, lowers his tone and pauses, which provides a more dramatic affect. The recruiter picks up on this by nodding.

Extract S

96. R: [th]at's XXXXXXX XXX isn't it XXX XXXXX XXXXX they're in park royal where is this

97. based

98. C: This was based in[inaudible] the head office in it was a small office there

99. were only four people in the office

100.   R: where is, where's where is it

101.   C: Eastcote it was erm base point I don't know if you know base point

102.   house it was opposite Eastcote station

In line 96, the recruiter matches her tone and pace to that of the candidate's as they have both slowed down their pace in this extract. The candidate in line 98 reciprocates her speed which is very distinct when compared to the previous fast pace used to enthusiastically convey how much he enjoyed working customer service.

4.1.9.3 Displaying rapport through alignment of thought

This connection that is built between the interlocutors is conveyed when the candidate and the recruiter say the same thing at the same time. This illustrates that their thoughts have aligned, they are thinking the same thing and the meaning making process has been properly executed as they are on the same page. Although the candidate and the recruiter do not actually talk over each other very much, there are instances where they say the same thing e.g. "reapply for the role" in lines 140 to 141. This can be seen as reassurance that the hearer and speaker are both in sync and communicating effectively. The outcome of this is that the candidate smiles at the recruiter indicating that there is a connection that has been acknowledged.

4.1.10 The importance of building a relationship with the recruiter

In this example, Justin expresses awareness of the importance of relationship building in recruitment interviews in order to find work.

Extract T

746.C: yeah yeah well I've only really been I left there I think this is my is it

747.my second I think this is only my second sorry nah third third week

748.obviously out of work so erm so yeah I've just really been doing the

749.whole agencies fing at the moment erm I've got a good relationship with

750.a couple in XXXXXXX dat have obviously got me erm one got me he

751.XXXXX XXXX job

The candidate illustrates that he is very aware of how recruitment interviews work. He shows that he is actively looking for work and not waiting for the recruiter to get in touch with him for roles (lines 747-749). In this example, Justin states that he understands that agencies are not guaranteed to find him work, but he makes it clear that there is a better likelihood of him finding work through an agency if he has a good relationship with them. In line 751 Justin mentions that he has a good relationship with a couple of agencies in the area. The implication here is that because he has a good relationship with them, they are more likely to help him with finding work (in conjunction with his pro-active approach).

4.1.11 Overcoming Misalignment

In the following examples it is clear that the interlocutors encounter hurdles, where they may not always align in their views. However, in the following examples the focus is placed on *how* the interlocutors co-constructively overcome these hurdles and how "(dis)harmony is (mis)managed." (Spencer-Oatey 2009, p.102), which becomes fundamental in how the interlocutors maintain rapport. In the following example, the interlocutors disagree on where a company is located.

Extract U

324.   C: the same the same building

325.   R: are they still there

326.   C: yeah erm

327.   R: XXXXX XXXX

328.   C: Yeah

329.   C: erm now are they called something else (thinks out loud) nah I'm sure

330.   they're still called XXXXX XXXX

331.   R: it's called XXXXX XXXX XXX

332.   C: I might have to I might have to look that up but dey might I don't think

333.   they've changed

334.   R: I don't think they're there I've not come across one *(Looks them up*

335.   *on her computer)*

336.   C: I know that they're definitely [in that building]

337.   R: [I woz just der] *(says this whilst*

338.   *researching on internet) (looks back at the candidate)* I woz

339.   just der [two months ago]

340.   C: you sure XXXXX XXXXX communication

341.   R: *(continues to search on the internet)*

342.   C: yeah that's them

343.   R:: hmmm *(pulling face)* did they ever use agency in der

First, the interlocutors have two different approaches towards how they disagree with the other. Justin starts with an indirect approach when disagreeing with Star. He disagrees through expressing self-doubt by questioning whether the company is still there rather than stating that the company is still located in the building, just under a different name (lines 325 & 329). Justin thinks out loud by asking a rhetorical question to himself to show his thought process (line 329). Star responds to the questions with certainty indicating that she is sure of what she knows about the company (line 331). Justin responds to this indirectly, using self-doubt as he "might have to look that up," conveying that he is not disagreeing with Star. This particular line is important as it illustrates Justin's perception of power and face. He saves face for the recruiter as "'face' is a key concept that is integral to rapport" (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, p. 109) where Star holds power in this genre as defined by their role relation and her role as a gatekeeper, where "power is a highly face-sensitive variable" (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, p.106). Star however, in her position of power challenges Justin by attempting to show that she is correct as she uses the internet to prove her point (lines 334-335). As she does this, Justin uses a more direct approach, moving from self-doubt to certainty "I know they're definitely in that building" (line 336). This is interesting as his certainty in this

line reveals that he was sure all along about the company being in the building but did not want to offend Star by being direct. Star finds out that in fact the company is still in the building and makes a face playfully indicating her embarrassment (line 343). Showing her humiliation through her facial expression, she then changes the subject to finding a lead for future business potential.

It is Star's question of whether the company uses agencies that moves the conversation to a more positive topic. Spencer-Oatey (2009) states that "in an interview in Britain, it is normally only the panel members who can ask questions, until they pass that right to the interviewee" (p.108). In Star's position as a recruiter, she has the ability to change the topic due to her assumed role in this genre, and the power her role entails. Responding to Star's question, Justin displays his knowledge on a company that proves useful to Star, elevating his level of power through the knowledge he uses agencies helps Star find a new lead.

Extract V

351.   C: yeah I got that job through XXXXXXX so yeah yeah they do sorry yeah

352.   they do use [agencies]

353.   R: [they do okay]

354.   C: I thought you meant not for temp we never had temps in there but in

355.   terms of full-time positions yeah

356.   R: okay cool

357.   *C: (laughs)* you're like yeah I'll get on that

358.   R: Yeah I'll get on that III didn't I never I wanna definitely but when I

359.   was

360.   C: to be fair they don't – e – as I say it's not a place where people go or

361.   people

362.   R: I don't think its der anymore

363.   C: it [definitely is]

364.   R: [I literally] went on [every single floor *(High pitch. playfully arguing)*

365.   C: [I know a girl dat works der] I chat to her all da time and yeah

366.   der on the XXXX building Colin a guy that I know works der as well he's

367.   always doing the gym der yeah it's definitely in der

368.   R: yeah I know there was one floor that was completely knocked down

369.   Quite recently so [I dunno]

370.   C: [yeah I think it might be that*](lowers voice)*

371.   R: I haven't spoken to your friend in a while to be honest I don't know

372.   C: hahaha

373.   R: I'm joking I'll find out okay cool so career progression really

374.   yeah

375.   C: yeah so that was another one nowhere to go

376.   R: okay cool then you found XXX how did you did you get into XXX

In line 351, Justin repeats "yeah" showing a very positive, agreeable approach. He shows absolute certainty that the company uses temporary workers. The significance of the company using temporary workers is that the company could be using agencies. If the company uses agencies, then the recruiter will be able to get in contact with them to see if they could do new business. The candidate and recruiter align on their views as Justin comments on the recruiter's next moves as she will "get on that" (line 357). Star aligns with this view of what she will do next by repeating his words "yeah I'll get on that" (line 358).

Having aligned their thoughts of Star's next steps, they start to argue playfully (line 364 – 368). The recruiter continues to disagree with the candidate after being proved wrong by her Google search (line 362). This conveys a part of Star's character where she is not happy with being proved wrong in this situation, and even after changing topic she still tries to show that she could be right. This indicates feelings of humiliation; however the interlocutors deal with this through humour. Star's tone suggests that she is poking fun at the situation as her pitch increases (line 364). Justin responds to this by arguing that he knows someone who works there, and he has another friend "Colin" (line 366) who works and attends the on-site gym. Justin's use of first name, gives validity to having a friend who works there, this is a method used to strengthen his argument of having real inside information. Star alters her approach by now agreeing that she has seen a floor "knocked down," which could be this company's floor but she "dunno" (line 369). Star soon moves the topic back to obtaining a lead by indirectly asking the candidate to speak to his friend at the company for some leads (line 371). Justin has understood this as a joke and laughs (line 372) at her joke related to not speaking to this "friend in a while" so she doesn't know if the company is there or not. Star is asking Justin to provide her a lead through his connection, she wants him to speak to his friend to help her do business with this company. By Justin laughing and not actually saying he will,

Star immediately says that she is joking and will find out for herself before promptly shifting topic (line 373). She again asks why Justin wanted to leave, to which Justin responds with a short answer this time, and they both move from their more friendly and almost symmetrical power balance where the recruiter can benefit from the candidate to a more formal conversation within the asymmetrical power balance. This is interesting as the recruiter can do this by simply drawing on the question-answer sequence that is ascribed to her role in this genre. According to Nørskov et al (2022) there can be modifications to the "power imbalance between employers and candidates," which can be noticed in this example, however, "since the job interview is a situation where decisional power is asymmetric, it thus requires and asymmetric setup" (p.2). As a result, Star is able to control the conversation through her right to ask questions, which Justin is required to respond to.

4.1.12 Dealing with misunderstandings

Justin attempts to avoid potential occurrences of miscommunication by ensuring that he has understood Star's question before answering. Instead of implying meaning and giving the wrong answer, the candidate asks another question in response to the recruiter's question in order to fully understand what was asked and to make sure that they are on the same page. He does this so that he can provide the correct answer that he believes Star would want to hear. This is a very good technique as it mitigates any potential occurrences of miscommunication by assuring that there is alignment in both of their meaning making processes.

Extract W

26. R *(Returns to her desk)* so you're looking for erm temp to perm what would you

27. be looking at at temporary roles wise

28. C: In terms of uh whot whot I was actually doing?

29. R: Wh-Whot roles you'll be looking at

30. C: yeah customer servisss operations logistics erm yeah really around hopefully

31. Erm account management

32. R:*(writing)* and that goes to permanent roles as well

33. C: yes yeah [yeah]

In line 26 Star asks a question that Justin doesn't quite understand. Justin attempts to use the contextual knowledge of a recruitment interview, where he would be asked about the roles he "was actually doing" and asks if this is the answer she is looking for (line 29). Justin provides a *right* answer that does not require any further probing from the recruiter. In this moment Justin demonstrates that he has contextual understanding of how recruitment works. In his answer, he does not limit himself to one type of position. Instead, he shows versatility by providing a very broad range of different areas that he could work in. Justin demonstrates flexibility, which makes it easier for Star to find him a suitable position in temporary work as he can "fit" in different areas. In line 32, Star seems content with his answer and moves on to asking if the same applies to permanent positions. Justin conveys his adaptability by stating yes (line 33), which provides a positive start to the interview.

4.1.13 Negotiating misunderstandings

In the following section, Justin displays his ability to be able to smooth over and prevent potential misunderstandings. In the same way that the candidate uses questions to avoid any miscommunication, Justin also uses methods of indirectness to ensure that they have aligned in their encoded and decoded meaning. There are a few occasions where Star pronounces words incorrectly. Justin demonstrates his ability to realign their understanding whilst saving face through his indirect approach.

Extract Y

119.   *C: and erm that was part of the UK brand was there*

120.   *R: were you not chupeed over it or somefin'*

121.   *C: sorry*

122.   *R: were you not chupeed over to the the new buyer so that [when] XXXX were*

123.   *being bought out*

124.   *C: [Oh yeah sorry] when when they bought it out XXXXX really when I joined there*

125.   *really up I would imagine at head office level it was being talked about but when*

The recruiter pronounces "tuped" (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment[4]) as "chupeed" (line 120). Star uses a "high language," HR terminology that may not normally be known to someone who has not encountered this in a work environment. Justin attempts to avoid any miscommunication by asking Star to repeat herself through the use of an apology "sorry" (line 121). Justin attempts for both interlocutors to realign their meaning. Justin first uses a negative politeness strategy to save the recruiter's positive face. Instead of directly asking what the recruiter means, or by correcting the recruiter which would be a bald on-record face threatening act. To mitigate the face threatening act, he uses a speech act "sorry," apologising that he was not able to hear, and requesting the recruiter to repeat what she has said. Blum-Kulka & Olshtan (1984) recognise a request "by definition as a face threatening act" this is because "the speaker impinges on the hearer's claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition," (p. 201) such that by Justin requesting that Star repeats herself requires a politeness strategy in order to mitigate the potential impact the request has to the hearer's face. This mitigates the impact of a request for the recruiter to repeat what she has said. She then repeats the word that she used and provides an explanation of the meaning. The candidate agrees and apologises before continuing to answer the question. The significance is that: i) it is a powerful strategy used by being mindful of asymmetric power dynamic in order to maintain rapport between the two interlocutors without hindering this relationship and ii) it maintains the asymmetrical power relationship that is made to seem symmetrical. In other words, the candidate does not overstep the power distance by using a face threatening act, which could impede his chances of building a strong enough rapport with the recruiter where the recruiter would be willing to find him a suitable role.

Similarly, Star pronounces differ as "defer," where the candidate does not mention that she has mispronounced the word, but instead uses the correct pronunciation of what he believes she mean at the beginning of his answer.

Extract Z

247.R: So how does the defer
248. C: okay so that differs in terms of

---

[4] TUPE – Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment regulations 2006. This legislation protects the rights of the employees when a company or service is transferred to another, new employer.

Justin makes sure that he has understood her meaning by repeating the correct word in his own phrase, without questioning what she has said, or highlighting that she used the wrong word. He again uses the same off record politeness strategy to save the recruiter's positive face by not actually putting any emphasis on the word "differ." This enables his answer to come across as a statement rather than directly questioning her meaning. The gives the recruiter a chance to realign meaning in the next turn taking sequence if he has misunderstood the question and answered incorrectly.

4.1.14 Ending on a positive note

Although there were moments of disagreements and some areas of misunderstandings that were resolved, overall the interview went well. There are key signs that index this within the closing stages of the interview.

Extract Za

790. R: yeah no that's fine that's fine but I know obviously I don't think it

791. would be long for you to get [what you want] really

792. C: *(smiles)*   [hopefully]

793. R: erm buh yeah just keep us updated would that be okay

794. C: wicked thank you appreciate it

795. R: brilliant thank you so much for coming down XXXXX and it was [nice

796. to meet you]

797. C: [Nice to meet you]

798. *(both shake hands whilst seated)*

799. C: lovely thank you

800. R: thank you byeee

In lines 790- 791, the recruiter highlights her belief that Justin will be able to find a job soon. This is positive feedback from the recruiter as she demonstrates that she has faith in him finding a suitable position in the near future. The implication is that through his interview with her, she can see that he will be a good "fit" for the type of roles that he is looking for. The candidate has reacted to this positively by smiling (line 792), indicating that he has understood the positive feedback. After this exchange there are many instances of positive language in their closing sequence. Justin uses phrases such as "wicked," "thank you,"

"appreciate it" (line 794), nice to meet you (line 797), lovely (line 799), this positive language style is replicated by Star as she says "brilliant," "thank you," "nice to meet you" (lines 795 & 796). This shared understanding of a positive interview is conveyed in the interlocutors post-interview questionnaire answers. Furthermore, Star mentioned to me upon my return to the agency three months later that she worked hard to place Justin, as she used his CV as a speculative CV that she sent to her clients. She also contacted the other company branches in west London to see if any of her colleagues had any suitable roles for him. In no time at all, Star managed to set up interviews for him and Justin was placed into a position only a few weeks after having this interview.

4.1.15 Interview notes

The overall post-interview feedback from the recruiter and the candidate were very positive. Star described Justin as a "people's person," who showed enthusiasm and energy. She felt that Justin was very easy to get along with and that he will be very "easy to place." Star believed that they would find him a suitable position very quickly. She noticed that Justin used "slang" in the interview, but she still viewed him as someone who "spoke well" and "enunciated well". To her, he came across as confident. She noticed that he used a lot of hand gestures and he was very open and "sat forward." She mentions that he came across as very knowledgeable of the positions that he worked in previously.

Star's positive experience of the interview was very similar to Justin's. In response to the question related to the overall interview experience, Justin rated the interview as being "excellent". He felt that the recruiter made him feel "at ease" and she "was very inquisitive." In the interview, Justin wanted to be perceived as "knowledgeable," "smart," "well spoken" and friendly. He felt that the recruiter was looking for someone who has "good job awareness and certain skills." He mentions that the interviewer's style and language met his expectations. He did not feel that they encountered any cultural differences.

After reviewing both completed post interview questionnaires, it is noticeable that both Star and Justin have a shared perception of the interview. Both interlocutors felt very positive about the interview. One of the key commonalities in the interlocutor's answers is that Star perceived Justin in the way in which he wanted to be received. It could therefore be argued

that Justin has successfully performed his view of an ideal candidate (a knowledgeable, smart, well-spoken, and friendly candidate) that has aligned with Star's view of a "sellable" candidate. Consequently, there has been an alignment in the outcome of their meaning making processes. Justin's performance of a suitable candidate has been understood and decoded in the way Justin intended his meaning to be understood, making their communication distinctly successful. The overall success of this interview is evidenced through the successful performance of cultural fit. Justin had later been successfully placed into a new role only three weeks after having this interview.

4.1.16 Conclusion

This section identifies how interlocutors can successfully "do cultural fit," even if they do not share many commonalities in their backgrounds. When analysing the interaction, it was observed that rapport was built quite early in the interview and the interlocutors managed to do cultural fit through alignment. Justin's view of a "good candidate," which he demonstrates through his performance, aligns with Star's view of a "good candidate," one that she can easily "sell" to her clients. Whilst showing that Justin has the relevant key work experience making him suitable for his desired roles, Justin also manages to demonstrate versatility. Justin shows that he can "fit in" with the recruiter personally and "fit in" with her perception of what her clients would be looking for in a "good candidate." Justin demonstrates how he "fits in" with the recruiter by building a rapport with her. He does this by aligning with two different language styles that they share and uses language to convey humour. The interlocutors also align by co-constructively positioning each other in their allocated and negotiated roles and identities within the interview. They also display, align, and accept each other's "ingroup" memberships of their shared identities. Finally, on a personal level, they also align emotionally, through paralinguistic features as they both laugh and use tone to convey their emotions. Justin also performs versatility to "fit" in with Star's perspective of a "sellable" candidate, which he does through demonstrating his linguistic capital and ability to win her trust through his convincing performances and narratives of his work story. Star also manages to negotiate "trust" by interrogating any areas that does not fit into her view of a trustworthy candidate, leaving Justin in a position to prove his trustworthiness.

It is also noted that within this successful recruitment interview there have been instances of communicative turbulence. However, the interlocutors managed to overcome these instances and used language indirectly to save the interlocutor's face. The positive rapport that has been established and trust that has been built throughout the interaction has aligned their ultimate goal for this interview. Justin wants Star to help him find a job, Star really wants to find him a role. Resulting from this strong rapport, Star attempts to urgently find Justin a position. Within three weeks of having the interview, Star manages to successfully get him an interview with one of her clients, where he gets the job. This interview example has thereby not only revealed *how* the interlocutors perform cultural fit, but also, the *power* of being able to successfully "do cultural fit."

4.2 Section 2 - Case study: CA 20 – Zenab & Steve: An Unsuccessful Interview

4.2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to examine a recruitment interview conducted by two interlocutors of different backgrounds, focusing on the communication that contributed to the unsuccessful outcome. This section mainly focuses on the granular level of the interaction, highlighting any misalignments, differences and areas of communicative turbulences that arise, and to provide an insight into why the interview was unsuccessful. Using interactional sociolinguistics, the dialogue that takes place between the recruiter and the candidate is analysed in relation to the turn-by-turn sequences, extracting the key themes and pinpointing any indexical issues related to culture that become apparent.

This interview has been selected as one that illustrates how an undesired outcome stems from the co-construction of the communicative event. In other words, this exemplifies how both the recruiter and the candidate have contributed to the undesirable interview outcome through their misalignment of: codes, formality, views, positioning, goals and lack of trust.

4.2.2 Interview context

The following is an example of an unsuccessful interview that took place in West London. The candidate, Steve has been invited to the interview by the recruiter - Zenab for potential blue-collar work. Prior to this face-to-face interview, the interlocutors have already engaged in the initial pre-screening conversation over the phone, where Zenab has asked Steve to come in for an interview and to register with the agency. Earlier in the day, Zenab attempted to contact Steve over the phone, but she was unsuccessful in getting hold of him. This is Zenab's second interview of the day and has another three interviews scheduled after Steve's. Noticeably, this was one of her shortest interviews. The full duration of this interview lasted fourteen minutes. This interview was one of two unsuccessful candidates on this day. In comparison, the other three successful candidates had an interview duration average of 21 minutes and 9 seconds all of whom had some background ties with either Pakistan or India.

In the first instance, it is evident that both interlocutors are dressed differently. Zenab is dressed in a purple open cardigan with a black blouse and black formal trousers. Conversely, Steve wears an opened navy and grey hooded jumper that reveals a red polo shirt. It is noticeable that the level of formal dress differs between the interlocutors. The candidate and recruiter both smile amicably at one another before the interview commences.

Table 3a – About the recruiter

About the Recruiter – Zenab					
Age range:	25-30	Codes:	English Urdu London English	Lived elsewhere?	Yes, Pakistan & Bradford
Gender:	Female	Is English L1?	Yes	Work:	Retail Recruitment
Heritage:	Pakistani	Resides in:	West London	Education:	A-level

Table 3b – About the candidate

About the Candidate- Steve					
Age range:	25-30	Codes:	English London English	Lived elsewhere?	No
Gender:	Male	Is English L1?	Yes	Work:	Warehouse, brick layer, forklift operator
Heritage:	English	Resides in:	West London	Education:	GCSEs

4.2.3 Opening sequence – Formality, power and language misalignment

The candidate, Steve, has been taken into the interviewing room after filling in some of his registration forms. Steve takes a seat in the interviewing room. Zenab, the recruitment consultant, greets Steve and sets the tone of the interview. Zenab tried to call Steve prior to the interview. Being unable to get hold of Steve by phone, Zenab left Steve a voicemail. After addressing this with Steve, the topic of problematic mobile phone technology dominates the opening sequence.

Extract A

1. R: how's it been goin' for you
2. C: been not bad its alright
3. R: perfect so I've just got all of your details *(shuffling through papers)*
4. heyer [sic] an you can just quickly take me through so this is just for
5. yourself
6. erm just to see how the customer service has been with from XXXX today
7. umm oki doke now I called you this morning but your phones been
8. turned off so I [left a voicemail]
9. C: [yeah my] phones bein' a right pain in the backside at the
10. moment
11. R: oh [really]
12. C: [yeah] it just keeps losin' reception for no apparent reason
13.   [I don't know]
14. R: [ahhhh do] you know what I had that quite I think it was about four
15. weeks ago I had that for two and a half weeks my phone [wasn't working]
16. C: [Eyrr] it's been
17. like it for about [four days now]
18. R: [Does it say no] service on that
19. C: Yeah constantly
20. R: Yeah tha you know what it is I think [what phone to d'you have]
21. C: [then it's got full] bars but its errrr
22. Samsung buh I'm on network free [sic] [an I think]
23. R: [do you]
24. C: its them
25. R; Yeah it would be because when I went I had I got the iPhone six just

26. recently

27. *C: (nods)* mmm *(good eye contact. Nods enthusiastically)*

28. R: ermm an so I live in sort of west Drayt'n an it I think it was one day

29. randomly it just went off

30. C: Mmm

31. R: And it just constantly jus kept turning on and off and it made me go to

32. apple n they exchanged the phone for me an in the end it turned out that

33. it was a network in the west Drayton area that was down for two and a

34. half weeks

35. Mmm

36. R: Yeah so when I got into the area there was no network at all it was like

37. living in like *(laughs)*

38. C: Yeaahh *(laughs)*

39. R: Country side n [i]

40. C: [s]ee your voice mail still hasn't even come through

41. R: Yeah that's it [my text won't come] through voicemail

42. C: [So *(shrugs shoulders)* I was unaware]

43. R: people where tryin' to call me it would go straight to voicemail *(listing*

44. *tone) I* was thinking oh my God is this what it was like in the ancient days

45.   [I was] like I wouldn't survive at all *(laughs)*

46. C: [yeah] *(laughs)*

47. C: yeah you feel naked without your phone innit

48. R: yeah definitely [I- I thi used]

The sequence begins with an adjacency pair (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). The recruiter, Zenab, opens the interview with a question "how's it been goin' for you" (line 1). Steve answers this question "been not bad it's alright" (line 2). Examining the style of the first pair part, it is both informal and non-specific. Without context, one may question, how is *what* going? The second pair part to the adjacency pair is equally as informal and non-specific. In the same way, *what* is not bad, and *what* is alright? Within this context, the assumption could be made that the references made to "it" in lines 1 & 2 relate to "job hunting," however, this is not clear. Steve's response maintains the ambiguity by not questioning what exactly Zenab is referring to by not questioning the specifics. Instead, Steve uses the correct second pair part,

serving the purpose of small talk and aligning with Zenab's position of power as the gatekeeper within this encounter.

The ambiguity of this conversation opener can be seen as small talk, which Homes (2000a) describes its purpose in a work environment as one that "serves to establish…relationships, with the most common use of small talk being therefore to maintain solidarity." (p.48-49) On the one hand, it could be argued that the ambiguity presented by Zenab's utterance is an attempt to initiate small talk to establish a commonality with a goal of building a rapport with "the other." Her choice of language style is used to initiate an informal approach, therefore using language to align with her perception of the candidate's linguistic repertoire. On the other hand, Valencia (2009) states that "small talk may also serve other functions in the workplace, such as doing power." (p.19) Small talk coupled with the introduced level of formality is an indication of the recruiter's attempt to "do power" by masking the social, power distance in this asymmetrical power encounter, it facilitates rapport building by "faking friendship" (Duncombe & Jessop 2012). The purpose is that "once rapport is built successfully, trust and mutual respect will increase and communication will be more effective" this then means that "when two people are having trust and understanding, communication will become more open and in-depth," (Zakaria & Musta'amal 2014, p.2) therefore the recruiter is able to obtain a more true and relaxed version of the candidate.

Being a gatekeeper within this encounter, the recruiter, by position has control over the communicative event, and in her opening utterance, she establishes the language that "may/ must be used" as well as the "genre of discourses allowed," (van Dijk 1996) both of which are informal. In other words, the recruiter has set an informal interview tone.

4.2.3.1 Misalignment in choice of code

Steve mirrors Zenab's level of formality in his responses, as evidenced in lines 1 & 2 where Zenab's vague question elicits an equally vague response. The level of formality understood by the candidate is made apparent in lines 9 and 10, where Steve states that his phone has been a "pain in the backside." It is clear that this is a non-typical phrase to use within a formal interview setting, and it is also clear in the recruiter notes (obtained after the interview is concluded) that Zenab did not feel that this language choice was suitable for this interview.

Nevertheless, closer attention should be paid to the exchange that builds up to this utterance. The empty small talk between lines 1 and 2 lead to an abrupt topic shift associated with the bureaucratic nature of the interview requirements (line 3). Here, Zenab mentions that she has "all of" the candidates details, and in the same turn, she also asks Steve to: i) take her through his CV (lines 4 to 5) ii) discuss in particular, the customer service element of his role(s) (line 6) and iii) mentions that she has attempted to call Steve but his phone was off (lines 7 & 8). In one conversational turn, Zenab asks four questions. In line 7, the last question she poses to Steve, she questions Steve's reliability by not answering her phone call. The utterance becomes somewhat confrontational through the use of the adverb "now" in the declarative statement "now I called you this morning but your phones been turned off so I left a voicemail." Even though she does not use an interrogative utterance, the recruiter still requires an explanation by drawing the candidate's attention to her action of leaving him a voicemail. The implied question is whether the candidate received the voicemail.

The candidate has understood that the declarative utterance requires a response and argues that the reason for not being able to answer her call is because Steve's mobile phone is "bein' a right pain in the backside" (line 9). Steve uses hyperbolic language to express his annoyance with the problems he faces with his mobile device. As such, taking into consideration the four questions asked at the beginning of the interview, with the accusation of being potentially unreliable by not answering Zenab's phone calls, this would indicate both a confrontational and distressing start of the interview for the candidate. Therefore, hyperbole is used to persuade the recruiter of his trustworthiness, with the aim obtain a more sympathetic response.

Zenab's response "oh really" (line 11), does not seem to indicate that she is taken back by his comment. Instead she seeks further explanation, whilst aligning with the empathetic reaction that the candidate intended to elicit through his use of hyperbole. Additionally, in line 12, the candidate provides the recruiter with further explanation in response to Zenab's "oh really," specifying that the "reception" problems caused the issue, and includes further dramatic affect by emphasising the inconclusiveness of what has suddenly caused the reception issue. Steve personifies the phone "it just keeps losin' reception for no apparent reason" almost suggesting that the technology is uncontrollable and has a mind of its own. The candidate conveys his helplessness in the situation as the issues with the phone happens for "no

apparent reason", expressing himself as a victim to the unreliability of technology. Further disappointment is shown through his uncertainty of the issue "I don't know" (line 13), illustrating his hopelessness by not knowing what to do, or how to improve the situation. This sustains the image of a helpless character.

Agreeing with Steve on the topic of faulty mobile devices, Zenab provides her own anecdote (lines 14 – 36). Zenab attempts to align her views with the problems Steve faces with mobile technology. Similar to Steve, she also uses a hyperbolic expression stating that she would not "survive" without a phone, stressing her dependence on the technology (line 46). Steve agrees with Zenab's view (line 47) "yeah" and laughs with the recruiter. Steve aligns his language with her use of metaphoric language "you feel naked without a phone innit." Although the interlocutors align in their style of language, both informal and metaphoric, Steve's lexical choice does not meet the same level of informality that Zenab uses. In other words, the recruiter choses to use an informal topic, but she does not use particularly informal lexical items. The candidate uses the items "innit" and "naked" that does not align with the same code that the recruiter uses throughout the interview. Taking Lypovsky (2006) approach on signalling systems **"different signalling systems leads to misinterpretation of others' abilities and intensions; this affords insight into the processes of signalling and interpreting meaning," (p.1148) it seems that Steve may have either not recognised, or misinterpreted the recruiter's level of appropriate formality for this context as this has not been negotiated or explicitly defined. Steve would have used his own understanding of the meaning conveyed through his own signalling understanding and interpreted a potentially very relaxed interview, as we know he has worked in the blue-collar field, where this type of language is common, however, this agency specializes in office support positions, where ordinarily such codes would not be used.

In the post interview questionnaire, the recruiter expresses that she did not feel that Steve's style of language was appropriate for the interview context, however, in this opening sequence, she has set the tone of the interview as informal. On this, Campbell and Roberts (2007) state that "the interview has, in parts, the appearance of an informal conversation, it is in many ways an asymmetrical encounter in which the interviewer exerts a high degree of control over the context of talk, allowing allocation of turns, and participation roles adopted" (p.248). As the gatekeeper, Zenab holds the power over the interview style and the language

associated with it, she also has the power to *decide* whether to provide feedback to the candidate in the interaction to let the candidate know whether what they are saying is appropriate. Therefore, she has the ability to control the adopted "roles" and its formality. For example, a formal interview structure would elicit more professional roles exhibited with the interlocutors performances. In the absence of honest feedback in the interview, and a strong focus on rapport building, Zenab does not signal to the candidate that she does not find his level of formality and language style appropriate. Instead Zenab's rapport building techniques indicates that the interview is going positively (lines 11, 14 & 15, 20, 23, 25, 28, 36 & 37, 41, 45, 48). Consequently, what could be seen as an alignment in initial views and formality, is in fact a distinct misalignment in the expected levels of formality in this context, distinguished by their chosen lexical items.

4.2.4 Emotional misalignment

Concluding the topic of mobile phone reception and network issues, Zenab shifts topic by asking if Steve would like a warm beverage. After the candidate politely declines her offer (lines 55-58), Zenab uses more "professional talk" (line 59-60). It is at this moment that the *actual* job specific interview questions commence. Zenab picks up on the short duration of time that Steve has had in his roles. Steve provides an explanation. His reason provided for the short duration in the job roles is a result of a work accident. Steve attempts to build a convincing illustration of the impact of his injury.

Extract B

55.   R: it's crazy do you want a tea of coffee or anything

56.   C: nah I'm fine [thanks]

57.   R: [are] you sure

58.   C: y[eahhh]

59.   R: [okay] ummm so your last position was in j- so that was only July to

60.   August was that a temp position

61.   C: err that was a temp yeah but in February I had err well my foot got run

62.   over by a forklift

63.   R: oh no- *(in the same breath)* where was this temp position from sorry

64.   C: erm XXXX did I not write that

65. R: so was this from an agency or

66. C: err yeah that was from an agency yeah

67. R: and that was is it S XXXX agency

68. C: XXXX no that's XXXX carpets the agency was err new staff but yeah

69. I've err I was walkin' around on I re-fractured my toe again so I took some

70. time off

71. R: *(writing)* okay so that was from new staff ermm agency

72. C: yeah

73. R: and erm (tuts) where where are they based

74. C: err St. Albans

75. R: (writes) okay so this was from July twenty sixteen up until august

76. C: yeah

77. R: erm is it XXXXX

78. C: yeah

79. R: Okay *(writes in silence)*

80. R: And was that just the duration of the the role

81. C: Yeah literally that's all it was an liy one day I woke up and couldn't walk

82. C: so

83. C: I had to go back to the hospital and and

84. R: oh it that why you came to an end

85. C: yeah cus I had to have another like four weeks off

86. R: *(writes)*

87. R: and then you were working from July fifteen to July sixteen ah ermm

88. C: XXXXX

89. R: how was that for you

90. C: err it was alright until they ran me over

91. R: *(looks, blinks, processes)* so who was it- how did that happen

92. C: err well I used to work in the freezah keepin' frozen [foods]

93. R: [yeaaah]

94. C: an dermm for' lift driver was drivin' the wrong way an der took it upon

95. himself to go between a gap *(uses hands to illustrate)* dat big

96. R: *(recruiter does not look)* yeah

97. C: and he was supposed to stand because I used to wear a headset

98. R: mmm

99.   C: so you get lost in that really follo[win] what they're sayin' [errm]

100.   R: [mm]   [Yeah]

101.   C: an he never sounded his horn either told me to go that location

102.   *(points to the right with hand)* I put my foot out *(swipes air)* woom

103.   *(shrugs shoulders)*

In lines 59 to 60**,** Zenab poses the following question to Steve, "so your last position was in j-so that was only July to August was that a temp position." By putting emphasis on the dates that Steve worked, whilst providing Steve with a possible excuse, Zenab requires an explanation for the short duration of time Steve spent in this role.

Steve has understood that there is an implicit meaning behind Zenab's question and interprets a need for further explanation detailing why the role was so short (lines 61 to 62). The candidate takes the opportunity to shift the topic after answering the recruiter's question. In doing so, Steve does not violate the question-answer sequence that would have been the case if the candidate did not respond to the question (Hanworth 2006). The candidate answers the question by first confirming that the position in question was a temporary assignment before informing the recruiter of an accident he had at work. The candidate's topic shift is accepted by the recruiter who offers a sympathetic response in line 63 "oh no." Nevertheless, it is noticeable that within the same breath, Zenab asks Steve "where was this temp position from." The recruiter asks the candidate to provide the name of the agency that found him this position. In this instance, the recruiter is trying to find a lead[5] that could become a new business opportunity. Finding leads is important to recruiters such as Zenab who conduct 360 recruitment[6] as the understanding is that is easier to approach a company who already uses agencies than companies that do not use agencies. The overall aim is to be named on the company's PSL[7]. Even though it is common practice for the recruiter to attempt to find leads during their candidate interviews, it is the timing of

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[5] Leads/ lead generation – Gaining the interest of prospect or future clients that recruiters could work with. Similar to this scenario, recruiters could use candidate knowledge to identify companies that may be looking for a recruitment agency to help source their candidates.

[6] 360 recruitment – handling the entire recruitment process, which includes identifying opportunities & clients, sales & marketing, relationship building, sourcing, screening, shortlisting and interviewing candidates as well as the administration & financial work.

[7] PSL – Preferred Suppliers List

where Zenab has decided to ask about leads that demonstrates an arguably unsympathetic response. This almost instant topic shift conveys less of an emotional alignment with the intended emotional response that the candidate attempts to obtain for his high impact injury. After discussing the agency that placed Steve in this position, again not violating the question-answer sequence, Steve shifts the topic back to details of his injury (lines 69-70) as he "re-fractured" his "toe again." This time however, Zenab does not provide any acknowledgement or empathy towards his injury, instead, Zenab asks again about the agency "okay so that was from the new staff agency" (line 71). In this adjacency pair, the candidate invites the recruiter to provide an empathetic response. Zenab, however, does not align her second pair part to the candidate's first pair part, causing an unsympathetic response and therefore, slowing down the pace and tempo of the interaction where Zenab confirms the dates of employment and silently takes her notes. The pauses and shift in tempo indicate an awkwardness that arises from empathetic misalignment.

The candidate continues to provide the recruiter with more information regarding his work injury. This time, Steve provides further information regarding the severity of the injury to justify the short duration of the role. On this occasion however, the emphasis is on the impact of the injury and its severity. In lines 81-33, Steve states that he "woke up and couldn't walk" so he had to "go back to the hospital." The severity of the injury is concluded by the need to seek medical attention. The recruiter conveys her understanding of Steve's justification for the short period of time spent working in this role and clarifies whether the injury resulted in the role coming "to an end" (line 84). The candidate depicts the long-term impact as a consequence of the injury as he had to "have another "four weeks off work (line 85). Here, the candidate uses emotive language to justify the short duration of work.

The recruiter remains silent as she writes her notes, again, not using any empathetic language to convey her emotional alignment with his situation. The recruiter breaks the silence by asking "how was that for you?" (line 89). Not specifying what exactly the recruiter is after in such an answer, Steve responds "it was alright until they ran me over" (line 90). The candidate reverts to the topic surrounding his injuries. Zenab looks up at the candidate, blinks a few times showing a sense of confusion and asks how the injury happened (line 91). The recruiter's confused facial expression indicates that this may not be the answer that she was

looking for. Zenab's question about the incident finally opens the floor for the candidate to discuss the details of the injury.

The candidate takes this opportunity to describe the event. He blames the forklift driver for breaking protocol in three different ways: 1) the driver went the wrong way (line 94) 2) the driver attempted to fit between a tight space (line 95) 3) the driver should have remained stationary (line 97) or at least, used the horn (line 101) when moving. There is momentum built in this description as he recounts the story, which conclusively ends with the onomatopoeic item "woom" (line 102) for emphasis. Steve attempts to build a picture. The build-up of the event that leads to the moment of the injury as described by the onomatopoeic item "woom" has a dramatic effect. This leads to the following question, why would Steve put so much emphasis on his injury? Dutton et al (2014) state that compassion is important in any work-place setting, more specifically, in interview studies "compassion psychologically connects people, resulting in a stronger felt connection," this is because, "compassion breeds trust" between the interlocutors, however, in the absence of compassion, "this lack of reciprocation may solidify status differences or inequalities in the relationship" (p. 3–4). Using this explanation within this interaction, the recruiter directing her questions to the short period of time the candidate spent in his roles alongside the candidates need to provide a good enough reason indexes a shared understanding of "work-ethic." Steve realises that he needs to provide a convincing reason for his short work durations and time off work to not seem as if he is lazy or unwilling to work. To convince the recruiter of this, Steve uses emotive language to obtain an empathetic response from the recruiter. In more detail, Dutton et al argue, "the interpersonal process of compassion begins with a pain trigger, which initiates suffering in one person who may or may not explicitly communicate distress. The focal actor begins responding to this suffering through three interrelated sub processes – noticing the suffering, feeling empathetic concern, and acting to alleviate the suffering" (2014, p.5). Therefore it is evident that an empathetic response would illustrate understanding, showing that the recruiter believes and sympathises with what happened. It would also convey that his account is not seen as an excuse, but instead an unfortunate event, where given the right opportunity Steve will be trusted to work without leaving within a short period of time. In the absence of this emotional alignment, Steve continued to provide a

believable account by reverting the topic back to the incident until he was given the floor to confidently share his account of what happened.

4.2.5 Positioning

In the following extract, the recruiter finally provides an empathetic response to the candidate's account. Steve continues to tell his story of the accident at work and includes the knock on affect this incident has had on his other work. Toth (2014) suggests that storytelling found in interviews can be seen as "scenes where special characters are cast, positioned and imbued with certain features, and also important sights for identity construction" (2014, p.153). Touching on Bamberg & Georgakopoulou (2008) theoretical framework on positioning analysis, the candidate attempts to position himself as both a victim and an honest character through the use of empathy, which the recruiter finally accepts and positions herself as a caring and understanding professional. It is through such positioning that the recruiter does not provide a fair forum for the candidate to demonstrate his capabilities.

Extract D

104.   R: Ahh it must be so painful for you *(enthusiastically nods)*

105.   C: mmm yeah *(nods)*

106.   R: ahh I couldn't even imagine

107.   C: mmm *(nodding)* the size of that (shakes head)

108.   R: oh gosh and did you take wha wha happened with the company

109.   did you did you take legal action [against them]

110.   C: [errr I am] at the mom p

111.   present yeah I am

112.   R: oh my God that's crazy and how are you feeling now

113.   C: fine

114.   R: yeahh [okay]

115.   C: [I'm] back to normal now

116.   R: *(writes)*

117.   C: yeah it hurt

118.   R: I can imagine *(looking at CV)* oh gosh and wh how did

119.   you find this position was it through an agency or was it

120.   C: Yeah that was through XXXXXXXX in errm Harrow

121.	R: an is this the Harrow branch that you were working with

122.	C: erm wha in c- in XXXXX that was in Greenford

123.	R: *(writes)* okay erm and it came to an end because of

124.	C: ermm

125.	R: the incident

126.	C: yeah basi'ly cause [ermm]

127.	R: [so how] could they deal so once you the

128.	accident happen how did they deal with ih [sic]

129.	C: errmm all they did really ermm woz ermm I was entitled to

130.	twenty days err money

131.	R: mmm

132.	C: because I'd been there a year I wasn't entitled to any form of

133.	sick pay or anyfin' and I went back only purely to pay bills

134.	R: mm[mm]

135.	C: [so] I went back way too early

136.	R: when did y when did you go back

137.	C: God I went back in like at the start of April happened on

138.	February the fourth went back on the start of April and I had to

139.	have more time off then then they got all a bit funny

140.	R: *(nods)*

141.	C: buh ey fough I was playin' on yem so I had to get my doc down

142.	hospital invo[lllved]

143.	R: [mmm]

144.	C: to prove them wrong nd *(looks down, sombre expression)* it just

145.	 got to the point where *(shakes head, quite distressed*) I- I –I had

146.	enough really to [be honest]

147.	R: [yeahhh]

148.	C: I felt like cheated n *(shrugs shoulders)*

149.	R: yeah so it's not your fault at the en then

150.	C: yeah [and then]

151.	R: [the] incident [happened while] at work

152.	C: [an it happened]

153.	C: I spoke to a lot of people they said it was an industrial acciden'

154.	an regar'less of how long I've been there I should have been at

155.   home with my foot up

156.   R: mmm

157.   C: but the only reason I went back t' pay biws [cus]

158.   R: [yeahh]

159.   C: lit'rally had noffin' an they weren't helpin' n

160.   [the alternative] Was to go back

161.   R: [then it just got to the point where]

162.   C: [yeah]

163.   R:[Yeah]

164.   C: n then I carried on workin' there got worse

165.   R: yeah

166.   C: re-fractured it but I din't know it at the time till I star'ed workin

167.   at the carpet company

168.   R: yeah

169.   C: an en yeah as I say on day I just couldn't walk on it again

170.   R: oh gosh that's awful okay then wi-with erm this one errm XXXX

171.   XXXX [XXXX] *(pointing at CV)*

172.   C: [yeah]

173.   R: ummm that again was that a temp cus there's quite a few temp

174.   [positions] *(writes)*

175.   C: [errr yeah] tha' was er temp to be honest tha-ws-er I was goin

176.   through some fings then

Steve positions himself as the victim, where he requires a compassionate response from Zenab. Zenab is in a position of power to find Steve a new job. Zenab's previous disinterest in being empathetic comes to an end as she uses the sympathetic onomatopoeic expression "ahh" coupled with emotive language "it must be so painful for you" in a sombre tone in line 104**.** Zenab finally demonstrates her emotional alignment by empathising with Steve. She describes her belief of Steve's feelings in that situation. Zenab's enthusiastic nodding (line 105), backchannelling (line 100), agreeable "yeah" (line 114), indicates that she has understood how Steve feels. Zenab continues to demonstrate her interest now by stating that she "couldn't even imagine" what Steve would have been through (line 106), really empathising with the depth of the situation and aligning her views with the "victim" character

that the candidate has positioned himself as. The recruiter further conveys her interest by asking whether Steve took legal action. The context of her sympathetic approach in conjunction with this question presupposes that Steve has the right to take action in Zenab's opinion. Here, Zenab positions herself on the same side as Steve, so much so that the question implies that she believes Steve may have ground to legally act. Following the candidate agreeing to having started to take legal action, the recruiter positions herself as someone who is concerned with what the candidate is going through by using emotional language to understand his feelings. She positions herself as someone who cares, aligning with the "victim" position.

In line 118, the response provided to the candidate's emotive claim of the injury being painful, is a sympathetic alignment to the candidate's emotion "I can imagine oh gosh." Zenab instantly attempts to take control of the conversation topic by shifting the conversation to how Steve found this position (lines 118-119). Zenab wants to know whether it was an agency that found Steve the position and where the role was based. The questions index her desire to find new clients through leads by understanding whether the company uses agencies and operates in her "patch." Zenab asks the candidate why the role came to an end (123), suggesting a pre-scripted response, until she realises that this would have been due to the accident (line 125) and answers this for the candidate, further aligning her understanding of the candidate's situation. Following this, the recruiter asks questions related to the accident rather than the job role (lines 127-128). This indexes the recruiter's attempt to build a rapport with the candidate by taking more of a personal stance than an interview stance. This in fact becomes problematic for the candidate. Unfortunately for the candidate, Zenab seems to not ask right questions that relate to the specifics of Steve's job role (lines 128, 136, 151). As a result, Zenab is unable to obtain the necessary information from the candidate. This does not provide a fair chance for the candidate to elaborate on his: work history, duties, capabilities, and skills.

The candidate also attempts to portray himself as a hard worker. Steve conveys that he had no choice but to return to work to pay his bills, even though it may have been too early for him to return to work (lines 133-135). The implication here is that going back to work at such an early stage only aggravated the injury further. This particular utterance, however, opens Steve up to more questions requiring further clarification on dates (line 136). Instead of an

approximate date, Steve uses the specific date that the incident occurred. By highlighting the exact date, this indicates a true story, making Steve seem trustworthy by building a convincing portrayal of an honest character.

Steve then mentions that he "had" to have more time off (138-139), which lead to his colleagues becoming "all a bit funny." This utterance requires contextual knowledge, as "they" describes the company, and "funny" addresses their dissatisfaction. This is an indirect way of communicating that the company was not happy with the events that occurred. It is Steve's desire to address this unprompted that may illustrate his attempt to position himself as an honest character. The candidate continues using the lexical field of "play" by stating that the company personnel believed him to be "playin," (line 141) yet again, indirectly stating that the company did not believe him. Nonetheless, to persuade the recruiter that his statements are truthful, he uses a trustworthy source to evidence his claims "get my doc down hospital involved to prove them wrong" (lines 141-144). He adjoins using the trustworthy occupation source with fighting talk to "prove them wrong" as a strong indication of his certainty that he is telling the truth. This fighting talk is then juxtaposed with a more sombre tone and slow pace to highlight him giving up, producing a melodramatic affect. Steve shakes his head in a distressed manner and repeats the personal pronoun "I" (line 145) where he then mentions that he had "enough to be honest" (line 146) and felt "cheated" (line 148). This is quite a dramatic account where Steve seeks to obtain an empathetic response from the recruiter. This empathetic alignment will indicate that the recruiter approves of Steve's account as being truthful and honest reinstating Steve's depiction of himself as he positions himself as a victim. Zenab aligns herself with Steve's view of not being at fault as she sympathetically states that "it's not your fault" as the "incident happened while at work" (lines 149 & 151). The candidate not only agrees with the recruiter but also declares that many others agree with his perspective, as he "spoke to a lot of people" who advised him that "it was an industrial" accident, where he should have been given enough time off irrelative of the length of time he spent with the company (line 153-155). This goes beyond the current context, where he justifies how unfair the situation is by evidencing this through what other people have stated. This enables Steve to solidify his point of not being able to work as one that is truthful and honest.

4.2.6 Misalignment of goals

Lypovsky (2006) states that "the candidates' performance or negotiating of their expertise plays a significant role in the interviewers' impression of them and can prompt a job offer. Therefore, the first task of candidate in a job interview is to negotiate their skills and professional experience, to demonstrate to their interviewers that they belong as competent professionals" (p.1149). Even though this is the candidate's aim, it is clear that the candidate has not been provided with the chance to do so.

The following extract depicts the final question related to the candidate's "job experience" taken from the candidate's CV, before moving on to questions relating to Steve's job preferences. Until this point, it is evident from the questions asked by the recruiter that the candidate has not been provided with the opportunity to negotiate his expertise. This is due to the absence of questions that relate to his skills. The onus of providing correct and fair interview questions remains with the recruiter.

Extract E

177.   R: was it through an agency

178.   C: erm y no that was err direct err tha was through a friend basi'ly

179.   tha work there n he had some work

180.   R: erm and then this erm general labour

181.   C: err yeah that was agency

182.   C: ermm XXXXX I think it was yeah

183.   R: what agency is that

184.   C: err they're called XXXXX

185.   R: *(writing)* oh where abouts are they based

186.   C: ahhh central London somewhere erm

187.   R: and wha were the client's name

188.   C: the clie- oh err XXXXX the contract they were XXXXX

189.   R: yeah

190.   C: who I was workin' for a well through dem yeah

191.   R: *(writes)* and then you worked at XXXX XXXXX

192.   C: yeah

193.   R: so what I need to do is erm now so wo sort of work is it ideally

194.   you're lookin' for

It is noticeable that the candidate and recruiter follow the question-and-answer adjacency pair pointing towards their situated identities of interviewer and interviewee (Zimmerman 1998). The candidate does not attempt to violate the recruiter's position as the interviewer by continuing to provide answers to the questions she provides. Zenab asks whether the most recent job on the candidate's CV was obtained through an agency. Steve provides more information to the recruiter, detailing how he obtained work through his friend. The recruiter however, questions whether this was also a "general labour" role (line 180). Instead of taking the opportunity to discuss what his duties entailed, Steve uses his knowledge taken from the sequence of questions previously asked and answers how he obtained the position. Steve mentions that he obtained the role from an "agency" (181) without being prompted by Zenab. The recruiter, however, does not revert back to the duties to understand what Steve did during this period of employment. Instead, Zenab asks for the name of the agency and where the agency is based (183- 185). Such questions index Zenab's interest in fact finding for lead generation to seek potential new clients. Taking Zenab's motives into consideration, Steve is left with a difficult task of demonstrating his expertise. Through this style of interview, it is evident that there has been a misalignment in the recruiter and candidate's interview goals. On the one hand, the candidate aims to secure himself a new role, however, he has used the interview as a way of convincing the recruiter of his hardship by justifying why his roles have been short. On the other hand, the recruiter has used this interview to obtain leads for potential new business. The misalignment in goals is evident as Steve's goal is to be successful in this interview so that he can be put forward for work, whilst Zenab's questions indicate that she is more interested in using this interview as an opportunity for lead generation. In this sense, where Zenab does not ask the right questions that can enable Steve to show case his experience and expertise, Steve is left unable to talk about his work experience as he is following the question-answer sequence.

4.2.7 Trust

The recruiter now asks information on the type of work the candidate is looking for. Zenab asks questions to understand of where she can place Steve for potential future work. It must be taken to consideration however, that at this point, the actual interview questions have

been concluded and Zenab has not obtained much information on Steve's duties in his previous positions. The following conversation conveys that Zenab could attempt to find Steve future work, however, as the turn-by-turn sequence unfolds, it becomes apparent that trust becomes an issue between the interlocutors.

Extract F

193. R: so what I need to do is erm now so wo sort of work is it ideally

194. you're lookin' for

195. C: errr Warehouse

196. R: okay

197. C: ideally fort lif' but I haven't got a license well I had one but eh

198. its expired so maybe somewhere if I get in n if they do in house

199. trainin' or buh ideally just warehouse

200. R: so when you say warehouse *(looks up at candidate)* what sort

201. of stuff in warehouse would you be happy to do *(looks back down*

202. *to write)*

203. C: ahh general warehouse pickin' packin' loadin' err loadin' bay

204. any sor' of thin like tha pretty much done n-near enough everythin'

205. in warehouse wise

206. R: yeah do you ermm wha sort of pay rate are you looking for

207. C: ermm to be honest anywhere from eight fifty up eight fifty an

208. hour on average

209. R: locations

210. C: ermmm pfft Harrow Uxbridge west Dray'n

211. R: where d'y live at the moment

212. C: ermm Harrow

213. R: okay how long did it take to get to XXXXX

214. C: about twenty-five minutes

215. R: yeah so did you get the train

216. C: yeah

217. R: okay perfect now are you happy to do temp work

218. C: yeah

219. R: yeah but temp in the sense a week two weeks that sort of stuff

220. C: errr yyy[eah]

221. R: [with] the sort of view knowing that once you're in there

222.   there is possibility of you having continuous work yeah

223.   C: yeah

224.   R: okay perfect so and hour wise are you flexible with hours are

225.   you flexible with hours or do you want set times

226.   C: I'm easy

227.   R: okay you're perfect for me *(giggles and writes)* y-

228.   C: *(laughs)*

229.   R: okay now my only concern is I really need references

230.   now *(counts jobs on CV)* there's not so much gaps but there's

231.   quite a few employers that we need to go through

232.   C: mmm

233.   R: umm soo we need to go back all the way to two thousand and

234.   thirteen okay so we'll start off err XXXXX biscuits okay if you were

235.   you you working direct or is that [through an agency]

236.   C: [errr that was]direct for them

237.   yeah

238.   R: okay so who did you used to deal with at XXXXX

239.   C: err John XXXXX

240.   R: *(writes and repeats name)* do you have his details at all

241.   C: errmmm pos-possibly at home

242.   R: okay when you get at home can you send it [to me] straight

243.   away yeah

244.   C: [yeah]

The recruiter asks what type of work the candidate is looking for (lines 193-194). The candidate initially responds with warehouse work (line 195), but then states that "ideally" he would be looking for a position that enables him to use a forklift but realises that at present he doesn't have a valid license (lines 197-199). He then corrects himself, by stating that he had one, but it expired, so he will need some form of "in house" training, which does not give him the legal requirements to operate the forklift. He then goes back on this statement mentioning that "ideally" he will be looking for "warehouse" work (line 199). This quick change of what he is "ideally" looking for, coupled with the attempt of wanting to be put forward for a role without having the correct legal documents to operate the machinery

suggests that he may not know what he wants in a position. By not having the minimal requirements, more specifically in this case, the relevant legal documentation that can enable the candidate to do the job, already puts him at a disadvantage as it is difficult to trust that he can be put forward in the first place to do this particular role.

 The candidate's uncertainty may be the reason why the recruiter asks what "sort of stuff in warehouse would you be happy to do" (line 201), almost questioning whether he knows what the job entails before she attempts to consider placing him. This almost signifies her not being completely convinced that he is knowledgeable of the job. The candidate, however, is able to convey his knowledge in what the role would entail by stating that it would involve: picking, packing and loading (203), further justifying that he has full experience in this role, which the recruiter would have known if she would have asked for more information in the interview regarding his actual job roles and duties. The recruiter does not dig deeper. This answer seems to be sufficient enough for her to move on to asking the candidate about his salary expectations (line 206).

The recruiter then asks questions regarding the candidates work requirements surrounding his: pay rate (line 206), location (line 209), ability to commute to specific locations (lines 213 & 215), openness to temporary work (line 217), flexibility surrounding hours of work (224-225), all of which the candidate answers correctly, making it a very quick verbal exchange where the recruiter mentions that the candidate is "perfect" for her (line 227). The statement conveys that his work expectations "fit" with what she is able to find as work for him. This, however, is only momentarily as she then mentions her concern. She expresses her concern of "references" (line 229) as there are several short-term jobs that he has had. These are two particular areas that Kerekes (2006) in a study on "wining an interviewer's trust" indicates as being phenomenon found to constitute "distrust" 1) inappropriate references 2) inappropriately high salary 3) time gaps that are detrimental to the desired interview outcome. As such, the candidate conveys two of these areas, making him come across as less trustworthy.

The recruiter then decides that perhaps it would be easier to get in contact with the agency that provided him the positions rather than the employers directly as he has had many temporary roles. She asks the candidate *who* his contact is at this agency. Steve provides a first name (lines 238- 239). She then asks the candidate to immediately provide reference

details, without actually asking whether he would mind her contacting them (line 240). The candidate provides an unsure answer "possibly at home," uses the filler "errrm" as he thinks and elongates the lexical item "possibly" (241) to suggest that he is thinking whether he has those details. The recruiter's response to this is as if the candidate has said he has definitely got the references, asking that the candidate provide her with this "straight away" when he gets home (242-243). This forces the candidate to produce such references in a very direct manner, almost leaving him with no actual choice but to provide this information to her if he wants to be placed, illustrating her dominance and power within this context.

4.2.8 References continued – views and power

The recruiter attempts to obtain references from the candidate, however there is a slight misalignment in their views of how the candidate's previous employer might react to providing a reference. The candidate is reluctant to provide the recruiter with a reference from the company that he may have a legal dispute with over his work injury. The recruiter, however, insists that the candidate provides her with their contact details. Due to the power imbalance, the candidate agrees to provide the recruiter with this information.

Extract G

245.   R: so then they can cover err what was it September two thousand

246.   twelve to fourteen *(writes. Stops. Looks through jobs on CV)*

247.   R: where at XXXX do you have any of their contact details

248.   C: errr I'l a-to do a li'l digging again with them t' find out

249.   R: cus the only thing is I'm just going to find it difficult to put you in

250.   employment if I don't have references

251.   C: *(nods)*

252.   R: *(writes. long pause)* nd then XXXXXXX

253.   C: err yeah I got a num- Tony XXXXXXX the [boss]

254.   R: [is that] Tony

255.   C: XXXXX *(spells it)*

256.   R: *(repeats the spelling. writes details of dates as she*

257.   *mumbles to herself)*

258.   C: *(looking at mobile)* and his numbers 0XXXXXXXXXX

259.   R: yep

260. C: XXXXXXXXXX

261. R: perfect an then XX XXXXX XXXX

262. C: er yeah er Ian XXXXXXX *(looks for number on his phone)*

263. C: and his numbers XXXXXXXXXX

264. R: *(repeats numbers)*

265. C: XXXXXXXXXX *(puts phone away in pocket)*

266. R: so XXXXXXXXXX

267. C: yeah

268. R: *(writes and mumbles dates)* and then for XXXXX

269. C: to be honest I don't think that would go down so well I doubt I'll

270. get a reference off them cusss

271. R: why is that

272. C: because when I phoned them up and told em what happened t

273. they were not too happy about [I' to be] honest

274. R: [yeah]

275. R: well they have to confirm dates *(no eye-contact, looks down at*

276. her forms)

277. *(Silence – 6 seconds)*

278. C: ye[ahh] yeah errr

279. R: [ermm]

280. R: yeah

281. C: *(looks at phone)* bear with me

282. R: it's alright

283. C: ahh I'll av to send tha to you as wew

284. R: okay an wha was the name

285. C: whats that

286. R: wha was the name

287. C: ov er oww XXXXXX the guy's name is

288. R: was that from new staff agency

289. C: nah that was from direct at XXXXX

290. R: okay Adrian

291. C: yeah I'll av to f- I got his number at home

The recruiter justifies why she needs references from the agency, by arguing that the agency in question will be able to cover two years of his employment. After the candidate's uncertain comment on his ability to retrieve the references, the recruiter provides an explanation of the importance of references. Zenab highlights that she will be unable to put the candidate forward for work without sufficient references (lines 249-250). She then mentions the name of the previous employer (line 252). The candidate understands that this is a question and she is asking for a reference, so he states that he has the contact details for the "boss" and provides her with this (253). This happens for another employer until they reach the employer where he had the accident with the forklift, which resulted in his injury. The candidate mentions that it will not "go down so well" (line 260) and that he doubts that they will give him a reference. The use of the word honestly here, illustrates his genuine view of him believing that he will not be able to obtain a reference. The recruiter asks why (271), as she illustrates her inability to comprehend why they would not provide the reference. The candidate justifies that when he spoke to the company on the phone and mentioned "what happened" they were not "happy" (lines 272-273). The recruiter's response to this is that the company will "have to confirm dates" (line 275). There is a clear absence of a shared definition of "references." Both interlocutors are using different "scripts," which results in communicative turbulence. The candidate is reluctant to obtain references from a company that he has left on non-amicable terms with. On the one hand, the candidate may understand references as being a statement from the previous employer that is conventionally the previous employer informing the new employer of "positive" information regarding himself and his skills/work capabilities. On the other hand, the recruiter understands references from the compliance perspective of an agency where confirmation of dates that cover the period of the last five years need to be obtained. Zenab does not seem to be sympathetic towards Steve feeling uncomfortable to give this particular reference due to the circumstances. Zenab does not attempt to work around this or show any empathy towards this position. It is at this point that the power relationship is most noticeable, as the candidate does not question her decision, and agreeably says "yeah" (line 278) as he looks at his phone, then decides that he will send it later to her it instead. The recruiter does not entirely accept this, as she directly asks for the name of the employer (line 284). The candidate, perhaps taken back, asks "what's that" (line 285) showing his confusion and potentially stalling time for him to decide upon whether he wants to provide her with the details. The recruiter repeats the previous

utterance (286). Through the recruiter's direct and forceful approach she has used her institutional power to immediately obtain the company name with a contact name. At this moment in time, it is clear that there is an issue with "trust" in relation to references. Roberts (2007) states that characteristics of "untrustworthiness" demonstrated in interviews is one of "the most common reasons given by the interviewers for rejection of candidates" (p. 244), providing another reason as to why this interview outcome was unsuccessful.

4.2.9 Closing the interview

Kerekes suggests that in the absence of trust where a candidate is seen to be "misleading," "dishonest," "insincere" and not "credible" it has been strongly associated with "failed gatekeeping encounters" (2006, p.32) Following the incident with the references, the atmosphere is tense. The pace is slower and the dynamics between the interlocutors have changed. Both interlocutors now employ a distinctively different communicative style towards one another. This is a clear indication of communicative turbulence.

Extract H

292.   R: ow right perfect do you have any valid questions for me *(looks at candidate)*

294.   C: no *(candidate does not make eye contact looks down)*

295.   292.   R: nope okay errmm are you available for work ASAP

296.   C: yep

297.   R; Okay so when I sent you did you get the email that I sent over

298.   C: mmhm

299.   R: yeah so did you do the online registration

300.   C: yeah

301.   R: okay perfect so lets go out and let me check if I've got all the

302.   details tha I need di-you enter in bank details

303.   C: Err yeah yeah

304.   R: And did you bring all your documents with you

305.   C: Yeah

306.   R: Alright perfect if I can just take your documents an' we can head

307.   out and get them all photocopied

To bring the interview to a close, the recruiter asks whether the candidate has any "valid" (line 292) questions for her. This could be seen as somewhat patronising as Zenab instructs

Steve to only communicate pre-vetted questions that he considers as "valid." Zenab's question is ambiguous, leading to Steve responding with an abrupt "no" (line 294) whilst making no eye contact with the recruiter. Interestingly, Zenab seems to be taken back by this response as she repeats Steve's answer of not having any questions (line 295). This repetition provides Steve with another chance to change his mind. Not taking the opportunity, Zenab then concludes "okay" that there are no questions, signalling the end of this part of the interview and proceeds with the administration questions for the registration. Between lines 294 and 305, the candidate uses one-word answers, leaving very limited room for him to be able to build any rapport within the exchange. This downturn in the tempo and mood of the interview links to the previous incident and demonstrates the effects of communicative turbulence.

4.2.10 Post interview findings

The candidate describes this interview as "it went ok" but he didn't get to speak "too much about the job", he has used agencies before, where they "call him for work" which he obtains through referrals, but he hasn't had much experience with this type of interview so he didn't know what to expect. He does, however, feel confident that the recruiter will find him work and will need to just "give her references" when he gets back.

The recruiter mentions that she will find him difficult to place, as they do not have many of the roles that he is looking for. She felt that the candidate was very "casual" but this could be due to the type of work that the candidate is looking for. She comments on Steve "very casually saying words like backside" and noticed that he wore a "hoody," but again suggests that this could be due to the nature of work he is looking for. "He seems like the type that might not go in or would leave a post quickly" but he would be "good for short term jobs."

It is evident that there is a clear misunderstanding in whether the recruiter will be able to find him work. Looking back at the interview, line 227 "you're perfect for me" strongly suggests a positive interview outcome, which could be why the candidate is misled to believe that the interview went well. The candidate also interestingly comments on how he was not able to "talk too much about the job." Unsure of which job the candidate is referring to, this indexes the power relationship, suggesting that he did not find an opportune moment to talk about

his work experience as he follows the question-answer structure set out by the recruiter. Therefore, although he suggests not having strong face-to-face interview experience, he is aware of certain interview norms where the recruiter asks the right questions to obtain the relevant information. He also demonstrates his understanding of the importance of references and highlights that he will do this immediately.

The recruiter's comments pick up on the candidate being "casual" and comments on his use of (what can be seen in her eyes as) inappropriate language in this context. There is misleading information in Zenab's comments too as she suggests that they do not provide personnel for the jobs that the candidate is seeking, yet she mentions that she does not trust that the candidate will attend work, or would leave quite quickly, so shorter roles would be more suitable. Taking into consideration that Steve has been invited to interview due to the credentials illustrated on his CV, the recruiter must have been aware of, or at least, spoken to the candidate over the phone about the roles that he is interested in. It could be then argued that through the way in which the recruiter has decoded the candidate's: language, attire and trustworthiness, she may not find him suitable for the jobs that she recruits for. Arguably, her mindset could have been made up quite early into the interview, from her perception of how the candidate is dressed and his initial informal lexical choice "pain in the backside." This could index why Zenab began to ask for information related to new "leads" rather than the candidate's work history.

Interestingly, Zenab does not comment on Steve's unwillingness to provide particular references that caused some tension in the interview. This could therefore suggest that the urgent need for references from this particular employer may have not been necessary as Steve was unsuccessful as he was not a good "fit" for the positions that she recruits for. As a result, *Steve would not require references.*

4.2.11 Discussion and main key points

Comparing the closing of the interview with the opening sequence, where the interlocutors were more interactive and talkative, there were positive 'contextualization cues' (Gumperz, 1992b, 1992c) such as smiling, faster pace, higher pitch, strong eye contact etc., that

conveyed, what could be seen as, a good rapport, however this dramatically changes in the closing sequence of the interview after the incident of communicative turbulence.

There has been a distinct misalignment in language, views, empathy, and formality, as well as emerging issues of trust and power dynamics that prove to be problematic. Jiang (2001) describes the genre of the workplace interview as one where the interview is a "strategic conversation" that has "dual purposes" (p.1). In assessing the candidate's suitability for particular job roles, the recruiter makes judgements on the candidate's language and communication skills, their professional ability, ability to collaborate and so forth. Whilst the candidate attempts to illustrate being a good fit for positions that could be available to them. This proves problematic when the recruiter in this interview does not ask the right questions to obtain any understanding of the candidate's skills background and ability.

One of the notable aspects of this interview is the duration. The interview lasted only 14 minutes. This is one of the shortest interviews within this study. On average, the interviews last approximately 30 minutes. Throughout this particular interview it is noticeable that there is no real evidence of the recruiter asking about the candidate's professional experience. Several topics surround injuries at work, cellular problems etc., however, within these topics there are evident key queues for the listener to provide a sympathetic response, which, interestingly, neither of the interlocutors do. As the topics emerge from each turn-by-turn sequence there is clear misalignment in: views, language, emotive language, goals, and formality.

4.3 Section 3 - Case Study: CA 008 – Jenifer & Surjeet – An unsuccessful interview

4.3.1 Introduction

This section examines an unsuccessful interview where the interlocutors have different ethnic backgrounds and operate on different scripts. The concept of power is a recurrent theme that manifests itself throughout the whole interview. Differences in power over, power to and power behind (Fairclough 2009) are found within the nuances of discourse and contextualization cues (Gumperz 1982a) that are unravelled using Interactional Sociolinguistics. The way in which the interlocuters operate on different "scripts" manifests itself in misalignments of: power dynamics, views, positioning and identities that leads to communicative turbulence and misunderstandings between them. The co-construction of the undesired outcome is addressed through these prevalent characteristics and through power asymmetry in the interview genre, this enables the empowerment of an ethnocentric view that operates within a culturally diverse context. This case-study conveys the imperative need for cultural understanding where professionals are placed in positions of power when dealing with members of different cultural backgrounds.

Table 4a About the recruiter

About the Recruiter - Jenifer					
Age range:	20-25	Codes:	English	Lived elsewhere?	No
Gender:	Female	English L1?	Yes	Work:	Hair and Beauty Sales
Heritage:	English	Resided in:	West London	Education:	GCSE's

Table 4b About the candidate

About the Candidate - Surjeet					
Age range:	40-45	Codes:	English Urdu	Lived elsewhere?	Yes
Gender:	Female	English L1?	No	Work:	Sales Customer service
Heritage:	Asian	Resided in:	West London, East London	Education:	A-levels and Further professional qualifications

4.3.2 Interview introduction

The opening of this interview is noticeably dynamic. There is, what can be described as a lot of noise. Most of the noise originates from the candidate, Surjeet. The recruiter, Jenifer is heretofore sat in the interview room, waiting for Surjeet to enter as she skims through Surjeet's CV. Surjeet arrives, looking for somewhere to place her belongings. Surjeet asks if she can leave her belongings on a seat close by, which Jenifer agrees to and politely thanks her. Surjeet moves towards the seat already placed on the opposite end of the table to Jenifer. Surjeet sits and tries to make herself comfortable by attempting to adjust the height of her chair. She does this whilst letting Jenifer know that the chair is "a bit low" (line 7). Jenifer smiles, but she is silent. Surjeet continues to fiddle with chair as she exclaims "I'll just" (line 9) and attempts to make herself more comfortable. The recruiter laughs (line 10) and Surjeet uses humour by repeating that the chair "won't go up" with raised intonation indicating that she is stuck. The repetition of the utterance "it won't go up" combined with the progressively raised intonation, loud volume and high pitch suggests that a request is being made. This is a request for Jenifer to help Surjeet by providing advice on how to raise the chair. Not acknowledging the request, Jenifer agrees that the chair "is a little bit low" (line 12) and does not provide any help or advice. Subsequently Surjeet decides to use humour again by addressing how low the chair is as she will just sit "down here and look" at Jenifer (line 13). The anaphoric reference "here" is used as an indication of just how uncomfortably low the chair is for Surjeet, especially as she mentions that she is "tall" in the same utterance. Despite Surjeet's use of humour, her explanation of why she prefers to be higher due to her height, and her repetition, Jenifer makes no response to the implicit request. Instead, both interlocutors laugh (line 14) before Jenifer shifts topic to introduce the interview.

Extract A

1. C: *(walks in and closes door behind her. Looks at recruiter who is seated)*
2. can I leave my stuff there [I just] *[Inaudible]*
3. R: [yeah of] course yeah just put it where ever you need to
4. C: Thank you
5. R: *(looks down at her documents and writes)*
6. C: *(about to sit down)*
7. C: It's a bit low isn't it this chair
8. R: *(coughs & smiles)*

9. C: *(sits)* I'll just *(fiddles with chair)*

10. (Recruiter laughs)

11. C: it won't go up does [it *(louder)* IT WONT GO UP]

12. R: [it is a little bit low] isn't it haha

13. C: ill just sit down here and look at you *(laughs)* I'm tall so I just have that

14. (Both laugh)

15. R: *(changes to formal tone)* thank you so much for coming [in today]

It is noticeable that the dynamics of the room are loud. The amplification of noise and laughter might suggest a positive start to the interview, however paying attention to what is actually happening, it seems that this is not the case. It can be noticed that firstly, the candidate makes *most* of the noise in this initial interaction. Secondly, within the short exchange, the candidate is making an implicit request through humour, but the recruiter does not respond to this request. With reference to the former point, it's evident that between lines 1-14, Jenifer is not actually leading the interview, nor has any induction been formally made between the interlocutors. Gifford (1989) states that "a job interview typically follows a certain format, including an opening that consists of a greeting and introduction. Experienced interviewers generally try to put candidates at ease by engaging them in small talk before the formal interview begins" (p. 244). Applying Gifford's insight on interview introductions to this example, it is evident that there is no greeting between the two, and the recruiter has not led with any small talk. While it is true that Jenifer is one of the less experienced recruiters working in this branch, nevertheless, drawing on her previous interviews, she would assume control of this initial opening interaction. Jenifer normally takes the lead by greeting the candidates whilst they walk into the room, she commences small talk by referring to the candidate's journey, and thanks the candidate for coming in etc. This interview is an exception in that it does not follow this structure. Instead, the candidate walks in, leads the opening sequence by asking if she can leave her belongings in a place of her choosing. Surjeet does not use any form of greeting towards Jenifer, nor does she ask Jenifer *where* she should leave her belongings. As Surjeet takes her seat, she begins to make herself comfortable by tailoring the environment to herself. Jenifer coughs and smiles (line 8). She does not verbally respond to Surjeet's utterance. Surjeet begins to fiddle with the leavers at the bottom of her seat, without directly asking Jenifer how to alter the height of the seat. Jenifer does not offer

her assistance on how to increase the height of the chair even when Surjeet's raised intonation mimics a sign of calling for help (line 11). Jenifer's evaluative comment "it's a bit low isn't it" (line 12) followed by laughter that in effect declines acceptance of the request, indicates three possibilities: 1) that she has not understood that there is a request for assistance 2) she may not know how to alter the height of the seat and therefore remains silent, or 3) an explicit request has not yet been made so she may not want to provide assistance just yet, enabling her to hold control over the situation. All these potential reasons evidence an obvious misalignment between a request and the acknowledgement to accept the request.

It is also clear that there is a power struggle manifesting itself in this opening sequence. Foucault (1978) famously states "where there is power, there is resistance" (p.95 – 96). Applying this notion, it is noticeable that the recruiter, who through context should be in position of control as she holds institutional power, is in fact resisting. Jenifer is resisting giving control to the candidate. Jenifer resists through silence (line 5), by ignoring a request (line 8), by refusing to accept a request (line 12) and by using laughter to mask the resistance (line 14). In particular, the recruiter's silence is intriguing in this exchange. According to Bengtsson & Fynbo, silence can be seen as powerful in interview contexts as "silence is often perceived within a prescriptive power structure between interviewer and interviewee, inferring a relationship between, for example, a powerful interviewer and a disempowered interviewee" (2018 p.18). As a result, it could be argued that Jenifer uses silence to take back control during Surjeet's attempt to control the start of the interview including the environment that surrounds them. Silence enables Jenifer to take back power, she then laughs (line 14) and changes the topic, using the interview question-answer format, where through her role as the recruiter she holds power to ask the questions in order to draw upon her ascribed power in this activity. Moreover, Jenifer uses a formal tone in conjunction with a topic shift, which is distinctly different from the informal introductions noticed in the recruitment interviews, in attempt to make the candidate comfortable. By contrast, the formal tone could be seen as a way of taking control by enforcing Jenifer's authority in this context, and more specifically, a method in which does not permit the candidate to remain comfortable. Within this opening alone, it can be foreseen that power and negation of control will be key themes throughout this interview.

4.3.3 Power & space in the opening sequence

The concept of space, allocation of space and use of space is also significant in relation to the dynamics of power in the opening sequence. It is noticeable that Surjeet takes up a lot of the space in the small interview room. When she enters, she attempts to own the space. Whilst already walking towards where she wants to put her belongings, she asks if she can put her "stuff" (line 2) on this seat. She then moves to another seat, raising her arms as she speaks with enthusiasm. She thus begins to own the space, and exhibits her comfortability, by imposing her power over the interview environment. Research conducted by Cuddy et al (2015) in the field of applied psychology unravels a link between the non-verbal behaviours and interview outcomes. It was found that candidates who came into the interview and displayed "powerlessness" through their closed demeanour, hunching over their phones and taking up less space correlated with a negative outcome. Interestingly, it seems that in this example, taking too much space, may come across as over-powering, over-confident, and may contribute towards an undesired negative perception of the candidate.

In contrast to the candidate, the recruiter takes up less space. Jenifer sits in one place, using noticeably closed body language: she is not as expressive and does not use large hand gestures. Even though the recruiter is relatively new to this industry, her position as a recruiter holds power in this context. Through her ascribed position, Jenifer decides which candidates are good enough to be put forward for client interviews. Surjeet's display of over-confidence and ability to exert control of the start of the interview, may be understood as potentially intimidating for a less experienced recruiter, who is relatively new to this role. The candidate exerting too much control over the interview may have an adverse effect towards the desired interview outcome. This would make a less experienced recruiter's job more difficult by adding an element of struggle over control of the interview process.

4.3.4 Dominance

"Interruptions and floor appointment" has been a topic much associated with power and gender (Cameron 1986, p.39), however, in this example, interruptions and floor appointment has been a key area of investigation of this due to unconventional negotiation of power

relations between the two female interlocutors with roughly a twenty-year age gap. Struggles in the negotiation of floor appointment is both apparent and recurrent throughout the interview. Within seventeen turns of this introduction, fourteen of the turns are overlaps where the interlocutors speak over each other. This is indicative of power struggle.

This struggle commences as early as the initial introduction between the interlocutors. The following excerpt is the exchange that takes place after Surjeet has attempted to make herself comfortable. Attention is drawn towards the overlaps between the interlocutors. Although the interruptions become increasingly more frequent as the interview progresses, it is this moment that is of interest because it occurs so early in the interview. The relevance of it taking place so early in the interview is that it happens at the height of the rapport distance where the interlocutors are still very much strangers. This is before any real rapport building has happened, and before they begin to get comfortable with each other. This example is suggestive of how the interlocutors attempt to take control over the interview and manifest their power.

Extract B

15. *(changes to formal tone)* thank you so much for coming [in today]

16. C: [no worries at all no]

17. R: erm I know I spoke with you recently to get you to come in during the

18. week

19. *(Candidate takes out papers and neatly places them on the table)*

20. *C: (interrupts)* we did yep [yep] *(enthusiastic nod)*

21. R: [but] I do like to get all my candidates in

22. C: *(looking down at her papers as she sorts them out)* [no problem]

23. R: [so I can] meet you you can

24. meet me if you've got questions

25. C: *(nodding whilst neatly putting papers into different piles)*

26. R: if I've got questions we'll go through your CV

    (*candidate stops ruffling papers puts elbows on table and looks directly at the*

    recruiter. Her stance suggests that she is ready to listen and provides strong eye

    contact)

27. R: in a bit more depth

28. C: yep

29. R: and if I've got any more questions to [ask you or]

30. C: [fire away yep]

31. R: and so on yep perfect I'll start from the back

32. C: [okay]

33. R: [just] so I can get a better understanding

34. C: [okay]

35. R: [of your] [work] history *(recruiter looks through cv whilst talking)*

36. C: [okay]

The recruiter introduces the interview by referring to their previous phone conversation (lines 17-18) in which she reminds Surjeet of how they have got to this stage. Surjeet does not make any eye-contact with Jenifer as she is occupied with sorting out papers that she has brought along with her. As Surjeet removes the documentation from a plastic wallet, it is noticeable that the documents comprise Surjeet's qualification certificates, which she has decided to bring along with her. As Jenifer talks, Surjeet continues to sort out her qualifications into neat piles without giving Jenifer eye-contact. Surjeet responds to Jenifer verbally. Although, it is noticeable that her responses either overlap with or interrupt Jenifer's utterances.

In line 21 Jenifer provides a reason as to why she has decided to invite Surjeet to come in for a face-to-face interview rather than holding a telephone interview. Surjeet interrupts Jenifer to agree with her statement (line 20). In line 20, Surjeet is agreeing that she has spoken with Jenifer in the past. It could be argued, that in this example, Surjeet is attempting to use interruption as "support for the speaker" (Tannen 1989), however due to the lack of eye contact and failure to allow the recruiter to complete the point she is trying to make, Surjeet does not acknowledge much importance to Jenifer, thereby illustrating a "sign of dominance" (Zimmerman 1993, p.157). Overlap is seen as a way to "wrest the floor in a power play" (Weatherall et al 2001, p.157), a dynamic that is not normally associated with an interview context, for example Tannen (1993) highlights that interruptions are less likely to happen in interviews than it is in more casual conversations amongst friends. Being so early into the interview, the recruiters have not yet been able to establish, let alone build a strong rapport with one another, making the possibility of interruptions suggestive of a strong friendship rather unlikely. Although semantically Surjeet's utterance is supportive, it is her timing that is disruptive, giving indication of an interruption rather than a positive overlap. Weatherall

(2001) argues that "overlaps are more likely not to be interruptions among those with… high involvement" whilst interruptions can be used to "dominate a conversation or person" but this needs to be observed in relation to the context (p. 157). In relation to the context, this has occurred quite early into the interview, where the interlocutors are still attempting to find mutual grounds on their rapport building strategies. In addition, further evidence of this being an interruption is due to a switch that is not entirely smooth. As there is an attempt "to take a turn before a prior speaker has given any indication of reaching the end of it" (Lakoff 1990:47). For example, in line 29 Jenifer discusses the benefits of face-to-face interviews, providing a structure for the interview. Surjeet interrupts Jenifer's contribution with a seemingly supportive utterance "yep fire away" (line 30). This utterance overlaps with Jenifer's attempt to finish her contribution, making the overlap "restricting" to Jenifer's contribution and therefore having a "negative" effect (p. 307), resulting in the overlap being construed as an interruption. Yemenici (2001) argues that there are cultural backgrounds that "attribute negative characteristics to any kind of interruption or overlap" and would therefore "regard interruptions as non-supportive or disruptive no matter what intention or function" (p.308). Taking this into account, it could be argued that this interruption may have been disruptive as the outcome of the interruption has led to an abrupt change of topic. In response to "fire away," Jenifer stops giving any further information on the structure of the interview and begins the interview by starting "from the back" of Surjeet's CV (line 31). Seemingly, Jenifer has understood "fire away" as a request to immediately start 'firing' questions. In relation to issues of power relations in interviews, Surjeet has in fact taken over a turn through her interruption and has allocated a turn by telling Jenifer to "fire away" with her questions. According to Zhu (2019), normally in an interview setting it is the interviewer that is "authoritative and with an exclusive right to allocation of turns" (Zhu 2019, p. 153). Instead, Surjeet has managed to take control of the allocation of turns here by telling the recruiter to begin questioning. This is significant as within the unequal power relationship set by this genre, Surjeet uses language to obtain control, and in this case, interruptions can be seen as a form of *exercising* control (Fairclough 1989, p.18).

4.3.5 Cultural difference

The following extract demonstrates misalignment of interlocutor's views as it becomes evident that they are operating on different schemas. Nishda (2005) describes schemas as

"generalized collections of knowledge of past experiences that are organised into related knowledge groups and are used to guide our behaviours in familiar situations" (Nishida 2005 in Zhu 2019, p.130). By working according to different schemas the interlocutors show evidence of wearing different "hats" (Zhu 2019, p. 147). They both demonstrate ethnocentric stances by depicting their own views surrounding three particular areas: the importance of qualifications, the appropriate behaviours expected in this context and how the interlocutors position themselves against the "other" in relation to the power dynamics. The following example occurs in the early stages of the interview, where the recruiter begins to ask questions from the back of the candidate's CV before arriving to Surjeet's more recent job roles. Surjeet's furthest experience on her CV commences with her education history, and Jenifer attempts to clarify when and where the qualifications were obtained. It should be noted that the candidate has not been asked to bring in her qualifications.

Extract C. a

37.   R: so in regards to education and stuff I know that that's going back

38.   C: *(loud)* [years ago yep yep]

39.   R: [back a bit far] for you but can you just tell me where [you had

40.   your education]

41.   C:[XXXXX XXXX] it's in[*inaudible*] west midlands, I grew up in the west

42.   midlands

43.   R: oh okay [so]

44.   C: [so] it's a fle – comprehensive school

45.   R: perfe[ct]

46.   C: [we're] going back 25 years ago (*recruiter laughs*) showing my age

47.   [okay I got erm]   [si-si]

48.   R: [so west Midlands] [what] years where you there from

49.   C: CSEs I've got

50.   R*: (writes and mumbles)* CSEs

51.   C: erm I left in 1995 there isn't it yeah

52.   R: 1995 so you must have been

53.   C: okay

54.   R: 1989 its 6 years school [isn't it]

55.   C: [yeah]

56.   R: [Perfect]

57.   C: [its around] 90 okay

58.   R: and how [many did you get]

59.   C: [I got math's] English

60.   R: [Yeah]

61.   C: [I'll show] you I'll show you math's English RSA office practice which we

62.   used to have in those days

63.   R: R[A]

64.   C: [and] I did a language Urdu but I'm not good at it so I'm not going to

65.   mention it because I can't use it.

66.   R: okay

67.   C: so that was the five I had okay one two

68.   R: [so I've got math's] English RSA

69.   C: [three four five] and and and a language

70.   R: and a language *(points to recruiter's copy of CV)*

71.   C: and a language but I can't can't [I don't know] how to use it I can't write

72.   in it

73.   R: [perfect okay]

74.   C: I can't do okay

75.   R: yeah so that's five yeah

76.   C: okay so that's those and then in I went to work in *(puts a hand on her head – indicating that*

77.   *She is concentrating. She then looks down whilst she goes through her copy of her*

78.   *CV)* London for about the age of eighteen or nineteen I went to Walthamstow forest

79.   college and I did

80.   R: *(writes)* so college

81.   C: err Waltham forest if you need it so its wh- its E17 and I did there er a

82.   BTEC certificate in business and finance… day release

83.   R: *(writes)* so college

84.   C: err Waltham forest if you need it so its wh- it's E17 and I did there er a

85.   BTEC certificate in business and finance… day release

86.   R: *(writes)* so BTEC

87.   C: that's what I did next

88.   R: certificate in sorry what was that

89.   C: erm business and finance

90.   R: sorry what years was that

Jenifer commences the interview questioning Surjeet's educational background. She introduces the topic (line 37), whilst also using humour to reference the length of time that has passed since Surjeet's education (line 37). Surjeet has not taken offence to this comment and enthusiastically agrees that this was "years ago" (line 43), as her utterance overlaps with Jenifer's stating that it is "back a bit far" (line 39). Jenifer is specific in her question as she asks for Surjeet to only tell her *where* she had her education (lines 39). Surjeet responds by naming the school and where it is located, ensuring that she has covered both possible answers of what Jenifer could mean by asking "where" she attended. Surjeet has understood that "where" could mean which school, requiring her to respond with the name of the school, as well as the location. As such, she answers with where it is located in the UK (line 41). However, Surjeet's answer does not end here as she continues to explain that she grew up in "the West Midlands" (line 41 & 43). Jenifer interjects (line 43), but Surjeet takes back the floor by using the co-coordinative conjunction "so" (line 44) in order to give further information on the type of school (comprehensive school) that she attended. Jenifer attempts to re-take hold of the floor (line 45), but once again is interrupted by Surjeet (line 46), who reiterates how far back she is "going" before immediately informing Jenifer of the qualifications she obtained (line 51). Once again, Jenifer interrupts Surjeet as during this moment the interlocutors are both speaking over each other (lines 47 & 48). In this moment, Surjeet is about to announce the level of education she had achieved at the establishment in question, whilst Jenifer is clarifying the location of the establishment. Surjeet gives Jenifer the floor as Jenifer asks which years Surjeet had attended the school in question. Surjeet's immediate response is irrelevant to Jenifer's question, as she mentions that the qualifications she obtained were "CSE's" (line 49). During this exchange, Surjeet reveals that she wants to share the information that she believes is important - in particular, information that will help her succeed in her goal of being put forward for work. Surjeet shares information that she believes would place her in a better position of being successful in the interview. She attempts to lead by willingly giving information without the recruiter asking, which she does by holding the floor for long periods of time. Whilst struggling to hold the floor, Surjeet dismisses Jenifer's questions, placing more importance on the information that she believes (in line with her own schema) is important. As a result, Surjeet does not position the recruiter as someone with power in this situation,

similarly Jenifer is not able to use her own power in this context to control the topic of conversation in order to obtain the information she believes is important (as per her own schema). Jenifer is attempting to fill gaps in Surjeet's CV whilst clarifying information that she cannot obtain from Surjeet's CV. At the same time, Surjeet wants to highlight the qualifications that she has obtained, thus conveying the importance she places on qualifications. This difference in schema illustrates that they are both using different *hats*, which has become an obstacle for both the recruiter and the candidate. The obstacle surrounds a struggle for control and power in this context, that results from their differing views of how they can achieve (what should be) a shared desired goal.

In line 48, Jenifer asks Surjeet which years she attended a particular school. Surjeet responds with an answer that holds very little relevance to that question, as she states the level of qualification she obtained. Instead of repeating the question again, Jenifer uses a co-operation strategy that allows Surjeet to provide the information *she* deems appropriate. Accommodatingly, Jenifer takes notes of Surjeet having "CSEs" (line 50). Equally, in the following line (line 51) Surjeet also replicates the co-operation strategy and provides Jenifer with an appropriate answer that incorporates the year she left school. Once Jenifer obtains the information she requires, she uses "perfect" as a discourse marker to indicate that she will be changing topic (line 56). Surjeet has not understood this and carries on talking until Jenifer asks a question that Surjeet *accept*s. Jenifer asks "how many" CSEs Surjeet obtained (line 58). Surjeet does not provide Jenifer with the number of CSEs, and instead begins to list the subjects, placing importance to each of the qualifications she received. Emphasis is made on "maths" and "English" (line 59), and as Jenifer supportively states "yeah," Surjeet interrupts Jenifer (line 61) and repeats that she will "show" Jenifer her qualifications (line 61). Between lines 68 and 73 Surjeet is showing Jenifer her qualifications that she has brought in with her and neatly spreads the documents on the desk on her arrival. Surjeet's need to control the topic of conversation so that it includes discussion of her credentials, in addition to her coming equipped with the original certificates to show Jenifer, conveys the importance that Surjeet places on her qualifications.

Jenifer struggles to take control and change topic. In Jenifer's attempt to interject (line 73), Surjeet ignores this overlap and continues to point out that she can no longer use a language that she once studied. Surjeet gives Jenifer the floor by signalling that she has finished through

the use of the discourse marker "okay" (line 74). She manages to not only hold control over the topic of conversation, but also takes control over the turn allocation, particularly when Jenifer is able to contribute. By line 75, Jenifer has finally managed to obtain the information she asked for – the number of CSE's Surjeet has achieved. She clarifies whether Surjeet has obtained 5 CSE's (line 75) as well as the number of qualifications that were 5 CSEs (line 79). Yet again, Surjeet does not respond with the *required* response. Jenifer's interrogative utterance is structured as a closed-ended question. Surjeet responds with an open-ended answer that holds no relevance to the question asked. Relevant to this exchange, even though Grice's conversational maxims are criticised as varying culturally, the co-operative principles are relevant due to the ultimate conversational goals of this interaction, whereby both interlocutors will be aiming to achieve successful communication for their desired outcome. It is the breakdown of the communication here, that can be understood using Grice's (1975) four maxims. According to the co-operative principle whereby effective communication is achieved, Surjeet flouts three out of four of these maxims. This includes: relevance, quantity and manner. The implication is that there is a break down in their communication that leads to misunderstanding between the interlocutors. Jenifer allows Surjeet to lead the conversation, detailing the information that she wants Jenifer to know; however, it is noticeable that in lines 88 and 90, Jenifer apologises before asking for confirmation of the information she is trying to note down. Therefore, flouting of such maxims has led to a breakdown in communication, which potentially leaves Surjeet at a disadvantage as her attempt to positively display her achievements is not being understood correctly by Jenifer.

As conveyed in this extract, it is evident that there is a misalignment in the interlocutors views of the importance of qualifications, but more specifically, there is a misalignment in how they negotiate these views. Jenifer wants to obtain the information she requires to successfully assess the candidate in a timely manner. Conversely, Surjeet understands academic achievements as being both important and advantageous in helping her obtain her desired role. As such Surjeet attempts to prove her academic achievements with the original documentation and displays this to the recruiter. By bringing in the original certificates she "indexes her self-reflexive ability to enter the world of her audience" (Baxter 2014, p.2). Therefore, through Surjeet's lens, she believes that Jenifer will also hold strong views on the importance of academic achievements, hence her emphasis on her academic achievements.

The interlocutor's different levels of value placed on qualifications has not been understood by each other. The topic of qualifications is revisited again near the end of the interview when Jenifer asks to verify Surjeet's identity for the right to work checks:

587. R: and how did you find the course

588. C: what *(looks down at her collection of certificates and gets hold on the relevant*

589. *one)* I've done it I pass [ed look]

590. R: [did you]enjoy doing [it d-]

591. C: yeaaaaah I   [loved] it

592. R: Yeah

593. C: it was lovely to go back an get your brain [working and learning] VAT

594. R: [yeah I know]

595. C: and learning journals

596. R: yeah

597. C: you know stuff that I haven't covered

598. R: yeah

599. C: this is the other side of stuff

600. R: [yeah]

601. C: [so] I'd like te [sic] learn a bit more o tha'

602. R: yeah [yeah and get more involved in that]

603. C: [that's my whole purpose why I'm here] yeah

604. R: yeah of course

605. C: so ma- there's your certificates that you asked for *(hands over papers)* and

606. your pay – oh – you- go – oh yeah tha-that's my lih'l thing *(holds up a certificate*

607. *from Uxbridge College - giving this to recruiter)* from

608.   [college] alright to let you know I've been turned up done it all I've been good

609. R: [oh okay] perfect that's fine *(looks at papers and puts them together)*

610. C: okay [incase you ho-]

611. R: [you can keep hold of them ones] *(the candidate isn't paying attention)*

612. C: I got you your copy of the [passport]

613. R: [I nee]d to see the originals

614. C: you c- you can see

615. R: yep

616. C: but do yu do you need to

617.   R: erm I need to photocopy them myself so

618.   that's I just need to see them photocopy em fank you

619.   C: *(candidate searches her bag to find her passport)*

620.   C: so – a they're quite confidential aren't they I don't want

621.   R: yeap so

622.   C: going into the wrong [hands and we keep hearing things on te-television

623.   R: [no we have erm we have confidential] (*she stops here so she can be*

heard)

624.   R: we have confidential waste here so   [everyfink [sic] is under data protection so]

625.   C: *(goes into handbag to get her passport)* [oh okay brilliant there you go]

626.   R: *(hands back NI card)* I'll photocopy them after

627.   C: no worries

628.   R: fank you

629.   C: okay

630.   R: in regards to

631.   C: yep

632.   R: the certificates you can keep hold of them for [now that's fine]

633.   *(She repeats this again)*

634.   C: [you don't need] them okay

635.   R: If and when I put you forward for a role

636.   C: okay

637.   R if a client requests to see them then I can

638.   [grab them from] you

639.   C: [oh okay]

640.   R: no problem [that's fine]

641.   C: [that's fine]

This extract continues from a conversation regarding Surjeet's accountancy qualification. In line 587, Jenifer asks how Surjeet found the course. Surjeet does not answer this question. Instead, Surjeet provides information that she believes the recruiter will want. Surjeet mentions that she passed the course and shows her the certificate. Jenifer rephrases her question by asking whether Surjeet enjoyed the course, which Surjeet responds to positively. She continues to discuss her predilection to learn until she changes the topic by line 605, stating that she has brought in the certificates that Jenifer had asked for. Remarkably, it is

confirmed after the interview that Jenifer did not in fact ask Surjeet to bring in copies of her qualifications. Drawing on other ethnographic information available to me as a researcher present in the agency, I learn that copies of certificates are not required by this branch and therefore they do not ask for originals or copies of qualifications. I was informed that in addition to completing the online form, the agency asks for candidates to be equipped with their passport and reference details, whilst candidates seeking temporary work are advised to bring in their national insurance number. As a result, there seems to be a misunderstanding of which documents Surjeet has felt she was required to bring into the interview with her.

Between lines 606-610, the recruiter uses an off-record politeness strategy. Jenifer does not tell Surjeet that she has not asked her to bring in her qualifications, but instead, she co-operatively accepts the documents and looks through them. Thus the recruiter holds these documents for a moment. Relevant to this, Robin Lackoff's (1973) "proposed 'rules of politeness" incorporates three rules: don't impose, give options, and make addressee feel good (this could be by being friendly). Essentially, this goes against the notion of 'being clear.' (Zhu 2019, p.108). As a result, Jenifer's indirectness is in fact a face-saving strategy to ensure Surjeet does not lose face in the interview. Due to the typically friendly nature of the recruitment interview, where the recruiter aims to build a strong rapport with their candidate, face-saving strategies are used more frequently than not. They are used by the recruiters in this agency with candidates that are valued as "marketable" by the recruiter. In line 610, Surjeet attempts to continue discussing her qualifications, but is interrupted by Jenifer (line 611) who now tells Surjeet that she can retain possession of the copies of her qualifications. Surjeet ignores this request and mentions that she has a copy of her passport (line 612), which she hands over to Jenifer. Jenifer makes a more direct request for the passport, asserting that she "needs" to see the original (line 613). Surjeet contests this by stating that Jenifer "can see" (line 614) the required information through her photocopy. Jenifer's mono-syllabic, and non-explanatory "yep" (line 615) provokes a pleading question from Surjeet who asks whether it is necessary to see the original (line 616). There is yet another misalignment in the interlocutor's views of the value of documents. Surjeet's resistance to handing over her passport to be copied conveys the value she places on her own personal information, especially in a scenario where her personal information could come in

contact with the "wrong hands" (lines 620-622). However, Surjeet does not demonstrate understanding of the legal requirements that the company procedures must comply with in order to lawfully conduct their right-to-work checks. As per the guidance on right-to-work checks (taken at the time this interview took place) for employment companies, a company employee must touch, scan and sign and date the scanned copy, which must be kept on file for a period that is deemed necessary by the company. Jenifer's more direct approach, using bold-on record utterances suggests the value and importance she places on this requirement, as she conveys a non-negotiable approach (lines 615, 617 & 618) on the company's compliance related matters.

Following the misalignment in the interlocutors' own views surrounding right-to-work documents, Jenifer employs a more direct approach towards the obtained copies of Surjeet's qualifications. In lines 632, Jenifer refers to the copies of Surjeet's certificates and suggests that Surjeet "can keep hold of them." There is a moment of realisation where Surjeet understands and accepts that these documents are not required as she reinstates that "you don't need them" (line 634). This utterance signifies some confusion before she accepts by saying "okay." Following this co-operation, Jenifer uses another face-saving strategy towards Surjeet by providing a scenario for when she might need them "if a client requests to see" the documents, then she will ask Surjeet for the copies (line 637). The candidate accepts this as she says, "no problem" and they both align agreeably by stating that its "fine" (line 640 & 641).

Delving further into the events of this extract, the method of ethnography used in this research has enabled further information to be drawn upon. Following this interview, Jenifer who is somewhat giddy approaches me as she says "this is a good one for you, she was weird. She brought in all her certificates and had them laid out on the desk." Wanting to learn more, I ask Jenifer if she is ready for a lunch break. Jenifer accepts and over lunch we discuss her own background where the topic of academic achievements is brought up. Jenifer expressed her opinion that she does not find qualifications important. She uses herself as an example as she left school after her GCSEs, qualified in beauty before working in retail selling beauty products. She did this until she found her first office job, where she has now started in recruitment. She explains that she is happy with her role and that there are still individuals who have higher qualifications that also end up in the same role. As a result, she explains that

she does not "care too much" about people's qualifications unless it's a "must" in their field. She also explains that from her experience with her clients, they tend to place more importance on people's abilities and work experience rather than their academic achievements. Gaining some understanding of Jenifer's perception of qualifications, it became clear to me why Jenifer describes the interview as "weird" to her. Reading through Jenifer's post interview questionnaire answers, she interestingly mentions that she did feel that there were some cultural differences and refers to the importance Surjeet places on qualifications whilst commenting on the candidate's dominant personality. This is noteworthy as Jenifer shows awareness of cultural differences being present. However, she does not seem to be aware of her own cultural views. As a result, by not having awareness of her own personal cultural biases in this example, she conveys this as being the norm. In other words, Jenifer's own views of qualifications - the view that qualifications are not important unless necessary for a particular job, is her own view which she perceives as the hegemonic ideology. Thus, Jenifer's perspective of her own view, seeing that as a dominant view or the *right* view, has an impact on how she understands, or at least differentiates Surjeet's views of qualifications; a view that is not the dominant view, or the *wrong* view, which Jenifer deconstructs as being "weird."

In the same way, the candidate also does not seem to want to listen to the recruiter. Surjeet's need to hold the floor for long periods of time and control the direction of the interview, has put herself at a disadvantage where she is unable to listen to Jenifer, and as a result she does not give herself time to understand the conversational cues that Jenifer uses in order to obtain the relevant information she needs to find Surjeet a suitable role. Surjeet's ability to ignore Jenifer's topic shifts and revert to the topic of qualifications has opened herself up to being seen as different. To probe further, I pose the following questions: Would Jenifer understand Surjeet as "weird" if Surjeet was more co-operative in the interview by allowing Jenifer to lead? Would the interlocutors be more willing to co-operate if they understood why their views differ and more importantly, if both views had equal importance? Would this interaction have a more positive outcome if the interlocutors were open about their values, views, and expectations? By posing these questions, it is noticeable that the misalignment of views derives from the understanding that society operates with one's own view, and it is this view that has the most status.

4.3.6 Misalignment of power & positioning

Power struggles and topic changes have been touched upon in the previous extracts. Taking a closer look into these areas, it can be observed that the struggles of power ties in with the way in which the interlocutors position each other in this setting. This next extract follows on from the conversation regarding qualifications. Surjeet leads the dialogue by stating that since she finished her education she has been working. It can be noticed that Jenifer struggles to obtain control over the interaction and finds it difficult to obtain the information she requires in order to assess the candidate.

Extract D

99.   C: whow we're going back a little [while whow] yeah

100.   R: [perfect yeah]

101.   C: so I did that and then in between I've just been working

102.   R: [perfect] okay brilliant so we'll start off [with]

103.   C: [alright]   [erm from}

104.   R: *(clears throat and looks through CV)* so that's your ninety-ninety-eight yeah

105.   that's perfect

106.   C: okay *(looks a side and mumbles to herself)*

107.   R: So we'll start off with cannon

108.   C: yeah erm we er I moved to Brighton then

109.   R: Okay [so you]

110.   C: [From From] London I moved to Brighton to work

111.   R: okay so this is in Brighton

112.   C: so yeah so all so basically let me just take *(takes recruiter's copy of her CV and*

113.   *turns page)* it from there errr That's this

114.   R: this *(mumbles)*

115.   C: err what's that one commercial finance

116.   R: Yeah

117.   C: yeah that that's slough isn't it

118.   R: [yeah]

119.   C: [so] that's back to London

120.   R: this is [Crawley]

121.   C: [so] this is Middlesex yeah right here there you are

122.   R: oh right   [that's fine]

123.   C: [it does it does] tell ya okay all of this *(point through page with*

124.   *her pen)* even that one actually are all temporary

125.   R: Okay

126.   C: I was temping for [Hayes]

127.   R: [Okay that's fine]

128.   C: Hayes and Brighton okay so our payroll even GE was through Hayes

129.   okay

130.   R: okay that's fine

131.   C: so basic'ly I got a job and

132.   R: we'll start [from the back and work our way up]

133.   C: [okay okay no worries yep]

134.   R: so ninety ninety-eight

135.   C: mmhmm

136.   R: to two throusand [sic]

137.   C: mmmhmm

138.   R: you woz at Cannon

139.   C: I was yeah at Crawley west Sussex

140.   R: Yep

Kayi-Aydar (2014) explains that "looking at turn-taking alone can tell a lot about positioning" (p.31). This is particularly relevant to this extract as although the structure follows the sequential recruiter – candidate sequence that is specific to this genre, contrastingly, it does not actually follow a clear question- answer sequence that is prescriptive of the interview genre. On this, Gifford (1989) states "a job interview follows strict communicative rules mainly because of the difference in power between the interviewer and the candidate" (p.244). Conversely, such strict "communicative rules" does not apply to this example, leading to a contest for power and control. In line 99 Surjeet informs Jenifer of when she left school, she mentions that this was some time ago as they are "going back a little while." Jenifer interrupts (line 100) by using the discourse marker "perfect" as a method of both interjecting to hold the floor as well as introducing a topic shift so that she can ask her next question. Surjeet ignores the interjection and continues to tell Jenifer what she has done since she left school, providing information that she believes is necessary for Jenifer to know, as this will contribute

towards Jenifer seeing her as a suitable candidate for potential work. By operating in this way, Surjeet does not enable Jenifer to lead by answering the questions that Jenifer poses (line 101).

Jenifer responds with the discourse markers "perfect" and "okay" before letting Surjeet know which role she would like to know more about first (line 102). There is an overlap at the end of Jenifer's utterance, where Surjeet almost attempts to suggest where they should begin (line 103) "erm from." Jenifer again responds to this with silence as she clears her throat whilst gazing at Surjeet's CV. Her use of silence and divergence of her attention away from Surjeet and towards reading her CV, enables Jenifer to momentarily gain control over the direction of the conversation. Jenifer then asks what seems to be a rhetorical question (line 104), which she answers herself "yeah that's perfect" (line 105). Surjeet also does not give her full attention to Jenifer. Surjeet says "okay" and looks aside as she mumbles, an indication of her thinking. The recruiter uses an imperative utterance (line 107), stating that they will start with Surjeet's employment at Cannon. Before Jenifer asks a question in relation to the information she needs to know about Surjeet's employment with Cannon, Surjeet begins giving information on the location of her employment (line 108). Jenifer attempts to ask a question "so you" (line 109), however, Surjeet interrupts, speaks over Jenifer and continues to talk about where she moved to Brighton from (line 110). The actual turn-taking within this exchange is not conventional of the question-answer sequence that is generally expected of this genre. A sequence that would normally enable the recruiter to assume power over the direction of the interview through the assigned ability to ask the questions. It seems, in this example, there is an: answer- interruption –answer – interruption - start of question – interruption – question – interruption -answer sequence. Therefore, in order for Jenifer to ask a question there are multiple interruptions. It can be noticed, between lines 100-107 that it takes seven conversational turns for Jenifer to state where she would like to begin questioning Surjeet from. Moreover, within these seven turns, Jenifer has only managed to mention which job she would like to start from and has not been able to ask what type of information she needs about these roles e.g. Surjeet's duties in this role. As Surjeet attempts to take control of the direction and conversation style of the interview, she does not position Jenifer as a recruiter who is in a position of power. The candidate having control over the interview interaction does not comply with the interviewer-led conventions of the

recruitment interview that Jenifer may be used to. According to Roberts (2009) "The rules of interview interaction, as with other institutional discourses are unwritten, and conveyed through subtle contextualisation cues and tacit markers of change in footing and discursive mode" (p.17). Such rules require the candidate to be able to "read between the lines." Surjeet is unable to read the contextual cues that Jenifer uses in order to regain control, such as her use of silence and various attempts to hold the floor. By not adhering to the ascribed features of the interview genre, Surjeet does not align her actions supportively to collaboratively construct Jenifer's situated identity as a recruiter, where power and control is largely a characteristic of the role she assumes. More specifically, Jenifer is forced to negotiate her power whilst faced with the challenge of "faking friendship" as she builds a rapport with Surjeet. This misalignment in the positioning of the situated identity causes fraught exchanges leading in difficulties obtaining each of the interlocutor's desired goals.

Shifting from the turn-by-turn sequence to word level, the interlocutor's choice of lexical forms of politeness also suggests a misalignment in the negotiation of how the interlocutors' position one another relates to their situated identities and power. Jenifer uses discourse markers such as "perfect" or "brilliant" (lines 100, 102, 105 etc.,) as a way of indicating that she has obtained all the information she needs. This can be understood by examining how Jenifer uses discourse markers throughout the entire interview. It is noticed that in the full interview, Jenifer uses discourse markers twenty-eight times to change topic by either interjecting to ask a different question or interjecting so that her following utterance in her next turn will be the start of another topic. The value of using discourse markers in this way is that Jenifer retains power despite the candidate's attempts to take control of the interview. She does this by positively taking the floor before steering the direction of the interview. Although it is understood *how* Jenifer uses discourse markers, it is evident that to obtain the desired outcome through its use, Surjeet will need to accept and align her turn in a way that actively gives Jenifer the control she aims to obtain.

In line 99, Jenifer tries to stop Surjeet from continuing her utterance by using the discourse marker "perfect yeah." Surjeet does not react to this interjection and continues informing Jenifer of her past experience. Drawing on surrounding research on the use of discourse markers by English users, discourse markers are seen as a politeness strategy used to mitigate a FTA (Boncea 2014). Applying this to Jenifer who has English as L1, sheds a light on the

desired effect of using such discourse markers. On the contrary, Surjeet's misalignment with the required acceptance of the discourse marker, does not necessarily mean that Surjeet is intentionally trying to be understood as impolite. In fact, Surjeet will be trying to portray her best self in order to meet her goal of obtaining a job. As a result, intentionally being impolite to the interviewer would theoretically minimise her chances of being seen as a good candidate, and consequently produce an undesired outcome. On this, Jegarlooei & Allami (2018) state that impoliteness "often varies across people with different cultural backgrounds" (p.3). Taking this into account, even though Surjeet may not mean to be impolite or at least, understand that her actions may come across as impolite, her capability of making Jenifer struggle to obtain control over the interview may be considered both impolite and inappropriate as Jenifer may be accustomed to being in a position of power and control within this hidden asymmetrical power dynamic, where candidates may understand, respect and align with the asymmetric power dynamic requirements.

There is a turning point in Jenifer's passive behaviour towards Surjeet when Surjeet leans over the table to physically take Jenifer's copy of Surjeet's CV, the CV that Jenifer is writing her interview notes (line 112-113). Using Jenifer's copy of the CV to show which jobs were outside of London, Jenifer attempts to assume control over the interview, by interrupting Surjeet with a more direct approach. Jenifer lowers her tone stating, "okay that's fine" (line 126), instead of her usual "brilliant or perfect," signalling that she no longer requires further information on the location of these roles. Jenifer's interruptions are now suggestive of not being able to obtain the information she requires so she attempts to speak over Surjeet in order to be able to ask the questions she needs to. However, Surjeet again ignores the interruption and continues to inform Jenifer of the location and the agency based in Brighton that found Surjeet's previous positions (line 123). Jenifer again repeats "okay that's fine" (line 127), trying to assume control over the direction of the conversation by indicating that she does not need any more information, but Surjeet still continues to speak. Jenifer uses a more assertive manner (line 130), and Surjeet has still not recognised that Jenifer wants to move on to another question and still continues (line 131). Jenifer again changes her strategy and takes control of the topic of conversation by cutting Surjeet off mid-sentence (line 132) and specifies the structure that she would like to follow, namely, that the interview questions will start "from the back," of Surjeet's CV, working their way towards Surjeet's most recent job

role (line 131). During Jenifer's utterance, Surjeet speaks over Jenifer, but she agrees with the structure stating, "no worries" (line 133) indicating that she accepts this. Over the rest of this extract there is more of a question-answer interview structure, where Surjeet finally gives control to Jenifer to freely ask her questions without interrupting, ignoring, or speaking over her (lines 133-140).

From this example, it is evident that in order for the interview to be conducted successfully, both interlocutors are required to adhere to the conventional power dynamic. Yet, what seems to have brought about this misalignment in the co-constructed positioning of the other in relation to power, can be understood in relation to their goals. According to Gifford (1989) "the candidate attempts to impress the interviewer with their verbal answers or comments what they think the interviewer wants to know" whilst the recruiter or "interviewer attempts in a short period of time to elicit the responses he or she desires" (p.244). It is important because Surjeet's goal is to obtain a job through this agency. Jenifer is time bound and needs to obtain the right information from the candidate. In order to achieve their objectives, the interlocutors need to align in how they position each-other in accordance with the requirements of the situational identities in this context. In other words, the candidate must be aware of the hidden power dynamic, understanding the local conventions that govern the activity, and in this case, must be able to freely give control to the recruiter to fulfil the requirements that are prescribed to the situated identity. This is not to say that the onus is all on the candidate. In fact, the recruiter must also be able to take control of the interview where necessary. In relation to positioning theory (Kayi-aydar 2019) interlocutors have the ability to position themselves as "powerful or powerless" and through their "positioning moves, people are able to claim, deny, and give rights" and through such use of positions are able to "limit or allow certain social actions" (p.5). Through positioning, Jenifer contributes to her more powerless positioning by not taking control and using conversational methods that are ascribed to her role to obtain the relevant information required to assess the candidate within a short amount of time. Arguably, Jenifer could be more specific in her questions, for example, in line 107 where Jenifer suggests that they "start with Cannon," she does not actually specify *what* information she needs to know about Cannon. Jenifer's lack of specificity in her questions allows Surjeet to have power over the information she deems necessary and relevant. In effect, there is no structure given for Surjeet to follow, and as such

this gives the floor to Surjeet to freely discuss what she is thinking, describing points that she finds relevant without being given any form of structure. Giving too much power over the type of information that they want to give leaves Jenifer in a position of feeling that she needs to interrupt in order to obtain the information she needs. Nonetheless, interrupting the candidate who is providing an open-ended answer may leave the candidate feeling that they have not finished the point they need to make: they may feel the need to mention the points that they believe are relevant. In essence, as a result of both interlocutors not adhering to their ascribed roles within this genre, tensions and misunderstandings are produced, which will be covered in the next example, as well as Jenifer understanding Surjeet as having a "dominating personality," that she describes in her post interview feedback.

4.3.7 Misalignment of identities and communicative turbulence

Similar to the interlocutor's misalignment in the negotiation of positioning in relation to the power dynamics, misalignment in the negotiation of identities is also present. The following extract provides an example of how misalignment in the identity negotiation can result in communicative turbulence. Communicative turbulence occurs when there are "troubles in communication when partners in interactions fail to make sense of what is said and intended by others and consequences of confusion, disagreement or feelings of resentment" can occur (Zhu 2019, p. 120). This is particularly relevant in the following example where the interlocutors use language to negotiate the identity that they want the other to align with. To shed further light into the topic of understanding how there has been a misalignment in their performance, Bakhtin's principles on "polyphony" are very relevant. There are multiple voices that display multiple identities of the interlocutors, which do not align. One main example is the situated identities (Zimmerman, 1992) that do not align due to the negotiated distribution of power. For example, Jenifer attempts to manage a friendship identity as required in her attempt to "fake friendship" with the candidate through what can be described as her more informal, friendly voice, namely the use of her understanding, supportive and agreeable utterances. This sits alongside her professional identity, her identity as a knowledgeable recruiter, respected in this genre for the power she holds as the decision maker, which is reflected in her more formal voice. Surjeet's actions suggest that she may not convey that she

acknowledges Jenifer's situational identity and as a result dismisses both the friendly and "recruiter –candidate" identities that Jenifer attempts to construct.

188. C: so that's what that was all about about

189. R: Okay brilliant *(still looking down at her paper)*

190. C: and word was part of that [as well]

191. R: [Yeah of course]

192. R: So what was your sort of reasons for leaving

193. C: Its temporary that's [temporary] These [are all temporary] assignments

194. R: [Oh that's oh]   [all them temporar]y aren't they

195. C: Ye-ahh [inaudible]

196. C: yeah yeah so I le- I was mostly temp I

197. tempted for s [I did a ten year]

198. R: [so that was a temp] (looks at the candidate quite annoyed)

199. C: role with a company securi a security company left them (clears throat) was in

200. Brighton slightly temped and somebody else did as well and just

201. *(looks towards recruiter)* carried

202. on temping *(dynamic hand gestures here. Speaks at a very fast pace)*

203. R: okay [yeah]

204. C: [it's all it was]

205. R: cos it was quite on goin [an fing] *(recruiter also uses more dynamic hand gestures)*

206. C   [it its quite] a lot of temping work that one [cus]

207. R: [yeah]

208. C: you're meant to take all [your [inaudible]

209. R: [okay its] building up your CV as well and

210. getting your experience

211. C: (shakes head and pulls a confused face) [you never know]

212. R: [you was there for two] years though

213. C: *(chews gum)* yep

214. R: *(writes)* perfect

215. C: mmhmm *(watches what the recruiter writes)*

216. R: do you remember the months for them

217. C: no [sorry]

218. R: [no]

219. C: nooo [sorry I don't have]

220.	R:	[that's fine okay] so April two thousand to
221.		October two thousand [you]
222.	C: [yeahh]	

In this example the interlocutors are discussing a role that the candidate has previously worked in. Before Jenifer moves on to her next question, she asks Surjeet for her reason for leaving that post. This is integral to the interview structure that Jenifer adheres to. It is noticeable that after Jenifer asks about what a particular role entailed, the next question to follow surrounds Surjeet's reason for leaving. Jenifer asks reasons for leaving in line 192, bringing the topic of one role to a close before asking for the reason for leaving, as she has done with the roles they have covered so far. Surjeet, however, conveys some annoyance in being repeatedly asked this question. Surjeet abruptly exclaims that the role is a "temporary" position. Emphasis is made on the adjective "temporary" through the variety of determiners. She uses the possessive determiner "its" temporary, followed by the demonstrative determiners "that's" temporary and "these" are all temporary (line 193). The diacope used in this utterance is powerful, stylised and expresses a need to add emphasis to the role being temporary. The listing tone used within the diacope expresses an annoyance as she attempts to make her point clear without the same question having to be asked again. The emphasis drawn on the adjective in temporary assignment indicates that there is no other reason for the employment being short in duration, and that short durations are expected for temporary assignments.

Whilst Surjeet expresses a feeling of irritability, Jenifer does not make any eye contact with Surjeet. It is only when Jenifer interrupts Surjeet in line 198 to clarify whether a certain role was temporary, that Jenifer looks directly at the candidate. In this moment Jenifer has a somewhat defensive facial expression that equally conveys a sense of irritation. At this point both interlocutors have conveyed annoyance towards one another, which indexes a level of misunderstanding. On this, Kramsch (2016), argues that "the source of misunderstandings or conflicts does not lie in our lack of linguistic proficiency but has to do with much deeper differences in our understanding of symbolic power game based on our different experiences of historical events and in our conceptual moral" (p. 524). Therefore, it is suggested that due to the differences in how the interlocutors decode each other's behaviours, particularly

within this genre, this could be the reason for misunderstandings or conflict. To provide some insight, Surjeet's need to emphasise that her roles were temporary suggests that Jenifer should stop asking her this question as the roles are "all temporary." This expressed annoyance with Jenifer's question does not identify Jenifer as a power holder, more specifically, this may not be the conventional behaviour displayed towards a recruiter's identity as a gatekeeper in this genre. In the same way, Jenifer is simply following her normal recruitment questions. Questions she poses in much the same structure to all her candidates. There is a clear misunderstanding between the interlocutors that has led to annoyance with one another expressed through their use of language, tone, and facial expression, as well as hostility which is signalled through the lack of eye contact and hesitation (line 203).

Jenifer's annoyed facial expression whilst repeating her question of whether a role was temporary (line 198) implies that an answer is required. However, Jenifer does not explain to Surjeet that this is in fact a common question that she must ask all candidates, and that she is not insinuating any negative views on Surjeet's short work durations. Surjeet answers this question by giving context, instead of answering the closed question "so that was a temp" (line 199) with a closed answer, Surjeet instead begins by mentioning what the company did, the fact that she left the company, where it was located, and uses ambiguity by stating that she "slightly temped" (line 200) and also "somebody else did as well" (line 200) and so she just "carried on temping" (lines 201 – 202). It could be argued that the fact that Surjeet speaks over Jenifer, does not give Jenifer any eye contact, answers with no relevance to Jenifer's question and has an increase in her speed of speech signals that she could be uncomfortable and uneasy. Therefore, the interviewer-interviewee identities seem to move towards interrogator–interrogatee identities, moving away from the aim of more friendly identities that derive from actively working towards "faking friendship." The more defensive nature Surjeet employs may indicate a frustration of not being able to come across in her own perceived understanding of an "ideal candidate," as she may have understood that "temping" may be understood negatively by a recruiter.

Jenifer aligns with the candidate's tone, speed and mirrors the candidate's hand gestures (line 205). Jenifer does this as she attempts to align with Surjeet's view where she shows that she understands that temping is more of an "ongoing…fing" (line 205), attempting to realign with more of the "friendship" identities as she conveys she is understanding of this. Surjeet who

now employs a calmer and more collected approach towards Jenifer, admits that she has had a fair few temporary positions within a certain time period (line 207). This mutual understanding between the two is only momentary. In the next turn (line 208) Jenifer builds upon the empathetic stance that she employed in her last conversational turn. Agreeably, Jenifer shares her knowledge and views that she would have obtained as a professional in this sector. She describes the importance of having temporary jobs in order to build upon CV experience (line 209). Surjeet instantly disagrees, shaking her head whilst making a facial expression that conveys a sense of confusion (line 211). This facial expression demonstrates both confusion and disagreement, conveying a sense of hostility towards Jenifer. However, there is an attempt to save face for Jenifer as instead of explicitly disagreeing as her facial expression and shaking head gestures would suggest, Surjeet instead provides a neutral answer "you never know" (line 211). There is an overlap with this utterance as Jenifer attempts to take the floor and immediately changes in a way that attempts to avoid confrontation or disagreement as she states, "you was there for two years though" (line 212). Surjeet responds to this with a monosyllabic "yep" (line 213). Surjeet shifts from her context heavy style of communication to more short, monosyllabic non-cooperative answers (lines 213,215, 217). For example, when asked whether she "remembers the months for them" (line 216), Surjeet answers with an abrupt "no sorry."

There is an element of confusion as Jenifer repeats "no," overlapping with Surjeet's "sorry" (line 218). The raised intonation at the end of Jenifer's "no," indicates that this utterance requires an answer. The requirement for an answer demonstrates that this is not the answer that Jenifer expects, giving Surjeet another opportunity to either change her answer, or provide further information. For example, Surjeet is given the opportunity to state why she cannot provide dates for the role in question, or at least demonstrate that she could co-operate by *trying* to obtain this information. The repetition indicates that for Jenifer, this is an undesired answer. In response to this, Surjeet does not rectify her answer, nor does she convey any attempt to get hold of this information, instead Surjeet repeats her previous answer, but this time with a more elongated "nooo" (line 219). Whilst apologising for not having this information "sorry I don't have," Jenifer speaks over Surjeet and states that it's "fine" before she moves on to the next question in the same breath, without spending any more time on this topic (line 220).

Within this short exchange, there have been two incidents of communicative turbulence that derive from misalignment in the interlocutor's situated identities. The first is in relation to the misunderstandings of the perceived views of "temping." The second surrounds the misunderstanding of when more information is required by Jenifer drawing on her "voice" as a recruiter. At the start of this extract, Jenifer draws on her own knowledge taken from her professional identity that enables her to comment on the benefits of temping. As such, Jenifer attempts to justify why the candidate was temping so much it could be seen as a way of "building up" a CV (line 209). Surjeet conveys that she has taken some offence at this comment. This is displayed as Surjeet rejects Jenifer's views on the situation in quite a defensive and confrontational manner. Surjeet seems defensive about her reasons for leaving and does not accept advice from Jenifer, when the way in which she wants to be perceived has not aligned with how she believes Jenifer to have understood her. Surjeet's perception derives from how she has decoded the meaning of the questions and comments that Jenifer poses. Similarly, Jenifer attempts to defuse the situation, and only manages to do so when she expresses her own views that align with the way in which Surjeet desires Jenifer to view her. By the end of this extract, Surjeet also uses a similar direct, hostile approach towards Jenifer. Directness, interruptions, heightened pitch, and tone, in much literature, is linked with impoliteness, however, according to Culpeper's (2009) view of politeness, politeness is seen as "context" driven, and not inherent in such linguistic forms. This could indicate that Surjeet may not realise that she could be coming across as abrupt, and therefore impolite, which is not expressive of the ideal candidate identity that she will be striving towards in order to meet her goal of obtaining a job.

Even though Surjeet may not mean to come across in this way, Surjeet does not quite align her behaviour in a way that accedes to the recruiter's power in her situational identity (lines 209-211). Not only does Surjeet's behaviour allow itself to be seen as impolite exemplifying a misalignment in how the recruiter may view the candidate's power in this setting, but this is also embedded in the way in which Surjeet dismisses the knowledge that Jenifer has learned as a recruiter in this field. Therefore, Surjeet does not align with Jenifer's professional identity as this derives from the advisor–advisee identities.

This approach seems to push Jenifer to lean more towards sharing equal power relationship – a more friendly relationship. In order to overcome this confrontational issue and instances

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of misalignment, Jenifer moves towards the "friendship" identity, by being positive and aligning her views with what the candidate is trying to defend (lines, 205, 209 & 210). She gives more positive feedback, which the candidate accepts. Jenifer is actively attempting to reconcile their relationship, whilst Surjeet becomes uncooperative with the norms related to their situational identities as well as the answers she provides. Surjeet rejects the recruiter's situational identity as a recruiter or advisor and fails to want to align with the "faking friendship" process that produces more informal, friendly identities. Similarly, the recruiter's attempt to "fake a friendship" whilst balancing her identity as a recruiter, has potentially put her in a position where the candidate holds more control. As a result the onus is left on the candidate to accept how she attempts to position these identities. The recruiter has allowed the candidate to take control of the interview, giving herself less power and status, which has led to her opinion not being taken seriously. It could be argued that as the candidate does not align her behaviours with the recruiter's situational identity, she rejects any attempts of the recruiter drawing on her situational power that is associated with her professional identity. This makes it difficult for Jenifer to conduct the interview in both a professional and friendly manner. According to Locher and Watts, "impolite behaviour and face-aggravating behaviour more generally is as much part of this negotiation as polite versions of behaviour" (p.5). Therefore, impoliteness between the two interlocutors has been co-constructed through the examples of communicative turbulence that derives from misunderstanding and misalignment in their performed identities.

4.3.8 In-interview feedback vs post-interview questionnaire feedback

In this extract, we compare the feedback Jenifer provides Surjeet in the interview against the feedback Jenifer provides in the post-interview feedback questionnaire, where Surjeet is not present. During the final stages of the interview, Jenifer remains optimistic about how she will try to find work for Surjeet. Noticeably, Jenifer begins to set Surjeet's expectations for an unsuccessful outcome despite mentioning (line 725) that she will try to find her work. But this is followed by comments on the unlikely nature of being able to find Surjeet the type of work she seeks. Notably, before Surjeet came into interview, Jenifer already knew that Surjeet's preference is part-time work. It is only after Surjeet has completed her interview, that Surjeet's work preferences become problematic in the agency's ability to find her work.

694.	R: errm so your sort of ideal role now would be like an assistant accountant

695.	C: I would like

696.	R: [just to sort of get into it]

697.	C: [if that's possible]

698.	R: yeah

699.	C: if somebody was prepared to teach me a little bit more

700.	R: yeah

701.	C: about the VAT side n it turns in to a little bit more

702.	R: (pause as she writes) but anyfink to do with [sort of purchase] ledger as well

703.	C: [mumbles]

704.	R: jus jus to get your [foot in somewhere] an erm

705.	C: [yeah yeah] [I'm learnin a bit more em]

706.	R: [perfect] as I said what I'll do erm is people that I'm already in

707.	contact with that I know have a sort of account departments an see if they are looking for any

708.	[part time] roles at the [moment] as well

709.	C: [okay] [okay]

710.	R: an start of next week I'll star' sort

711.	C: no [no problem]

712.	R: ov specking you out [to them]

713.	R: just so that we get more of a chance so as said part time it's quite rare for me to geh

714.	C: okay

715.	R: for accounts so I have got a par I have got a full time er permanents accounts role

716.	C: that er full time how many hours is it

717.	R: that's er about forty plus

718.	C: yeah that's quite a lot for e me

719.	R: [yeah]

720.	C: [and its] going to be hard

721.	R: yeah

722.	C: especially durin' the summer holidays then I've

(rolls eyes and uses a dynamic hand gesture lifts hands palms facing up)

723.	R: yeah of course yeah so

724.	C: no [problem]

725.	R: [I'll] definitely see if there is any part time

726.	C: okay

727.   R: work available at the moment but if you're applyin' at home as well when your

728.   at home as well when you're at home te keep me updated to all with all your job

729.   searches so [if your applyin' to anyfin' online]

730.   C: [sha shall I start doin' that then] yeah

731.   R: yeah

732.   C: ok

733.   R: si sign up to our website erm [an upload your CV]

734.   C: [I'm tryin' to log in] it says I'm already registered s I haven't

735.   registered already so I don't know [what's]

736.   R: [maybe] try loggin' in with your email it might be that

737.   you've logged on bef you've

738.   [registered] before

739.   C: [registered] yeah yeah *(has a sad facial expression)* okay

740.   R: erm because your registerin' here and on the website its completely different

741.   C: rightio okay

Initially, the interview feedback that Jenifer provides Surjeet with is quite positive. Jenifer asks about Surjeet's ideal role and from her own understanding she answers the question for Surjeet stating that she believes that Surjeet's ideal role would be as an "assistant accountant" (line 694). Surjeet agrees with this stating that she would be happy if the company would be "prepared to teach" more about VAT (line 701). Jenifer expands Surjeet's preference by adding that Surjeet may be looking for "purchase ledger" jobs (line 702), in attempt to help her get her "foot" in the door (line 704) which could be another way of gaining experience. Surjeet refers back to how this will help her "learn" (line 705). On the surface, the interlocutors seem to be agreeing, as there are a number of encouraging "yeah" (lines 698, 700, 705) between the two as they agree with each other's statements. Nonetheless, taking a closer look at what the interlocutors are actually saying to each other, it is evident that they have different views on learning (e.g. by either learning through qualifications or learning through experience). Surjeet uses the lexical field of education by using the verbs "teach" and "learn," whilst Jenifer uses the lexical field of experience as she refers to getting her "foot in" the door by starting with something you know and getting more experience. By line 705 Surjeet repeats her requirement to find a role where she can learn, but Jenifer overlaps

Surjeet's utterance, ignoring Surjeet's stated requirement, and moving on to how she will help Surjeet by contacting professionals that she knows in accounts departments to see if they are "looking for any part-time roles" (lines 706-708). The fact that Jenifer does not acknowledge that Surjeet's preference is to have a role that she can learn and therefore grow with conveys an element of ignoring the views that sit outside of her own. What she is saying here is that she currently does not have roles that meet Surjeet's requirements, however, more emphasis is placed on Surjeet specifically wanting part-time work. Jenifer begins to convey that she will actively look for work for Surjeet by the start of the following week (line 710) as she will be "specking" Surjeet's CV "out" to her clients (line 712). Jenifer will therefore be sending Surjeet's CV to the HR managers or clients she has on her list who have accounts departments to see if they have a need for anyone with Surjeet's skill sets. Jenifer follows her positive and optimistic tone of actively trying to find Surjeet work, and then sets Surjeet's expectations as she states that part-time roles are "quite rare" for her to come across (line 713). There is a hesitation as Jenifer declares that she has "for accounts so I have got par I have got a full time er permanents accounts role" (line 715), which Surjeet quickly asks how many hours it requires. Jenifer mentions above forty hours (717) and does not delve into any detail about the number of hours Surjeet could actually work. Surjeet expresses that her main concern is with the holidays (line 722), which Jenifer agrees with, before changing the topic to a more optimistic one as she promises to "see if there is any part-time" (line 725). Soon after Jenifer moves away from discussing the work, she will be doing to help Surjeet, and moves towards the requirement for Surjeet to update Jenifer with her job search (lines 728 & 729). Surjeet questions Jenifer asking whether she should start doing "that" (line 730). With more context, it is noticeable that "that" refers to actively applying for other roles as she will need to "sign up to the website" (line 733) in order to find positions. Surjeet makes a facial expression that indicates that she is upset (line 739) by the need of having to register and apply online which Jenifer explains Surjeet must do as registering in person and registering online is different (line 740).

This example shows the recruiter's attempt to let the candidate down gently by setting their expectations. There is a structure of how Jenifer slowly lets Surjeet know that Jenifer may not be finding her work. Jenifer begins by asking what roles Surjeet is looking for. She answers this herself and begins to build upon the difficulties of finding suitable work that fits Surjeet's

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criteria. To let Surjeet down gently, Jenifer states the actions that she will be doing, demonstrating that she will be doing what she can in her power to help Surjeet find work. Jenifer seems to ignore Surjeet's specific requirement of wanting a position where she can "learn" which normally would be seen as a criterion for candidates that recruiters would note down as being important. At this point she has already dismissed the candidate without yet stating that she will be unable to find her work due to the candidate looking for part-time work. It should be highlighted that the candidate has already informed the recruiter during their over-the-phone interview that she is looking for work with reduced hours or at least some flexibility as she has children. According to Lipovsky 2010 "job applicants are usually selected for an interview on the basis that they do possess the skills and necessary experience for filling the position, so they are a priory qualified for the post they are applying for, other factors must influence interviewers' decisions about candidates, such as their ability to present their experience effectively" (p.3). As a result, Surjeet has already been invited to interview as she has the necessary skills and experience in her CV and at the time she was called over the phone to attend the interview, looking for part-time work did not prohibit her from coming in to interview for accounts related positions. Surjeet's facial expression at the end of the interview indicates that she is unhappy with this outcome. Jenifer understands that this was not what Surjeet was expecting after coming into the branch to interview, which results in her having to explain why she must do a face-to-face as online is different. It is later noticed in Jenifer's post interview questionnaire that she had made up her mind that Surjeet was not a candidate that she would put forward for positions.

As previously mentioned, Jenifer called this interview weird. Within our conversation over lunch Jenifer mentions that she believes there was a cultural difference as she found it very strange that the candidate brought her qualifications with her "it was so weird. She brought her qualifications with her and proper laid it out on the table." She states that she had never seen that before. She highlights that as "an agency we just really want to know about the relevant work experience, and not so much on the qualifications. Don't get me wrong. Its great if you have it, but our clients, most the time aren't too bothered." She highlights that she did find that she has quite a dominating personality, and that she found it very difficult to get the information she needed out of her. She didn't feel that Surjeet could be someone that

"I would be able to place quite easily." "She really wouldn't be good fit for the companies I work with if I'm honest," as she seems like she would be "quite hard work."

While it is clear that Jenifer would not want to place Surjeet with her clients as she does not think that Surjeet would be a good fit, Surjeet seems quite positive in her feedback despite mentioning that she encountered some difficulties. When asked about her thoughts of the interview she mentions that Jenifer "went over years old employment…some of when I had forgotten." In order to prepare for the interview she states that she "brought all relevant paperwork in which was requested" but the difficulty she had with the interview was "just remembering detailed from nine years ago." She did feel that the interview "was fine considering I have not attended an interview in ten years." The only feedback she gave on the recruiter was that the "lady was very thorough" and if she could change anything about the interview she would "make a note of all the relevant job details beforehand." She did not notice any cultural differences but used "English" as it is "better to communicate in this language." Reflecting on Surjeet's feedback she believes that it went well, but she perhaps wasn't prepared for the interview to be that thorough.

4.3.9 Discussion

From the interview feedback it seems that Surjeet is aware of some difficulties but does not recognise that the difficulties could surround some cultural differences that Jenifer picks up on. In the same way, although Jenifer may understand that there have been some difficulties as Surjeet was seen as being "dominant" and that there were differences in their views of qualifications, Jenifer does not take into consideration that her own views may be considered different from Surjeet's. In other words, Jenifer has her own personal bias, she sees the world through a lens that she considers the right or normal view. Drawing on Foucault's work on the subject and power, when understanding Jenifer's feedback in describing Surjeet's behaviour as weird, Foucault describes three modes of objectivisation, one of which is termed "dividing practices" where "the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. The process of which "objectivises him" (p.208). To understand this concept, Foucault states that one must understand the "antagonism of strategies" (p.211), therefore, in this example the divide is between the weird and the normal, where attention should be paid to what is

considered the "normal" over the "weird." The normal being a candidate that would be appropriate to be deemed as successful, but weird being different from normal and therefore not good enough to be put through to other roles. The recruiter's notion of "normal" holds power. Power obtained by her institutional backing and role in society. Therefore, Surjeet's interactional power, which Jenifer describes as "dominant", could stem from her power obtained from knowledge, competence, and qualifications that she demonstrates in her interview. However, this is outweighed by the ultimate power obtained through the interlocutors' roles in their relationship in this encounter. One could argue that if Jenifer could understand cultural differences as simply different and not "weird," which indicates a wrong vs right, perhaps Jenifer would perceive Surjeet's behaviour differently, in a way that she could work with this difference, rather than dismissing it as incorrect or wrong because it may not fall into the hegemonic perspectives of interview practices. Paying further attention to the antagonisms of why Jenifer did not perceive Surjeet positively, would Surjeet be more suitable if she had the same view of qualifications as Jenifer? Similarly, would Surjeet be more suitable if she had a less assertive, more passive personality or manner of speaking? Arguably, this relates to the ultimate question. Ultimately, would this have any implication on Surjeet's ability to fulfil her job requirements? The agency has many companies that they recruit for, so would all the companies see Surjeet through the same lens? Jenifer has the ultimate power to make this decision and dismiss candidates that do not fit into her own criteria and subjective view of a "good candidate" in addition to her own subjective views of what she believes her clients are looking for, as well as her views on her client's company culture. Jenifer's perception of weird derives from her understanding of a different view from her own that stems from the way in which she decodes this interaction through a Western lens. As a result, it could be argued that Surjeet is failed on the basis of ideological hegemony (Gramsci 1975), that is normalised (Bourdieu 1991) through social structure, where Jenifer contributes to society, and as such who she selects and labels as normal or not, or fitting/not fitting with her own views of how people/things should behave/be.

Seemingly, from Surjeet's post-interview questionnaire, Surjeet comes across as unaware of how the recruiter perceives her interview performance. On this occasion, displaying obedience to power may have made her more suitable. Looking at the activity type that incorporates "coded signs of obedience" (Foucault 1987, p.218) for example in the general

question-answer sequence, arrangement of the interview room with the interlocutors at opposite ends of the table and the recruiter faces the door with a screen in front of her, indicates power. Although the recruiter aims to hide the asymmetrical power relation through their friendly, less formal manner, there is still a power dynamic that requires an element of obedience from the candidate. For example, to answer a question when asked, to follow the lead of the recruiter, for the candidate not to take lead etc. Unfortunately for Surjeet, not being able to play the interview power game, she has been penalised for being unconventional, and more specifically she is understood as not a good fit for Jenifer's clients due to her inability to align with the requirements of power and hegemonic views by not fitting in to the recruiter's understanding of good candidate behaviour.

4.3.10 Conclusion

In reference to previous research conducted around types of job interviews, Zhu (2019) states "sometimes it is not linguistic ability, but a lack of knowledge of how the system works that leads to the undesirable outcome of the interview" (p.157). This statement provides truth toward the relation of the power dynamics in this interview. Such power dynamics can be explained using Fairclough's (2009) distinctions between power over, power to and power behind. Surjeet has found the "power to" control the situation, displayed through her interruptions, ability to control the direction of the interview and ignoring Jenifer's utterances. Through her actions she displays her "power over" the conversation. However, even though Surjeet demonstrates her power over the interaction, this power is trumped by the "power behind" where Sujeet is penalised for not following the conventional power norms ascribed to this genre, where the recruiter holds this form of power. The recruiter also plays what can be seen as a deceitful power game through the recruiter's attempt to hide the asymmetrical power dynamics through "faking friendship," she can penalise the candidate for not playing the game that requires them to align their formality, professionalism, and submission to that of the recruiter's in that given moment in time. Therefore, the candidate is expected to align their demonstrated power, positioning, and identities with that of the recruiter's, understanding when and where it is required via the recruiter's discourse and conversational cues. Even though this convention is tied in very much to the way in which recruitment interviews are conducted, what should be questioned is the ascribed power that

derives from context and societal placement that is given when a professional is in a position of power in a culturally diverse society but has not been trained in dealing with cultural diversity. Such a professional is in effect operating and empowering an ethnocentric view, that will (no matter how unintentionally) serve to block or constrain the successful implementation of any policy that reduces the disadvantage of cultural minorities that are in favour of achieving fairness and equality. This is a struggle to multi-ethnic and culturally 'superdiverse' contexts that operate in a diverse society.

4.4 Section 4 - Case study: CA 018 Star & Yasmina – Successful Interview

4.4.1 Introduction

This section focuses on a successful interview that takes place in west London where the interlocutors have quite different backgrounds. Within this interview, the interlocutors build a strong rapport, and convey "ingroup" status. In fact, the interlocutors demonstrate all 9 areas of performing "cultural fit," however, this section will focus on: power, identities, positioning, knowledge & cultural knowledge, and emotional affiliation. The candidate successfully plays what can be described as a power game as she aligns with the informal nature of this recruitment interview in the attempt to display natural friendship, however, she still aligns with the ascribed power asymmetry that is hidden in this type of interview.

Table 5a About the recruiter

About the Recruiter Star					
Age range	25-30	Codes	English London English Spanish Tagalog	Lived elsewhere?	Yes, moved to West London age 11 and lived in Spain for 1 year.
Gender	Female	English L1?	No, Tagalog	Work:	Sales Customer service Recruitment
Heritage	Pilipino Chinese	Resided in	Philippines	Education	Postgrad LPC

Table 5b About the candidate

About the Candidate Yasmina					
Age range	35-40	Codes	English Farsi	Lived elsewhere	Yes,
Gender	Female	English L1?	No, Farsi	Work:	Customer service PA Web developer Admin Accountancy
Heritage	Iranian	Resided in	Iran	Education	BSc

4.4.2 Power & small talk

Power is a very prominent theme in the opening of this interview. More specifically, how the interlocutor's "do" power negotiation, whilst being mindful of contextual and hidden power dynamics. Foucault (1981) writes about power in a way that is relevant to this context "Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared…" power can be relational (p.94). The following example demonstrates how power can be relational, manifesting itself in hidden ways; here it embeds itself within small talk. The candidate, Yasmina has been asked by the recruiter, Star to provide her original passport for Star to take a scanned copy. Co-operatively, Yasmina opens her bag, takes out her passport and hands her passport over to Star. Star opens the passport before curiously flicking through the pages. The conversation begins with small talk, where the interlocutors discuss the beauty of the new passport.

Extract A

1. R: mine didn't have tha' *(referring to the passport)*

2. R: like literally buh I've jus [I ju]

3. C: [did] you see all the pages

4. R: *(reaches for passport)*

5. C: it's so beautiful

6. R: I know I've seen it before and I just [thought]

7. C: [it's like]

8. R: *(flicking though pages)* like

9. C: it's like [all the]

10. R: [why wasn't] mine like this

11. C: *(giggling)* I know all my friends were saying that

12. R: No buh I've

13. C: It's my first passport

14. R: Loook

15. C: I know its soo beautiful its jus everyone was looking at [it] *(laughs)*

16. R: [I kn]ow an I literally jus

17. renewed it in January an I thought why doesn't mine look like this

18. C: you can request a new one

19. R: nahh that's another eigh'y th hundred pounds I was like nah eighty

20. pounds something its [so expensive]

21.   [I'll] deal with wha I've got at the moment

22. (Both laugh)

23. R: I'm sure it will be pretty in tweny tweny six when I will renew again

24. C: *(laughs)* Yes

25. R: buh yeh no thank you for comin'

26. C: *(mumbling)* thank you for your time

27. R: so we're jus goin' to go through registration erm you notice period

Referring to the passport, Star uses a comparison between her own passport and Yasmina's in line 1. Elevating the desirability of Yasmina's new passport, Star highlights just how beautiful it is, as she compares her own, which is not the same as this one. Yasmina elatedly interrupts Star to ask her whether she has seen *all* the pages (line 2). As Star reaches for the passport, Yasmina aligns her views with that of Star's as she also compliments the prettiness of her new passport. Star agrees, before mentioning that she has seen this passport before (line 6). She then begins to playfully moan as she asks why her own passport does not look as nice as this one (line 10). Yasmina giggles and highlights that all her own friends agree with the view that this passport is beautiful. She then openly shares with the recruiter that this was her first passport. Star ignores this comment and reverts the topic back to her fascination with this new passport "loook" (line 14). Yasmina responds to this playfully agreeing, whilst supporting her views with the opinions of others that have also seen her new passport, "just everyone was looking at it" (line 15). There is a very playful and open introduction that is noticeable within this small talk. First and foremost, the opening of this interview is rather informal and secondly, the introduction is characteristically playful. There has however, been some contextual understanding and alignment in how they begin to accept and respond to each other's performed characters – the whiner/ complainer and the tease/braggart.

The recruiter's complement of the passport's beauty as announces with a whining tone "mine didn't have tha" (line 1), required contextual understanding from the candidate to understand this as a positive as it specifically relates to the beauty, as this phrase could have been understood in multiple ways. There is further depth that can be seen in the interlocutor's understanding of the other's behavior, in particular, this understanding is illustrated in how they align with each other's small talk in a playful manner. Star's playful, whining, and sulking

utterances (lines 1, 12 and 14) is received and understood in a way that Yasmina aligns with by mirroring this playfulness. In line 3, Yasmina interrupts Star in a way that signals delight and enthusiasm on the topic as she willingly takes on a role that would align with Star's playful whining. The interruption here does not function as dominance or hostility (Goldberg 1990; West, 1979), but instead a form of meta-messaging indicating "interpersonal rapport" where it can be described as more of an overlap, which occurs during "feelings of intensity and rapid pace" and can leave some who experienced "the conversation as "great" …to those who favour this style" (Tannen 1983, p. 121). The positive emotions of this overlap is evidenced by Yasmina's utterance as she playfully teases and boasts about the beauty of the passport that she has and the recruiter wants. She does this by not only agreeing that her passport is beautiful, but also stating that her friends, and "everyone" who has seen it all also complement its beauty. Zhu (2019) describes the importance of small talk and its pivotal role in building relationships, as she states that "small talk is by no means small in its role in maintaining interpersonal relationships and facilitating social cohesion in the workplace" (p.38). Although it can be noticed that the recruiter and candidate have managed to successfully negotiate small talk, further focus is attributed to the *why*. Applying Zhu's (2019) research on business meetings, small talk and power can be applied to this exchange as she states "small talk is also a site for displaying and negotiating power between superiors and subordinates in the workplace. While subordinates can negotiate the direction of conversation, it is very often the case that superiors decide the extent to which small talk can be elaborated upon and whether to include personal topics in small talk through their response or their control of turns" (p.36). Relating this to this example, where Star holds power similar to that of a "superior" in context, Star is in a position where she can open with small talk, as she is ascribed power to control the direction of the interview and the conversation. The candidate aligns with this by accepting a more subordinate position as she gives control to the recruiter, as she allows Star to control the direction of the conversation and aligning her behavior to that of the recruiter. This negotiation of small talk and respecting the ascribed power dynamics has contributed to a friendly and more personal interaction. In other words, small talk here is also used as a way of negotiating power in social interactions. The recruiter uses small talk to "soften" the perception of the asymmetrical power dynamic. She hides her power in this context with the aim of being able to make the candidate comfortable, feeling at ease, in a more friendly environment so that she can obtain the best

version of the candidate. Nonetheless, the success is not simply attributed to Star's ability to hide the asymmetrical power dynamic, but more so, Yasmina's ability to be able to both understand and successfully align with the power dynamic. Yasmina successfully plays (what can be described as) the power game, a game that she has been invited to play. She initially accepts the power status given by the context, one where the recruiter holds the ultimate power over the decision-making process that the candidate hopes for a positive outcome. She does this by allowing the recruiter to lead and responds in a way that aligns with the intended requirements of the recruiter's utterance. This is evidenced in the acceptance and participation in small talk. Secondly, Yasmina also successfully plays the power game by accepting and successfully responding to Star's initiation of rapport building tactics through "faking friendships." Therefore, even though Star and Yasmina have just met and are two strangers in a professional context where an assessment is being conducted of the candidate, Yasmina is able to use small talk in a way that conveys unity and understanding between the two, enabling this context – forcing rapport to appear unforced and natural, in a way that successfully compliments Star's initiation of "faking friendship" through small talk.

4.4.3 Humour, identities, and power

In this opening sequence (extract A), humour is successfully used collaboratively by the interlocutors. Humour is being co-constructed by the interlocutors in their turn-by-turn sequence. In this example, the opening utterance takes the form of a role play. Star in an almost winey tone that indicates that it is unfair that her passport does not "have tha" (line 1). Within this utterance, Star moves away from the voice ascribed to her situated identity (Zimmerman 1998) as a recruiter and towards an emerging friend identity depicted in a shift in voicing being indicative of a helpless and somewhat whiney friend. Yasmina aligns with this establishment of a friend identity by playfully teasing Star (lines 11 & 15), stating that she also knows this to be true, as "I know all my friends were saying that" (line 11) as well as "everyone" who has seen has new passport also believe this to be true. It is understood that humour is being used within this exchange following Star's playfully questioning "why wasn't mine like this" (line 10), which provokes Yasmina to giggle. It is clear in this moment that humour is being used, and Yasmina plays along with this as she improvises by drawing on a teasing, friendly character "I know all my friends were saying that" (line 11). The humour in this exchange is found through the "pragmatic orientation of the content," therefore, "In

supportive humour, participants add to, elaborate on, or strengthen the propositions or arguments of previous contributions." There is a "collaborative nature of humour" (Zhu 2019, p.38). In this example humour emerges within improvisation, notably, within a setting that by nature requires a characteristically stylised performance. In other words, the professional requirements and assumed conventions of this context requires the candidate to perform their understood version of a professional and likable character, which could arguably differ to how candidates may interact in other contexts such as at home with family or socialising amongst friends. In addition to this initial requirement of "acting," there is also a second level of improvised performance that requires the interlocutors to negotiate and comprehend the style that must align with the speaker's behavior. Yasmina giggles and aligns her laughter with the humour taken from the recruiter's whiny character. Zhu (2019) states that "humour can be used strategically to 'include' and simultaneously 'exclude' participants" (p.40) but in order for humour to be successful and therefore "include" the other, there must be a level of understanding from the candidate. This level of understanding humour "requires at least three steps: recognition, understanding and appreciation" (p.41). Therefore, in Star's attempt to "include" Yasmina, by making her feel comfortable, it is Yasmina's response that will need indicate an acceptance through her process of recognition, understanding and appreciation. This should then be received by the recruiter as an attempt to align actively and correctly with her own effort of using humour. It is this process that conveys co-construction. It is therefore the feeling of unity that is constructed through inclusion and the acceptance of this inclusion which enables this form of humour to be successful. It is noticeable that Yasmina has accepted and successfully aligned with Star's style of humour and this has led to conforming to "ingroup" status as "for those who share the same style of humour, its usage can mark group affiliation and solidarity" which can be used as method of bonding by "reinforcing the group's solidarity by mirroring each other's behaviour, it may be seen by people who do not use this kind of humour as signaling hierarchal superiority or exclusion"(Zhu, 2019 p. 41). As such, it is found that the recruiter in this context aims to hide such hierarchical superiority (or power), where the levels of power are asymmetrical, however it does not mean that the power is not there. There is a requirement for the candidate to be able to successfully align with the power requirements of this context within a friendly façade. Power can therefore be described as the elephant in the room. It is through this attempt of humour, that it can be noticed that the recruiter has the ability the to control the context, however, it is still very much dependent

on the candidate's ability to be able to align with, and equally give control and power to the recruiter in this way that can also affect the interview outcome. Therefore, responding with laughter to attempt at humour plays an important role in displaying this power relationship. According to Glen (2010) "…the interviewer invites laughter. The interviewee laughs along. The interviewer may produce a next laughable or briefly topicalized the laughable materials., but the interviewee does not do so. Rather, the interviewee will wait for the interviewer to take the lead in returning them to the business of the interview. The asymmetries evident in the sequential organization of these shared laughs show participant orientation to respective institutional roles" (p.1486). It is noteworthy to highlight the control that the recruiter implicitly displays as "while laughing together might appear to reduce power distance and bring participants together, the organization and distribution of these shared laughter instances reflect and reinscribe the hegemony of the roles of interviewer and interviewee." (p.1486) As a result, the laughing together displayed in line 22 shows that not only has the candidate aligned with the ascribed situated identities, but also that she is able to understand and play the power game that she was invited to play by the recruiter. This success in alignment of the ascribed power identities through co-operation with the recruiter's lead in humour has enabled both effective small-talk, as well as setting the foundations of a positive rapport to be built.

4.4.4 Knowledge and identity

The following example is rich in identity work. There is an initial move from the recruiter – candidate situational identities to the transportable identities (Zimmerman 1998) of ethnic background. The topic of heritage comes up even though the candidate has shown her British passport. Star has identified Yasmina as being foreign and not British/ English. Star understands Yasmina as being "Iranian", and through her knowledge of Persian cuisine, Star attempts to connect with this identity. This leads to further small talk, sharing of knowledge and ultimately, building of a good rapport.

Extract B

99.   C: that's fine okay cool so erm we're gonna go through it role per role erm

100.   so you're form you're Iranian are you

101.   C: yes yeah

102. R: ahhh cool I love Iranian [food]

103. C: [well]

104. R: I love erm Persian palace and

105. C: (*laughs*)

106. R: Do you go to Persian Palace or

107. C: [Restaurant]

108. R: [Molanas] yeah

109. C: N- v-ven ever ve have guests no not on my own or erm because vell

110.   uh it's just the the food as I said it's just very its very too rich so

111. C: (*laughs*)

112. R: (*laughs*)

113. C: and and all my friends that vant me to take to take them all

114.   there or any of the Iranian restaurants

115. R: (*laughs*)

116. C: you have quite a few in here

117. R: we have a Rice (*points on direction*)

118. C: Rice and Piano

119. R: Piano, I've been to Piano

120. Branch manager: ahh that's our favorite [place]

121. C: [(giggles) yes]

122. R: [Rice is our] Rice is our house to be honest

123. C: (*laughing*)

124. Branch manager: (*giggles)*

125. R: The worst thing is when we call (*uses hand gestures to indicate being on*

126. *the phone)* in she don't even say who we are I think she knows us

127.   by voice

128. Branch manager: (*laughs*)

129. R: and when we come round she be like she would always be like

130.   em hello everyone bla bla bla

131. C: (*giggles, strong eye contact*)

132. R: and then when she picks up the phone she goes oh yeah right

133.   chicken wrap okay

134. C:[ooo]

135. R: [and] she will know exactly what you want

136.   C: what you want ok good good to [hear]

Star introduces the interview structure by explaining "we're gonna go through it role per role" (line 99). Within the same utterance, Star reverts to small talk, as she asks, "you're Iranian are you" (line 100). The shift in the identity work moves from the here-and-now identity of recruiter and candidate, to a more friendly identity. Star draws on her discursive identity (Zimmerman 1998) as the questioner to instigate a new conversational topic whereby the candidate is required to answer. Star makes use of the "local interactional roles" (Jefferson 1972, p.178) to initiate the emergence of the cultural identity by inviting Yasmina to talk about her cultural identity. Star has pulled on extra-situational resources that impels Star to believe that Yasmina could identify as Iranian. Yasmina admits that she is Iranian (line 101). Star uses this opportunity to display her knowledge and predilection for Iranian cuisine and names her favourite local Iranian restaurants (lines 102, 104, 108). Star asks this question to capture Yasmina's interest through her ability of being able to identify with Yasmina's identity. According to Holmes (2006) "to justify telling a narrative, there has to be something holding the listener's attention" (in De Fina, 2006 p.69). What is learned is that before Star begins to tell her narrative on Iranian food, she ensures that this would be relevant to Yasmina through Yasmina's identification of Iranian culture. The assumption is made that if Yasmina identifies as being Iranian, Yasmina will have both interest in the topic as well as specialist knowledge of Iranian food. Star then asks Yasmina whether she goes to "Persian Palace" (line 106) or "Molanas" (line 108), which Yasmina clarifies (line 107) are two Iranian restaurants in their local area. By asking Yasmina's opinion on the Iranian restaurants, in particular, referring to them only by name without the mention of it being restaurants, Star positions Yasmina as being very knowledgeable in this area through the understanding that Yasmina is "Iranian." Yasmina assumes this knowledgeable position by providing an answer, however, she provides a somewhat diplomatic answer, one that neither affirms nor denies the likability of this restaurant, taking into consideration the potential possibility that Star may really like this restaurant. Appealing to Star's "positive face," she uses a positive politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson 1987) which considered the difference in power, the context requirement to reduce the feeling of a large social distance, and also evaluating the cost of imposition. The politeness strategy used in lines 109-110, where she mentions that she would only dine in Persian restaurants with guests as the food is too rich," in comparison to Star's more bald–on

record approach directly stating that she does not like Persian restaurants illustrates Yasmina taking a safe option of expressing a view whilst avoiding disagreement. Yasmina also laughs (line 111), making light of her view, again mitigating the likelihood of potential disagreement. Equally, Star accepts and conveys alignment with this view by mirroring Yasmina's laugher. Yasmina moves towards more of an agreement of views, by shifting the topic away from her own view of Persian restaurants to "all" of her friends who like to food so much that they want her "to take them all there or any of the Iranian restaurants" (lines 113–114). Star laughs, demonstrating an affiliation with this topic. Yamina then mentions that there are a number of Iranian restaurants in this area (line 116), which leads the interlocutors to display their knowledge of these restaurants by sharing some of the restaurant names (line 117 & 118). In line 118, Yasmina mentions a restaurant called "Piano" that provokes excitement in Star's voice, as she exclaims that she has "been to Piano" (line 119). Following this, the Branch manager who is working at her desk across the room, picks up on this discussion and includes herself in the conversation by adding that Rice is "our favourite place" (line 120). This is supported by laughter, good eye contact and talk over each other as they display their affiliation with this Iranian restaurant (lines 121-123). The branch manager's comment ratifies the genuine predilection Star and the office has for Iranian food, and therefore, by joining in the conversation this shows how "different participants are differentiated in the degree in which their contributions are ratified and taken on board by others or, equally, challenged and delegitimated" (Georgakopoulou 2007, p.85). Therefore, the recruitment manager's input legitimises the recruiter's story, her role becomes someone who can "share an interactional history" linking all the interlocutors in a friendly and affiliative way. In the same way, the recruiter's laughter can be seen as "co-authoring" in a similar sense to that of the candidates, as they are both affirming the acceptance of the narrative. The branch manager and candidate begin "co-drafting," as their involvement makes them a "co-author" within the recruiter's narrative of daily experience with this restaurant in this "talk-in-interaction" (De Fina 2009, p. 84).

In the latter part of this extract narratives are useful in revealing how the interlocutors portray themselves within their story. The recruiter shares her "autobiographical stories" that is her personal experience of a past event (Defina 2009, p.84). In this case, the past events described by Star convey her and her colleagues' loyalty as customers to the Iranian food restaurant.

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The story is prompted by the candidate's Iranian identity, whereby Star aims to convey her (and her colleagues) affiliation with Iran and its cuisine. Posing the following question; why would this affiliation be important to Star? Attention is paid on the temporal place as the sequence of events chronologically occur when dealing with narratives. On this Mishler (2006) argues that by analysing how the story develops and ends can enable understanding of "how a narrator selects and assembles experiences and events so they contribute collectively to the intended point of the story – the ''why'' it is being told, in just this way, in just this setting" (De Fina et al 2006, p. 8). Therefore, the question of *why* indexes their rapport building. This is where Star incorporates "faking friendship" strategies in order to build solidarity between the two. The recruiter has been able to use identity as a way of inviting informal conversation, that has enabled laughter and lengthy small talk, even including the branch manager into the conversation. There are multiple indications indexing a connection and successful rapport being built between the interlocutors, which is illustrated in paralinguistic features of which include: laughter, smiles, strong eye contact, occasional overlaps of both laughter and discourse (lines 120-123).

4.4.5 Knowledge & positioning

In the following example, the interlocutors position each other as experts due to the identities that they are affiliated with. For example, following on from the previous example where the recruiter positions the candidate as someone who is knowledgeable in Persian cuisine due to her background, in the same way, the candidate also positions the recruiter as someone who is knowledgeable in her field due to her current situational identity as a recruiter.

It is through the recruiter's ability to position Yasmina as Persian food connoisseur, Yasmina accepts this position by giving advice and making recommendations, enabling the interlocutors to further discuss their likes and dislikes. It is noticeable however, that although Yasmina performs the given identity as a knowledgeable person in this area, she responds in ways that do no divert too far away from Star's opinion. The effect of this is that the interlocutors convey: shared knowledge, shared ways of thinking, and this leads to other positive and promising prosodic features such as laughter.

137. R: [yeah] buh she's so lovely though oh um I didn't like Piano *(sips water)*

138. C: vell yes I've been der only once and its uh

139. R: it's a nice restaurant the food is not very (*uses her hand gestures*

140. *here to help her explain)*

141. C: no they they personise [sic] it not in a good way

142. R: [yeahhhh]

143. C: [no- noh] in a good vay [i-like eh]

144. R: [that's] it (*pointing at candidate)* [that's the worst]

145. C: [in a like a]

146. R: the word I'm looking for i- it's not very authentic that's (*uses*

147. *hand gesture indicating that the candidate knows what she means)*

148. C: it's not[yeah]

149. R: [yeah]

150. C: yeah that they they should have kept it in a way that [if people]

151. want to experience something different

152. R: [yeah]

153. C: not the exact mm because if you wan' to if you want to serve like

154. chicken like that they made they can make themselves better than

155. this [so you need]

156. R: [yeahhh]

157. C: to keep it the [way it is]

158. R: [yeahhh] and the thing is you're right you're right that's the

159. word I was looking for its not it wasn't very authentic in my

160. opinion an derm I think it goes with the modern decor though

161. they probably

162. C: the von ferder [sic] down Mehdi da is really nice

163. R: never [seen it]

164. C: that's a beautiful restaurant to go to if you really like

165. R: towards Hammersmith

166. C: yes if you wanted like a really like a erm Eastern looking

167. restaurant like a far [middle eastern looking]

168. R: [hh- I've never seen] it

169. C: or Iranian looking restaurant so it's like a chandeliers and

170.   paintings on deh wall and so it's really its romanic [sic

171.   R: *(points)* wait wait is it literally as you approach by the cinemas

172.   C: exactly yeah

173.   R: oh I have been der yeah yeah yeah yeah *(noticeable enthusiasm)*

174.   C: yeah its very dat one is very

175.   R: loads of people loads of people

176.   C: yeah

177.   R: like [its erm]

178.   C: they [have]

179.   R: two two sides isn't it yeahh [I been there]

180.   C: [it is yeah]

181.   R: yeah they do really nice food but it's always packed in there

182.   C: [yeah I know]

183.   R: [and there] all Iranian and I've always been told if you want to

184.   eat Chinese you look at the restaurant if there's loads of Chinese

185.   people in der you eat der

186.   C: ohhh [right]

187.   R: [and if you] want[to look at Ind]ian

188.   C: [I didn't know] dat

189.   R: no but its ture [sic] an en if you go into that restaurant it will they

190.   were all Iranian were all Arabs it was literally

191.   C: [err] yes

192.   R: [it]was

193.   C: there are many Arab customers yes

194.   R: loads loads and i –it does [inaudible]

195.   C: Probably because their portions massive

196.   *(both laugh)*

197.   R: well that's why that's one thing I'm grateful for it for Iranian

198.   restaurants the portions are always big so you'll never go wrong it

199.   C- it can never go wrong

200.   *(looking at CV)* brilliant well umm so we're just going to go through this then

In this example positioning can be seen as something that can be "disputed, refuted, negotiated" where "shifts in positioning and strategy occur" (Ribeiro 2009, p.50). It is evident

that although Star positions Yasmina as a knowledgeable person, Yasmina still shifts and aligns her views towards that of the recruiter. For example, after Yasmina suggests Piano as a local restaurant (line 118), Star mentions that she does not like Piano (line 137). Star continues to explain that there is something about the food that she is not fond of, which Yasmina helps star to explain that the restaurant personalises the food "not in a good way." Star enthusiastically agrees with this, using an agreeable, elongated "yeaah" (line 142) whilst as she points at Yasmina adding that it is the worst (line 144). Between lines 141 to 145 there are many overlaps which occur during moments of agreements. As a result, these overlaps are indicative of being friendly, one that positions themselves more towards friends rather than strangers. What can be noticed is that although Star shifts her views to those that can be seen as more controversial, voicing her dislikes towards an Iranian restaurant that Yasmina has suggested, Yasmina manages to quickly re-align her views with that of Star's. As such this leads to agreements shared in the overlap of discourse. According to Miller et al (2012), for communication to be successful there must be "co-operation" "as in order for individuals to understand each other there must be a certain degree of shared knowledge between them" (p.46). The shared knowledge is further exemplified through the interlocutors displays of acknowledgement and added contribution to the previous speaker's utterance. For example, in line 143 Yasmina states that Piano's food is personalised "not in a good vay" (line 143), which star actively agrees with through discourse, body language and gestures (line 144). She then describes that the "word" she was looking for was that "it's not very authentic" (lines 146-147). There is an elevated and elongated "yeah" (lines 148-149) indicating agreement by the interlocutors through their shared understanding, as they both convey to one another that they are on the same page.

Further to the interlocutors' alignment in their views of "Piano" taken from their own knowledge deriving from their own personal experience, Star continues to talk about her disapproval of the "modern décor" (line 160). Yasmina then shifts the topic to one that is more positive, employing an optimistic stance, moving from an Iranian restaurant that is considered undesirable, to one, from her own knowledge, that she believes to be "nice." This restaurant is called "Mehdi" (line 162). Yasmina makes a recommendation, by aligning with Star's earlier attempt of positioning her as the knowledgeable person in Iranian food (in extract B), giving her the ability to make a recommendation of a good Iranian restaurant. As

such Yasmina suggests this restaurant due to its beauty (line 164), one that would please Star's desire for more authenticity as Yasmina describes this restaurant as "middle eastern looking" (line 167), rather than modern, which she understands that Star disapproved of. Star's initial response to this is that she has never come across this restaurant (line 163 & 168). However, once Yasmina provides more of detailed description of its appearance, describing the "chandeliers and paintings," and draws on the "romantic" emotion that this restaurant evokes (lines 169-170), this triggers Star's memory. Star enthusiastically points at Yasmina, asking her to "wait wait" (line 171). She shows enthusiasm as she realises "oh I have been der yeah yeah yeah" (line 173). It is this shared knowledge and shared view of the restaurant being nice (lines 161 & 181) that evokes emotions of enthusiasm, happiness, and excitement in their voices, indexing further rapport being built.

Star shares her views of a packed restaurant and what it entails. She uses a comparison of Chinese restaurants where she believes that "if there's loads of Chinese people in der you eat der" (lines 181-184). The candidate declares that she did not know this (line 188), positioning Star as a knowledgeable person and herself as a learner, especially as she prompts Star to give further information. Star aligns with this position by providing further information and assuming the role of a knowledgeable person in this area. Star states that she believes this to be "true" because she has noticed this with the restaurant Mehdi as it is always full of "Iranians" and "Arabs" (line 189-190), therefore implying that it must be good. Yasmina agrees with the view that there are many "Arab customers," and Star enthusiastically concurs stating that there are "loads and loads" (lines 193 & 184). Yasmina takes this as an opportunity to incorporate humour as she jokes about why an "Arab" customer likes Iranian food, and this is "because their portions are massive" (line 195). There is an alignment in their perspectives and views of the Arabic customers and their love for food as both the interlocutors laugh. Star then admits that the reasons she likes the food is also because the portions are so big (lines 197-198) and that "you'll never go wrong" with the big portion size. Yasmina aligns her views with this by conveying her understanding and equal perception through her use of repetition. By repeating what Star has just said, she signals that they both align in their views that derive from their own experience and knowledge of Iranian restaurants. The fact that the interlocutors' views align through their negotiation of their shared views, whereby the "expert" knowledge of the candidate aligns with the same views and perspectives as the

recruiter, provides a positive feel to the interview that is evidenced by the prosodic features. The process of positioning the candidate as the expert derives from "common ground" which "is an assumption speakers make about the quantity and quality of information their hearers will be able to access in the process of inferencing" (Bigi 2016, p.46). Therefore, it is the cooperation between the interlocutors that enable this to be successful. In this view, it has meant the recruiter positions the candidate as the expert, the candidate accepts and performs this identity, in a way that is yet still cautious of the hidden power dynamics, by allowing the recruiter to lead and not overstep boundaries through disagreements. For example, Yasmina agrees with the recruiter's comment of liking big portions and that one cannot go wrong with Iranian food (line 199) and their portion sizes, however, earlier in the interview (extract B) Yasmina mentions that she personally does not go to Iranian restaurants as the food is very rich (lines 109, 110, 113). By Yasmina aligning her views and knowledge with that of Star's, she indexes her understanding of the recruiter's power in this context as well as her ability to convey respect without performing any face threatening acts such as openly challenging or disagreeing with the recruiter.

It is clear in this example that positioning has been successful, according to Ribeiro's research on positioning and framing, it is argued "that is, as people speak and act, they signal to each other what they believe they are doing (e.g., what activity they are performing or what speech act they are producing) and in what way they want their words and gestures to be understood. The intricate ways in which framing is accomplished in verbal interaction is captured through Goffman's (1981) notion of footing, or the alignment that speakers and hearers take toward each other and toward the content of their talk. Interlocutors jointly construct frames by signaling their own ever-shifting footings while recognizing and ratifying those of coparticipants." (De Fina et al 2009, P. 48). Therefore, the success in positioning alignment is largely due to an understanding and the correct response that signals that the hearer's understanding has been received in the way in which the speaker has intended. The interlocutors signal this, by assuming the role of the knowledgeable person that they have been positioned to be by the speaker. In the same way, the following example conveys how the candidate also positions the recruiter as someone who is knowledgeable in the field of recruitment, requiring the recruiter to also be able to align with this given identity.

The following extract is taken from the beginning of the interview following their small talk. Yasmina asks for Star to share her knowledge on notice periods, positioning Star as a knowledgeable person in the field that she is in. Yasmina's questions give the opportunity for Star to demonstrate her knowledge. Star aligns with this by complying with the question-answer sequence and assumes the given role as the knowledgeable recruiter. On this, Auer (2007) conveys that speakers are able to "claim" knowledge through "the use of interactional and linguistic resources" (p.39), this is because "entitlements to knowledge are attached to, or belong to, categories – and not to persons… This has the consequence that speaker may possess some knowledge, but nevertheless have an asymmetrical position with respect to that knowledge" (p. 37-38). Therefore, by answering the question using the lexical field of HR, Star exhibits an asymmetry through her normative entitlement of her own knowledge of legal HR understanding.

Extract D

27.   R: so we're jus goin to go through registration erm you notice period

28.   cause I've had someone from XXXXXXX and their notice period was four

29.   monfs [sic] *(sips water)*

30.   C: depends on de erm depends on de position

31.   R: Really

32.   C: *(she has very open body language, she seems very calm relaxed, speaking*

33.   slowly and clearly) Yes so four months four months is director was she

34.   director

35.   R: yeahh she was a HR

36.   C: oh yeah

37.   R: so she erm decided she's gna she she cus she couldn't attend any

38.   interviews or anything like tha so what she decided wa she just left and

39.   then worked her notice and [then rather]

40.   C: [so i] really want to know that I'm not really f'miliar so

41.   my notice period is a standard four weeks

42.   R: Yeah you said [yeah] *(her tone and tempo is starting to match the candidate's, as the candidate uses a softer tone)*

43.   [but] I might I vel as the job search continues hopefully I might be

44.   offered a uh a job that [inaudible] requires me to start in ten days or two weeks

45.   is there any way legally to negotiate dat (*holds strong eye contact*)

46.   R: I fink the only way you could negotiate tha would be to see wheva how

47.   much holidays you got you got left for that [year]

48.   C: [yes]

49.   R: and then use that holiday so say for example you got two weeks holiday

50.   left then use that to serve your notice

51.   C: mhmm

52.   R: so then you'll be only working for two weeks

53.   C: mmhmm

54.   R: to serve your notice double check buh each company have different

55.   handbooks

56.   C: Ye[s]

57.   R: [so] to be honest and like I said [before you]

58.   C: [all very] strict with us I know dat [so well]

59.   R: [yeah I] know I heard they very strict an I've I've spoken to a lot of erm

60.   people that you know that worked in there for different roles n th –

61.   they've all said that like notice period is quite strict [as well]

62.   C: [quite strict] yes

63.   R: yeah

Foucault (1980) states "knowledge constantly induces effects of power… it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge; it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power." (p.52). Taking this view, Star demonstrates inside knowledge in a way that signals her power and status. Star demonstrates her knowledge of Yasmina's company in relation to the notice periods. Star does not ask Yasmina the question of her length of notice period, but instead draws on her own contextual knowledge, highlighting the fact that she has also interviewed someone else from the same company that Yasmina works in. This person had a four-week notice period (lines 27-29). Star's incorporation of a mutual person that they both may know, minimises the social distance between the interlocutors, creating familiarity between two strangers that creates a sense of closeness as they minimise the degrees of separation.

At the same time, Star also positions herself as someone in a position of power due to her ability to help candidates find roles. Yasmina aligns with the Star's display of knowledge, by moving away from being vague to being more transparent as she states that she is aware of who came in to interview with Star previously and "she" is a "director" (lines 33-34). The recruiter agrees and admits that Yasmina's colleague who came into interview "yeah she was a HR" (line 35). The recruiter then shares her understanding of the company's policy surrounding taking time off, information gained from discussions with the company HR director that she placed previously. Star shares the struggles that the HR manager encountered when trying to take time off as the company was so strict that "she couldn't attend any interviews or anything" which led her to leave and work and give "her notice" (lines 37-19). Here, the interlocutors convey their shared knowledge of Yasmina's ex colleague and Star's successfully placed candidate. It is of course Star's demonstrated ability to be able to successfully place a candidate that elevates Star's power status in this encounter. Star demonstrates that she is someone who has the proven ability to be able to help Yasmina in her task of finding a new role.

Yasmina aligns with Star's elevated power status by positioning Star as someone who has expert knowledge and herself as a learner. She does this by being transparent about her limited knowledge of notice periods. Yasmina admits that "I'm not really f'miliar so my notice is a standard four weeks" (lines 40-41). Through this off-record politeness strategy (Levinson 1978:61), she implicitly requests for Star to share her knowledge by viewing Star as someone who has knowledge in this field. In response to this, Star aligns her response with the *required* response whilst also incorporating "accommodative talk" (Coupland et al 1998). Star does this by matching her voice, tempo, and tone to that of Yasmina's (line 42). More often than not Yasmina speaks very slowly and clearly, contrariwise, Star's speech is dynamic, fast-paced and varies in tone. As Star performs the identity provided as the knowledgeable person in this area, she aligns prosodically with Yasmina. According to Coupland et al. (1998) it is argued that "accommodative talk is not necessarily talk wherein participants share any obvious speech characteristics…Rather, it is talk wherein actors achieve a high degree of fit between their typically different, but potentially attunable, behaviours' (p.28). One of the four ways in which Coupland et al break down "communicative accommodation" is through "approximation strategies" that converge "towards the addressee's productive performance

such as accent, speech rate, etc." (p.28). Therefore, the recruiter converges towards the speech rate of Yasmina that enables her to be able to convey similarities that enable them to build a rapport as they decrease the social distance and any other prosodic dissimilarities.

The success of this method is evidenced in how Yasmina begins to open up towards Star. Yasmina shares her hopes and wants in her next role and how quickly she would like to start. As she does this, she also draws on Star's knowledge about the legal requirements of the possibility of her leaving her current role earlier than the one-month notice requirement (lines 43-45). Star again aligns with the placement of being positioned as the knowledgeable person through her role as she advises that there is a possibility of being able to "negotiate" this with her current company, as she can see "how much holidays" she might have left for that year, which could help decrease the length of her notice period (lines 46-47). Yasmina acts as the enabler by positioning the recruiter in a position of power by asking for the recruiter's expert knowledge. Taking Foucault's (1977) view of power "we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it "excludes," it "represses," it "censors," it "abstracts," … In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The induvial and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (p. 194). Although it is acknowledged that the ultimate power is hidden in this type of interview, it is the candidate's ability to understand, assess and align with such power; being conscious of such power and possessing the ability to be able to position the recruiter in the position of power in a way that compliments the unspoken, asymmetrical power relationship in a way that enables smooth negotiation of power, leaving the characteristic of power as the unspoken "elephant in the room."

4.4.6 Knowledge and power

The following extract illustrates yet another connection between knowledge and power. Through the knowledge that Yasmina decides to share with the recruiter and branch manager, she elevates her power status. Following Star's compliments to Yasmina on her interviewing abilities, Yasmina shares that she is someone that also conducts interviews as she is in a position to hire in her current company (lines 578-579). Yasmina positions herself as someone who has power through her ability to hire and through her knowledge of being able to share inside information on which external agencies her company currently uses for their

recruitment. From this moment, the recruiter demonstrates that she has understood this interview as an opportunity for potential future business as her current company uses external agencies. As such, Yasmina's value increases through her knowledge and access to information within her company, especially as someone who has positioned herself as being able to help the agency win new business. In essence, there is a balance in the scales of power as the interlocutors both possess the ability to help one another.

Extract E

564.   R: [you are] very good at what you say though if I could say tha

565.   C: *(sniggers)* [but]

566.   R: so I can imagine you being very good at interviews

567.   C: but yes so if dey put me in a cv and if dey want to test my like

568.   erm excel eh skills in a advance level I think I am covered

569.   intermediate level but if they just ask me to write a macro in front

570.   of dem which I never claimed that I can I know what dey are but r

571.   write dem from scratch *(laughs)*

572.   R: *(recruiter laughs with her)*

573.   C: erm so probably that's where I'm going to start crying a bo *(laughs)*

574.   R: oh kay but over than that like a normal conv erm interview

575.   C: normal conversation yeah like a competency test

576.   behavioral interviews [yes]

577.   R: [yeah]

578.   C: and I perform I actually hold many interviews for XXXXXXX as well

579.   eh hiring people hiring temps so

580.   R: *(face lights up, looks at candidate in a surprised manner)* do you *(raised intonation here)*

581.   C: yeah so I I I kind without thei- because I know what they going

582.   to say or what [they go-]

583.   R: [do you] use agency there then cuz we've [tried]

584.   C: [we use] a lot of agency yeah

585.   we use we use a cople of agencies wo -what agency are we using *(tilts head and*

586.   thinks) Euro- London Euro London

587.   R: euro London

589.   C: yeah I think its da one

590.   R: *(looks at branch manager across the room. Her expression suggests that this*

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591. *could perhaps be a business opportunity)* You heard ov em

592.   Branch Manager: ey

593.   C: Euro London

594.   R: mmm

595.   C: where they based

596.   Branch manager: I've I dunno where they're based but I've

597.   heard of Euro London [yeah]

598.   C: *(to Branch manager)* [tha] That's not my choice [but]

599.   Branch manager: [huh]

600.   C: that's not

601.   Branch manager: why where abouts do you work then

602.   C: erm XXXXXXX XXXXX head office

603.   Branch Manager: Oh XXXXXXX XXXXXX yes

604.   C: yeah *(lowers tone)* but eh

605.   Recruitment Manager: yeah they're in White city [Inaudible]

606.   R: [yeah]

607.   C: [yeah]

608.   R: we've dropped to dem before like literally [sic] you're next to erm the

609.   arts erm

610.   C: Talk Talk

611.   Branch manager: [yeah]

Star compliments Yasmina by stating that "you are very good at what you say though if I could say tha" (line 564). Star provides Yasmina with positive in-interview feedback, whilst also questioning her own ability of being able to "say tha." This strategy manages to hide the asymmetrical power dynamic and contributes toward the act of rapport building. Fujimura-Wilson describes compliments as "speech acts that are used to negotiate solidarity in daily conversation, which are related to the concepts of face work in politeness theory" (p.19).

The candidate sniggers and the recruiter continues to mention in a more direct approach to her compliment stating that "I can imagine you being very good at interviews" (line 566). The use of the verb "imagine" in this sentence distances the interlocutors from being in an interview setting indicating that she desires a less formal approach to this interview alluding

towards a more friendly conversation. To do this, Star also downplays her own abilities, but through her compliment she elevates the candidate's position by attempting to make Yasmina "feel good" (Herbert 1986), giving the candidate an opportunity to further discuss her interviewing abilities. In the same way offering compliments varies across cultures (Herbert 1986; Barnlund & Araki, 1985), the way in which compliments are received also differ significantly across cultures (Chen 1993). Initially Yasmina avoids self-praise (Pomerantaz 1978) by changing the topic and discussing her abilities with Microsoft packaging. This does not hold much relevance to Star's compliment. She then uses a "non-agreement" though a "scale down" approach (Herbert 1986) as she states that she has the knowledge of "intermediate level" in Excel, but never claimed that she can create "macro," identifying something that she is not good at (lines 567-571). Following her response to the compliment by acknowledging one of her flaws, the interlocutors laugh, indexing some shared understanding of the meaning that Yasmina aims to get across. Yasmina further reinforces the non-agreement by stating that she will "start crying" in a scenario that requires her to create macros. The recruiter responds to this by further elevating Yasmina's status by stating "oh kay but over than that like a normal conv erm interview" (line 574) specifying exactly what her compliment relates to; the candidate's interview skills, giving yet another opportunity for Yasmina to respond to the compliment and opening the floor for Yasmina to discuss this ability. On this occasion, Yasmina accepts the compliment, aligning with this using a "praise upgrade" (Herbert 1986, p.79) by highlighting that she is good at "normal conversations" (line 575) and further demonstrating her knowledge of interviews through her use of technical language within the lexical field of interviews such as "competency test" and "behavioral interviews" (lines 575 &576). Within this, it is noteworthy that when discussing interviews, Yasmina foregrounds her ability of being good at "normal conversation" which aligns her view of this interview being informal to what Star has aimed for the interview to be seen as.

Still responding to the compliment, Yasmina provides "comment history" (Herbert 1986) by admitting that the reason why she is good at interviews is because she has experience of conducting interviews in her current job role. Yasmina states "I perform I actually hold many interviews" conveying that in her current role she is in a position to interview and to make hiring decisions. This captures Star's attention, indicated by her surprised facial expression

and smile that is followed by increased intonation demonstrating both contentment and excitement after receiving this information. Having understood Star's facial expression as a positive reaction, Yasmina continues to "praise upgrade" by stating that this is why she is knowledgeable of how to successfully conduct herself in interview because she knows what "they going to say" (lines 581-582). Yasmina elevates her status in the interview conveying that she has gained experience as both the interviewer and the interviewee, but more specifically she is in a position to hire "temps" (line 579). This information requires a level of contextual understanding as the agency specialises in hiring for temporary roles, therefore this increases Yasmina's value to Star. Not only does Yasmina increase her value through her own ability to be able to potentially help Star find new business, but also the interlocutors now reveal that they hold a shared identity as interviewers. Grasping this, Star responds by using a more direct approach highlighting her need to find new business opportunities as she explores the possibility of Yasmina being able to help her; Star asks, "do you use agency there then cuz we've tried" (line 583). On a syntactic level Star is asking if Yasmina's current company uses agencies, further explaining that this is a company that they have tried to work with in the past. However, on a pragmatic level when inviting context, the explanation in this utterance alludes towards Yasmina's ability to help her find new business. Yasmina draws on knowledge gained from her role and explains that they do use agencies, listing names of agencies they currently use (lines 584-586). Star looks at her manager (the branch manager sat across the room), signaling that this could be a potential business opportunity. She involves the manager in the conversation by asking whether she knows of the agency that Yasmina's company use for their recruitment. The branch manager mentions that she has heard of this company but does not know where they are based (lines 596- 597). This question is asked to understand whether this company operates in their "patch," determining whether they are a local competitor. Yasmina's response to this highlights that she was not involved in choosing this particular company (line 598), which in a way conveys her affiliation with this agency.

Her affiliation with this agency changes as the branch manager moves from being an "over hearer" to a "addressee" (Bell, 2001). Through Yasmina's knowledge she grabs the attention of the recruiter and the hiring manager shifting the style from interview to a conversation between colleagues. Yasmina has managed to be accepted as a valued in-group member, as

she is informed of how this agency do "drops" (line 608) to this company, a practice where the agency drops off treats and goodies with marketing material or speculative CVs to prospect and current clients. Star shares information of having "dropped" to this company, but has not yet been able to strike a deal that enables them to be a preferred supplier for the company's hiring activities. The candidate's inside knowledge positions her in a more balanced power relationship. This is because she comes across as someone who can be easily placed through her interviewing abilities in addition to possessing the ability to be to help the recruiters find new business with a company that they previously had no successful with.

4.4.7 Shared Knowledge and rapport

The topic of location continues in the three-way conversation between the recruitment manager, the candidate, and the recruiter. This leads to further conversation regarding the local companies. Having this shared knowledge enables them to strengthen their rapport. According to Prior 2017, knowledge can be linked to rapport building as "establishing personal connections built on trust, respect, and consent; a sensitivity to power relations and the co-construction of knowledge;" (p. 2). As the interlocutors discuss the area that Yasmina works in, Yasmina positions herself as the information giver. She does this by drawing on her knowledge and providing the recruiters with information on local companies, and in the same way, the recruiters enable her to take on this identity by asking her questions to obtain information. During this discussion, there is an excitement in the atmosphere signaled through the high-pitched tones, the overlaps, and giggling as they speak of companies that all interlocutors share knowledge of. This indicates that a good rapport is being built between the interlocutors.

Extract F

650.   Branch manager: [yeah no light outside]

651.   C: buht ehh der are so many interv like eh Stella McCartney's

652.   office next to us

653.   Branch manager: is Stella McCartney there *(raised intonation)*

654.   C: Yes

655.   R: which one *(screeching – high pitch)*

656.   C: yes and den I jus se and always I see dese ah like erm der like de

657.   all look like [inaudible] humans

658.   R: it's the space [though]

659.   Branch manager: [why]

660.   R: it's the space that they're after isn't it

661.   C: *(nods)*

662.   Branch manager: well like we'll have to go down there and do

663.   a little look around wont we

664.   C: *(laughs)*

665.   R: yeahh

666.   C: yeah

667.   R: [I've I've always gone there buh]

668.   C: [or Hadkinson] next to us

669.   Branch manager: Hadkitson yeah

670.   C: [yes yeah]

671.   R: [where] are they I fought y- you literally jus see when you go in

672.   you've got XXXXX which is occupied by the they've got two building

673.   the canteen

674.   C: yes

675.   R: and then the c- collard (*very expressive uses hand gestures,*

676.   comes across very enthusiastic) and then Talk Talk [tha's] all you

677.   see in there [where's]

678.   C: [yes] [so the McCartney office] is erm is the vone that recently

679.   owned by Monsoon of course buh *(giggles)* it's a it's a building so

680.   like ey it's not a it's not a really high rise building so its erm

681.   R: so behind you then

682.   C: yes so it's ven you turn into its not in de erm

683.   R: site itself

684.   C: it's not in the Nicholos [sic] road dat is XXXX is

685.   R: ohhh that's [what I thought okay]

686.   C: [it's on the side] [it's on the side yeah]

In this example Yasmina is being spoken to as an ingroup member. She is positioned almost as a colleague as they discuss information regarding the surrounding companies. Yasmina draws on her own knowledge of the surrounding area, informing the recruiters of the other

big companies that are nearby (lines 651). The information she provides is useful in helping the recruiters find leads for new business. Evidence of Star successfully obtaining the information she wants from Yasmina is suggested through Star's raised intonation at the end of the question and screeching to convey her excitement (lines 653 & 655).

As Yasmina shares further information on her inside knowledge as she explains why her current company recently moved to this area (line 656-657), the branch manager suggests that *they* will have to "go down there and do a little look around won't we" (lines 662-663). The use of the interrogative utterance "won't we," incorporates the first-person plural pronoun "we," which includes Yasmina. In this moment, it is evident that Yasmina is positioned as an ingroup member by the branch manager. Yasmina laughs (line 664) and both her and the recruiter agree "yeah" to having to "go down there" (lines 665 & 666). Yasmina shares more information speaking of other companies such as Hadkitson who are also in her same building. The recruiter shares her own knowledge of where this company is based in the building (lines 671-673) as well as the other companies that are in the same building such as "Talk Talk" and "Collard" (lines 675 & 676). Yasmina adds to Star's knowledge of the locations of these companies, to her knowledge of who previously owned a company and the type of building it is (line 679-680) as they continue to energetically share their own knowledge of the location.

From this example, it is noticed that shared knowledge has not only leveled the power dynamic, but also enabled the interlocutors to build a stronger rapport through this ingroup status. Identifying "how is authority through knowledge displays negotiated" (Auer, 2007, p.249), it is clear that Yasmina's value increases through her knowledge of surrounding companies use agencies, as well as her inside knowledge of companies in her same building. Yasmina therefore shares information that the recruiters need, which seems to influence the conversation style, becoming non-conventional of a general recruitment question-answer interview structure, and more towards the style of informal sharing of information, which is conventional of conversations amongst friends. The fact that all three of the interlocutors know the area very well and all have relevant input in the conversation, this shifts the formality and power dynamic to one that is less formal with a more symmetrical power distribution.

4.4.8 Empathy

Empathy has been seen as an intricate part of rapport building practices, so much so that Prior (2017), moved away from previous research surrounding rapport building being seen as "attentive listening and engagement" (Potter & Hepburn 2012), to rapport building being heavily driven by empathy as rapport is described as "affiliation and, more specifically, empathy." Through conversation analysis of the speaker's personal experience and the hearer's response within this study, attention is paid (using conversation analysis) to the affect-laden talk of personal experiences and recipients' responses to it. Prior looks at how interlocutors manage "their empathic alignments with each other" through "stance matching" (p.1 – 2). In order for empathy to be successful the initiation of the "interviewee asserting his primary rights to characterize and assess his own experiences" requires "a pleasant attitude on the part of the interviewer and perhaps even a mutual desire for closeness between the interviewer and interviewee" (p.3). In line with Prior's findings, the following examples convey the importance of emotional affiliation between the interlocutors in order to build a strong rapport.

In the following example taken from the early stages of the interview, the interlocutors convey that they are able to display emotional affiliation. According to Eisenberg and Strayer, empathy "involves sharing the perceived emotion of another – 'feeling with' another" (1990, p. 5) In line with this, the candidate makes the conversation personal by using empathy to put the recruiter in her own shoes, so that the recruiter can also side with the same emotion that she is trying to get across. There is an element of synchronisation between both interlocutors as Yasmina describes why she wants to look for another position even if she is currently working. Yasmina expresses her feelings towards her current situation which provokes an empathetic response. The following example conveys the successful display of emotional affiliation between the interlocutors so early in the interview.

Extract G

84.   [it's jus] it's like it's it's really horrible when you're not looking forward to

85.   go to work

86.   R: awwww

87.   C: you jus ermm its really bad ermm soo uhh

It is strikingly perceptible that Yasmina is in fact speaking negatively of her current workplace. According to Van de Mieroop, Clifton and Schreurs (2019) "popular how-to books on employment interviews claim that such negative comments are tantamount to inviting negative assessments and result in rejection," thus requiring candidates to possess a "positive and enthusiastic attitude and refrain from criticizing others." However, within their corpus, it is found that "candidates regularly make negative comments about third parties, and we also observed that candidates who made such comments were often successful" (p.562 - 563). Within the interview interaction it was found that "these candidates succeed in moving away from a restrictive form of institutional interaction to a more symmetrical and conversational form of interaction that allows them to construct and acceptable personalized and trustworthy identity" (p.580). Taking this form of "personalised" and "trustworthy" identity and using it in this example; by personalising through empathy, it enables Yasmina to move away from a more formal and institutional interaction and towards a more personal interaction that becomes more natural. Empathy enables her to seek affiliation from the recruiter by allowing the recruiter to draw from her own experiences. Yasmina takes more of an empathetic stance, where she discusses her daily emotions towards work. She uses quite an expressive yet relatable statement, that seeks an empathetic understanding from the recruiter, provoking her to think back to a point where she had been in a position where she did not look forward to going into work. The candidate uses a declarative to state that it is a horrible feeling coupled with the personal pronoun "you're," forcing the recruiter to put herself in Yasmina's position (line 84). This elicits an emotive response from Star, as she is able to align with the thought process of work dissatisfaction being "horrible" (line 84) and to actually feel the emotion, evoking the recruiter to potentially tap into a particular emotion from a similar experience. This requires empathy from the recruiter so that she can provide "an effective response that stems from the apprehension of comprehension of another's emotional state or condition" (Heritage 2011, p. 6). Star acknowledges this as she uses the interjection "awww" (line 86), conveying a sympathetic response towards Yasmina's frustration with her company. Through this interjection, Star illustrates that she understands and accepts, and has processed the given information in the way in which the candidate has intended. Through this emotional affiliation, the interlocutors build an emotional connection,

where the recruiter is able to sympathise by drawing on her "feelings of sorrow, or feeling sorry" (Eisenberg and Strayer 1990, p.6) for the candidate.

In another attempt to appeal to the recruiter's human nature and compassionate instinct, Yasmina also draws on multiple linguistic techniques that include tone and repetition to elicit empathy. The following is taken a short while after extract C, where Star asks Yasmina for her reasons for leaving her current position:

Extract H

373.   the main and the most important thing is there is no

374.   progression in this department in dis job vot so ever err ve ver and

375.   then I created as many responsibilities as I could for myself

376.   R: I heard dat as well

377.   C: but it's just its very unofficial

378.   R: *(nods)*

379.   C: so if I want to say okay so I'm taking care of dis and dis and dis

380.   can I be a supervisor here now or can I move into the [inaudible]

381.   operation and ve from last year ve become subordinate of XXXXXXXX

382.   and erm so I just said okay so now I can apply for positions

383.   available in XXXXXXX maybe even my background is in computer

384.   science

385.   R: *(nods)*

386.   C: no not at all it's like a dead-end department that you just you just

387.   don't of course I'm not going to say this to e to in job interviews

388.   cus that's not a nice thing to say

391.   R: yeahh

392.   C: but it is very erm erm it is very off putting

393.   R: *(nods)*

394.   C: it's just going round circle and

395.   R: mhmm

396.   C: um ders no training I have to train myself and erm after two

397.   years [in dis]

398.   R: [yeah] *(starts shuffling papers)*

399.   C: department particularly in dis department I feel I feel like I'm

400.   almost unemployable it's just un if I if I don't do somefing dem as a

401.   big company dey do not provide <u>any</u> *(really stresses on any)*

402.   training vot so ever

403.   R: *(still looking down, begins to write)* *(mumbles)* dats horrible okay

Yasmina structures her response by first highlighting that the most important reason for her wanting to leave is progression. In lines 373 to 374, Yasmina emphasises this by foregrounding "main" and using the adjective "important" before introducing "progression." This method enables her to stress the importance of her need to grow in a company. She signals her values of wanting to achieve and climb up the corporate ladder. Yasmina begins to tell her story, foregrounding her wants, which are followed by a stress on the problem "vot so ever" and repetition for emphasis "ever err ve ver" (line 374). Yasmina then details what she has already tried to resolve the issue. She illustrates that she is aware of the problem and attempted to build opportunities at work for herself "created as many responsibilities as I could for myself" (line 375). This anecdote communicates her motivation and ambition as she does not want to quit without trying. Star shows her understanding by verifying Yasmina's claim of this being a problem with the company, as Star has "heard dat as well" (line 376). Yasmina states that what she is about to reveal is "unofficial" suggesting that she is giving inside information to the recruiter, indexing the trust that has been built between them. The recruiter affiliates with this by showing her acceptance using body language as she nods (line 378).

Yasmina then begins to evidence her claim of their being "no progression" by giving a detailed, descriptive example of what she has had to proactively do in order to work around and overcome this known issue (lines 379-384). Yasmina describes the additional responsibilities that she has taken as well as overtly asking if she can progress to a supervisory or operational position. She further states that she would be willing to use her degree in computer science, or even apply for positions with an affiliated company (lines 379-383). Yasmina uses a listing technique stating that she is "taking care of dis and dis and dis," (line 379) using a group of three without actually saying very much about what she takes care of. She then shifts tenses from past to future as she draws on role play, positioning the recruiter as her current manager

asking Star "can I be a supervisor here now" (line 380) and "can I move into the operation" (line 380-381) within the new company that has taken over the current company that she works in. This reinforces the idea that she has exhausted all possible options for trying to find ways of progression and enables the recruiter to connect to her account as she involves the recruiter in her role play. (Lines 379-383). Yasmina stresses that she has attempted to ask for progression, even if it means side-stepping into another position so that she can progress (line 383). Yasmina then shows her flexibility by indicating that she is open to other options and announces that she has a background in "computer science," where she has skills that she would be happy to utilise in another role (lines 383-384). Yasmina's story positions herself as the protagonist and her current manager as the villain. She stresses that she has tried all that she can against her villain superior at work and for that reason she must now move on. There is an additional person crucial in this story. The recruiter is positioned as the hero, the person who possesses the ability to help. Moreover, by putting the recruiter in the position of her supervisor within this story there was a purpose and that is to evoke sympathy in order to persuade the recruiter to want to help her. There is an element of double voicing, as Yasmina assumes that Star may side with her, which is evidenced from the process of enacting the event with Star who is positioned as her current manager. The aim is for Star to understand that Yasmina's current supervisor is being unreasonable, and as a result evoke sympathy with Yasmina's current position so that Star would want to help find her a suitable role.

In line with Yasmina's intended response, Star conveys her affiliation through nodding (line 385), signaling that she agrees. Once Star illustrates her understanding, Yasmina gives a more direct and transparent account, conveying her feelings as she relives her experience within this story. Yasmina uses metaphoric language, describing that "no not at all it's like a dead-end department" (line 386). The simile of a "dead-end department" brings out her desires of progression and her motivated work ethic, that do not fit with that of this company. Yasmina immediately conveys her awareness of her understanding of interview correctness as she explains that she would not say such things in "job interviews cus that's not a nice thing to say" (lines 387 to 388). Even though Yasmina communicates that she would not say this in an interview, she aligns herself with the less formal recruitment interview that Star aimed to create, but also her self-correction indicates her awareness of the fact that there is still a level

of assessment going on that Yasmina is aware of. The shift from the indirect to the more direct approach of her story, following Star's agreement, suggests that she required an agreement for her to be able to open-up, trusting that Star would side with her. Yasmina is able to align with the friendly nature of the interview by clarifying that she is confiding in Star and would not say anything negative in a company interview

Star further agrees with Yasmina "yeahh," (line 391), which fuels further explanation, allowing Yasmina to open-up about her feelings towards her role. Yasmina describes the lack of progression as "very off putting" (line 392). The recruiter nods again, evoking yet another explanation of Yasmina's cycle of trying to exhaust all options "it's just going round in circles." Star agrees "mhmm" expressing that she understands and sympathises with Yasmina's position. Yasmina then moves to listing another frustration; the lack of training provided. Similar to the outcome provided in her previous example, she explains that has also had to be resourceful and train herself (line 396). Within her explanation she uses metaphoric language, describing an endless cycle of trying but not getting anywhere as she has been "going round circle" for over "two years," (line 396-397). The implication is that she has tried for so long, exhausted her options, and now seeks for the situation to change.

Following yet another agreement from Star (line 398), Yasmina draws on her emotions by highlighting how this situation now makes her feel. She expresses that "I feel I feel like I'm almost unemployable" (line 400). The use of the adjective "unemployable" connotes emotions of hopelessness, whilst the adverb "almost" describes her nearly reaching this state of hopelessness if she does not "do somefing" (line 400), again signaling her proactive nature. Her proactiveness is in her seeking help from the recruiter, again positioned as the hero in her story, as Star has the ability to be able to remove her from this situation. The adjective "unemployable" is a particularly emotive word that she uses in this context as it enables the hearer to sympathise with the desperate position, she has been left in. Emotional affiliation will enable the recruiter to *want* to help the candidate, working as a persuasive technique in this context.

Successfully, Yasmina's use of empathy is accepted, understood and affiliated with by Star as Star agreeably states that "dats horrible" (line 403). According to Prior (2017) "empathy

requires a high degree of relational and emotive involvement" that enable the interlocutors to express "affiliation and empathic displays through social solidarity" through expressing an emotive involvement (p.6). Star's response moves away from her enthusiastic back-channeling "mhmm", affiliative "yeah" and nodding, to a response that describes her own emotion towards her understanding of the situation "that is horrible." This emotional response is significant as the recruiter and candidate through their emotions are able to connect on a deeper level as they align their views and feelings of frustration, thus strengthening their bond through the use of feelings and connecting on a deeper level.

4.4.9 Recruiter's Notes

Star mentioned that that she had to slow down her speech to "adjust with" Yasmina. She noticed that she was finishing her "sentences for her" as she "understood what she was saying but she couldn't convey it." Although the candidate "spoke slow," she still "spoke well." She felt that the candidate was "very aware" about what she was saying and considered the words that she was using. "She paused and thought about her answers." She understood the candidate as being "very reserved, composed" and noticed her composure in her posture as the candidate "sat back."

The candidate rated interview as being "excellent." She felt that the interview was "very friendly and relaxed," and she hopes that she interviewed well. She attempted to use a "positive approach." She felt the recruiter was looking for "key skill set like office tools, also someone confident, positive and ready to take on a challenge." The interview was as the candidate expected. She felt there were no cultural differences. She felt it was different to Iranian interviews as "in Iran there is less conversation involved and more of skill test."

This interview was successful as the candidate was soon put forward and successfully placed as a pricing coordinator for one of Yasmina's clients. From the feedback, it is evident that the interlocutors felt that the interview was successful. The candidate gave the highest rating to describe how she felt the interview went. In Star's feedback however, she comments more on Yasmina's language, illustrating that there were instances where she had to help Yasmina convey the meaning that she wanted to get across. This however, did not deter Star from

helping Yasmina convey meaning, nor did it stop Star from placing Yasmina in a position. Nonetheless, Star did provide Yasmina with positive in-interview feedback, stating that Yasmina is "good at what you say" (line 566) and that she could imagine Yasmina being "good at interviews" (line 566).

4.4.10 Conclusion

First and foremost, power is a very interesting concept in this interview. It is how the interlocutors "do" power negotiation, being mindful of the asymmetrical power relation and how Yasmina plays the power game by being mindful of the ascribed power dynamic, allowing the recruiter to take the lead, but also treating power as the elephant in the room. In other words, to play the power game, Yasmina reciprocates the facade of this being a friendly conversation as the interlocutors both work towards "faking friendship," but she takes the lead of the recruiter, enabling the recruiter to have power without resisting, or falling in the trap of the friendly nature of this interview. Star attempts to "downgrade" her "claims to authority" (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain 2007, p. 250), however, even in this attempt, Yasmina actively aligns herself in a more subordinate position within this context for example through laughter or aligning views with the recruiter's, which as discussed in this section can be analysed as a way of re-inscribing hegemony of interview roles. This enables the interlocutors to convey rapport as being natural in this arguably, somewhat unnatural context.

Secondly, Yasmina is also able to position herself in such a way that almost balances the scales of power. Through her knowledge and experience, whilst being a person who can hire, she has managed to make herself come across as potentially being useful to the recruiter and branch manager, as someone who can help to them. Not only could she be seen as someone who interviews well, enabling the recruiter to secure a placement leading to financial gain through Yasmina's interviewing abilities, but she could also have a secondary use as someone that could help this branch win work with the current company that she works for as Yasmina also deals with the internal hiring. Finally, emotional affiliation between the interlocutors enables them to build a strong rapport. Yasmina draws on multiple linguistic techniques to obtain an empathetic response, appealing to Star's compassionate instinct. Star responds with the required level of sympathy which prompts Yasmina to open-up towards Star giving

a more truthful response to the questions and therefore creating a stronger bond between the interlocutors. Therefore, strong alignment in: power dynamics, identity, positioning, views, knowledge & cultural knowledge, language and emotional affiliation enables the interlocutors to successfully build a strong and positive rapport, whilst contributing to the idea of sameness, so much so that Yasmina mentions that she found no "cultural differences" in her post-interview notes even though she interviews in a different country and with an interlocutor who is of a completely different cultural background.

4.5 Section 5 – Case Study: CA 035 Tina & Mukesh – Unsuccessful interview

4.5.1 Introduction

Reinforcing key themes related to: trust, power, gender dynamics and marketability, this section examines an unsuccessful recruitment interview where the interlocutors are of similar 'cultural' backgrounds. This interview lasted approximately 27 minutes. This recruitment interview should only be a *formality*. The prospective client is very keen to interview the candidate based on receiving the candidate's speculative CV through the recruitment agency. At this point, the interview has been set up for a *positive* recruitment interview outcome. However, contrary to the expectation, the candidate's struggle to perform a marketable candidate through his demonstration of cultural fit contributes towards an unsuccessful interview outcome, thus demonstrating how cultural fit can be contingent on interaction. With particular attention placed on the contextual and turn-by-turn sequence of the interview, it is evident that "misalignment" is a key reoccurring theme that emerges from this interview. Misalignment manifests itself in areas such as: performed identities, language style, formality, and views, resulting in the candidate not demonstrating good "cultural fit" in his interview performance.

Table 6a About the recruiter

About the Recruiter - Tina					
Age range:	30-35	Codes:	English London English Spanish	Lived elsewhere?	No
Gender:	Female	English L1?	Yes	Work:	Sales Customer service Recruitment Manager
Heritage:	Sri Lankan Spanish	Resided in:	West London	Education:	BA

About the Candidate - Mukesh					
Age range:	30-35	Codes:	English, London English Urdu	Lived elsewhere?	No
Gender:	Male	English L1?	No	Work:	Sales Customer service
Heritage:	Asian, Ugandan	Resided in:	West London	Education:	BA

The candidate and recruiter have many similarities, they both: have mixed heritage, were brought up in West London, are close in age, have similar levels of education from London based universities, work in sales environments, and share two distinct codes: English and London English. Using "culture" in a more fluid sense as described in the literature review of the thesis, both interlocutors seem to have many shared cultural backgrounds.

4.5.2 Interview introduction

The candidate, Mukesh and recruiter, Tina have engaged in a few phone calls prior to this interview. Mukesh did not turn up to a previous scheduled interview with one of Tina's team members. Tina, who conducts this interview is stepping in for another recruiter who had been in contact with the candidate. Tina is the HB branch manager, with nine years of experience as a recruiter for this company. Tina is very keen to meet Mukesh as his sales background and skills seem to be a good match for the sales role that she is looking after. It seems that at this stage, the interview should be a mere formality.

 Mukesh arrives fifteen minutes late to his interview and is accompanied by a friend, who waits for him outside of the interview room.

As the interview commences, Tina tries to find eye contact with Mukesh. She smiles at him and tries to ease him into the interview by offering him a glass of water.

Extract A

1. R: *(brings water)* there you go XXXXX [thank you]
2. C: [thank you]
3. R: how was your journey into today [okay]

4. C: [Yeah] ….it's pretty [quick]

5. R: [yeah] good I'm

6. pleased

7. C: I parked in Halfords so I'm scared of getting a ticket that's all that's on

8. R: oh oh in Halfords you should be okay then they're normally quite good

9. how long is your j- parking for

Mukesh politely thanks Tina for the glass of water. Tina also thanks Mukesh as she places the glass next to him. Tina asks about his journey. Coupland (2000) highlights that the "small talk" commonly found in contexts that include job interviews are important as "all talk carries social and affective meaning, along with its representational or task-focused aspects." (Coupland 2000, p.647) The aim of small talk at this stage is to minimise the social distance between two strangers, disguising the asymmetric power dynamic associate with this genre. This is because Tina aims to make Mukesh feel at ease before the interview commences. In a previous discussion with Tina, she explained to me that she always wants her candidates to feel comfortable so that she can "get the best out of her candidates." In this moment, it seems that both interlocutors want the same, positive interview outcome.

4.5.3 Language, identity & formality

There are multiple identities that emerge from this interview. First, there are the 'discourse identities' that are "tied with the sequence of adjacency pairs such as questioner- answerer, speaker-recipient" that become a "platform for larger social identities" such as the interviewer – interviewee identities (Georgakopoulou 2011, p.85). Secondly there are the "situational identities" that emerge from the way the interlocutors position both themselves and the other. Thirdly, there are also the "transportable identities" that the interlocutors carry with them (Zimmerman 1998) Finally, there are also 'shared' identities that both interlocutors affiliate with, this could include their: professional identities in sales and their local identities as Londoners as well as other similar demographics they share. In the following extracts it becomes clear that even though there are shared identities, it is their *perspectives* of these 'shared' identities that do not always align. On this, Gal (1978) states that "the speaker makes the choice as part of a verbal strategy to identify herself or himself with the

social categories and activities the code symbolises. The choice enables the speaker to express solidarity with that category or group of people" (p. 378). Taking this into consideration, it could be argued that Mukesh's use of language to identify himself is strategic, however this needs to be accepted by the gatekeeper for there to be a successful alignment in the acceptance of the identities involved.

The following example demonstrates "high language" use. This is business talk that is associated with "signifying kinds of power and solidarity, and they function to exclude those outside the high-status language community" as it is "not available to the ordinary person." (Hodge and Gunther 1988, p.53 – 54). Tina uses very specific "business language" in her question, language that suggests she already identifies Mukesh as being a businessperson, using shared "in language" associated with their shared "sales" identities which is reciprocated by Mukesh.

Extract B

769. what kind of KPIs are you used to meeting in your most recent

770. position at XXXXXXX

771. C: okay er five KGP per month two and a half hours talk time sixty

772. calls per day about that

773. R: Sixty calls per day

774. C: yeh

775. R: calls per day out bound

776. C: yeah

777. R: sorry what was the rest of it

778. C: 5 GP gross profit

779. R: yeah

780. C: and two and a half talk time daily

781. R: talk time being

782. C: spending time on the phone like for example each phone call one

783. phone call could be half an hour that I'm speaking to someone

784. R: right

Through their use of language, both interlocutors identify themselves as sales professionals. Mukesh responds to the question of KPIs with short sentences that incorporate figures, a very specific linguistic style used in sales business talk (lines 771, 773, 778). Mukesh also responds with sales-specific lexical items, using phrases such as: "talk time" (lines 771 & 780), "5 GP" and "gross profit" (line 778). As Mukesh is being put forward for a sales role, he is able to signal his sales identity through his language choice. He shows that he is motivated by earning money and material items:

Extract C

243. C: or if you hit your 65 percent threshold and you you-ca it's a sigh

244. of a relief as well an-and then plus there's the money side as well

245. R: yeah

246. C: if if you go to any successful company and you see the sales guys

247. the way to see the success is to go to the car park and see the cars

248. that are parked up there

249. R: yea—ah

250. C: they'll all be like Bimas and Benzes some will some with the Audi

251. R eight

252. R: yeah

253. C: they'll be for like the top sales guys

254. R: Audi R8's my [car ideal]

255. C: [yeah you know what I mean]

256. R: (*laughs*)

257. C: so erm I mean iii- I mean I'm not being like a materialistic or

258. thing but it's nice to enjoy the fruits of your labour

259. R: [yeah of course yeah absolutely]

260. C: [you know and I'm one of] those people

261. R: Oh okay and is that kind of your main motivator is that your

262. biggest motivator is kind of the material – the money [side of things]

263. C: [the money side] of things

264. yeah yeah yeah

Mukesh is able to narrate a believable story of what motivates him. In his opinion personal success and company success is demonstrated through the cars that in the "car park" (lines

247 & 248). This motivation comes across as convincing due to the clear picture he paints of success. He attempts to ensure that he is not being understood by the recruiter as "materialistic" (line 257), to which the recruiter affirms that she understands that it is "money" that motives him (lines 261-262), which is understandable as his sales roles are commission based. From a "sales identity" it is evident that there is an alignment in performance and acceptance of Mukesh's performed sales identity.

However, unlike the "high language" used by both interlocutors, another emerging identity is the urban identity signified through Mukesh's use of language as he names car manufacturers. In line 250, Mukesh does not use the actual concrete noun of the car manufacturers, but instead, choses to use more urban names of the car manufacturers "Bimas and Benzes." This is largely associated with early 2000's rap music. Such code could be described as an "anti-language," a code that helps "create group identity and to assert group difference from a dominant group" (Hodge and Gunther 1988 p53). Due to the association of these lexical items with a particular generation, it could be argued that Mukesh's lexical choice could be seeking to align with his own understanding of Tina, particularly through age (language taken through 2000s rap music) and upbringing, openly signalling that they have a shared identity. At this point, Tina neither accepts nor rejects this identity, she responds by mentioning that "Audi" (line 254) is her ideal car.

Throughout the interview Mukesh continues to use other forms of colloquial language that exists in his linguistic repertoire (*Blommaert & Backus, 2011; Gumperz 1972; Hymes 1972*) acquired from different life paths signalling various identities. On this, Gal (1978) states that "alternate codes within a linguistic repertoire are usually each associated with sub-groups in a community and with certain activities. It has been pointed out that a speaker's choice of code in a particular situation is part of that speaker's linguistic presentation of self" (p.378). He uses colloquial sales talk such as "hitting the phone," indexing his experience in sales. He uses the vernacular "dilly dally" (line 710) a typically cockney lexical item, as well as "innit" (line 622) and "cuz" which is very typical London vernacular, where the tag "innit" is described by Baummann (1996) as an "indianism" (Harris 2009 p.112) and "cuz" or "nah nah nah" 325 as Jamaican English. Acton & Daphinis (2000) recognise "London Jamaican" as being "first and foremost a language of adolescence and youth" (p.112). A code that is "mainly associated with the black youth culture of London, and its music," it has "currency among London youth

which extends beyond the community which might identify it as its ethnic language" (p113). Such language choice is powerful in terms of indexing other identities that Mukesh identifies with and, more importantly, choses to exhibit. Nevertheless, Mukesh may have misjudged the *level* of informality that the recruiter was willing to accept in this interview context as he later choses to use more vernacular phrases such as: "always up my" (line 684) and "didn't give a crap" (line 347). Even though the interlocutors share similar "west London background" where they are both exposed to such language, it is this level of informality conveyed in the type of vernacular language used by Mikesh that Tina does not accept as being "appropriate" for the interview. Tina specifically picks up on these phrases as mentioned in her post-interview questionnaire.

4.5.4 Future identities

In the following example, Mukesh provides an insight into his future aspirations. Mukesh sees his future in a management position. Mukesh's future aspirations as a sales manager align with Tina's current status as a branch manager. During Mukesh's depiction of his being a "great" manager in his own view, he discusses his view of women in sales environment, apparently oblivious to the fact that Tina is a woman in a sales environment who through her status as a branch manager has successfully climbed up the ranks in her career.

Extract D

742. C: Err but sometimes these things these things don't happen I mean

743. if I can if I can get into just erm you know like management level

744. where I'm taking care of like eigh' nine people

745. R: Yeah

746. C: o or five six people but I still want to be hands on where if if one of

747. the guys like have done all of their thirty calls a day thirty calls today

748. outbound calls but because they've been dealing with some of the

749. incoming calls I'm going to help them and say ok guys

750. R: Yep

751. C: you know what I'm going to do I'm going to do another twenty

752. calls with you guys

753. R: Yeah

754. C: You you I want sort of like be hands on with like

755. R: Manage at the front

756. C: Yeah

757. R: [have fun]

758. C: [Meet with] the guys sort of have fun as well with the guys and

759. make sure that the guys aren't scared and worried and some cuz you

760. get some females that are working in sales environment

761. (Recruiter looks up at the candidate)

762. C: n start crying because they're not hitting their target or they

763. haven't done enough phone calls and [people get worried]

764. R: [Yeah yeah yeah]

765. C: I just want everyone to be happy

766. R: I've seen men do that as well *(laughs)*

767. C: Yeah y- I just didn't mean to say it like that

768. R: Yeah no but I have *(laughs)* I have yeah yeah no absolutely and

769. what kind of KPIs are you used to meeting in your most recent

770. position at XXXXX

Mukesh mentions that his aspirations lie in having a management role in the future. Mukesh describes his style of management as he envisions himself managing eight or nine employees. He shortly changes his mind to seeing himself managing five or six members of staff so that he could be more "hands on," (line 754) by helping his team with an additional "20 calls" (line 751). Tina conveys that she understands the type of management style that Mukesh describes and states in line 755 that the type of managing style he is referring to is to "manage at the front" exemplifying her knowledge on the topic through her own *current* identity as a manager.

Georgakopoulou (2011) states that the "stories of future (projected) events" is a step towards "unravelling the complexities of identity work in narratives that do not fit the bill of such canonical narratives" (p.85). Even though there is the envisioned, future identity of a manager described by Mukesh, there is also the current identity of a manager that Tina assumes. Nevertheless, there are more identities that emerge. In Mukesh's future narrative as a manager, he shows particular concern for the women in a sales environment (lines 759- 760).

Tina instantly looks up at him as this catches her attention. Mukesh has not considered Tina's other "transportable" identity that relates to both her gender and profession. Tina is a female who has climbed up the ladder in a sales environment. Using humour in her rebuttal to this comment, she states that she has also seen men cry (line 766). Mukesh realises that he may have been offensive. He attempts to rectify the situation by stating that he "didn't mean" for it to come across in this way (line 767). Tina dismisses this by laughing, and making a final point that she definitely *has* seen this before (line 768) and then she moves on to the topic of KPIs (line 769). Tina shows her situated identity as the "interviewer" by taking control of the direction of the interview through her right to ask questions.

4.5.5 Positioning through performed identities

Mukesh conveys his awareness of acceptable interview practices, by correcting himself when he says something that he perceives to be wrong. In the following extract, Mukesh attempts to perform his version of an ideal candidate to the recruiter by enacting his interview answers in the client interview. Mukesh begins by acknowledging Tina's professional identity as a recruiter (lines 638-639).

Extract E

638. I'm giving you all this information [cus you're the recruiter] for your

639. client

640. R: [yeah   yeah of course]

641. C: but in a in a client setting I'd be very professional and give them

642. correct answers which won't penalise me or make them think that

643. I'm a plum

644. R: (laughs)

645. C: [y-y-you understand]

646. R: [wha-what] would be what would be the correct answer what

647. would you give if I said to you as an employer

648. C: yeah

649. R: and I said to you what's your reason for wanting to [leave] XXXXXXXX

650. C: [yeah]

651. R: what would your answer be to me

652. C: my answer would be that erm you know *(clears through)* I want

653. to progress and certain promises were made with regards to this

654. role when I was initially head hunted

655. R: yep

656. C: an derm they didn't adhere to those promises

657. R: yep

658. C: and they also said that there was a set OTE involved and that's

659. approximately eight thousand to nine thousand pounds less

660. R: yeah

661. C: and that promise wasn't kept as well even though I did hit targets

662. month in month out and I feel now I've been there for a reasonable

663. amount of time which is approximately two and a half years

664. R: Yeah

665. C: And I feel it's time for me to time for me to move on

666. R: Perfect yep that's fine perfect erm I think that great because

667. you've addressed that fact that you perhaps haven't had the

668. promises that were made to you but you haven't been too negative

669. and you haven't focused on being to negative on a client

670. There's nothing worse than going into an interview and

671. interviewing somebody when they're negative [about their] previous

672. employer

673. C: [Yeah yeah]

674. R: it's a no no just don't ever do it just try to stay as positive as you

675. [can]

676. C: [Okay]

677. R: On interview but before you interview with XXXXXXX we'll try and get

678. you in here for an interview as well so that we can just prep you

679. C: [cool]

Mukesh realises that he is not aligning with Tina's view of appropriately conducting himself in the interview setting. In this example, he realises that he is not acting professionally, which he believes is expected of him in this type of setting as he is aware that there are "correct answers" (line 642). There is a sense of irony as Mukesh juxtaposes the way that he should portray himself in an interview (lines 652-654), with his actual lexical choices such as "them think I'm a plum" (lines 642 – 643). His lexical choices are not received as professional. Tina

laughs and neither agrees nor disagrees with his comments. It seems that Tina may not be completely convinced with his answers and asks him to provide an example. Tina asks Mukesh what he would say if he were asked for his "reasons for wanting to leave" (line 649). Tina requests that Mukesh performs his response in the *actual* interview as he indicates that he would be professional (line 641). Mukesh fails to realise that this is a real interview and Tina is a gatekeeper. Following Mukesh's response, Tina rephrases her question indicating that this was not the answer she was after. Taking a more direct approach, Tina asks "what would your answer be to me" (line 651). Mukesh clears his throat in a way that signals that he is in character, playing a more professional version of himself in the client interview (lines 652 and 665). Mukesh is noticeably more articulate and avoids forms of hedging such as "sort of" and "kind of," which frequent appear in his regular speech. Hedging seems to be avoided in order to portray himself in a more serious and professional style. He uses more of the standard and incorporates legal lexical items in his utterances such as: "adhering to" (line 656) and "with regards to" (line 653). Tina agrees with what he has said but also implicitly disagrees with his approach. She mentions that he hasn't been "*too* negative" (line 668), implying that there is an element of negativity. She then provides Mukesh with some interview advice, positioning herself as a professional with experience in the field of interviews as she states that "there's nothing worse than…when they're negative about their previous employer" (line 670-671). She speaks about people in the third person, in a way that is implicitly directed at him. After Mukesh agrees, she becomes more direct "it's a no no just don't ever do it try to stay as positive as…" (line 674). She then demonstrates power in her answer as she refers to how she and the organisation can help him. The use of the first-person plural pronoun "we," (line 677) refers to herself, her team, and the organisation behind her, will "try" to provide Mukesh with interview preparation (678) to aid his interview technique.

4.5.6 Positioning Identities through acceptance of knowledge

In the following extracts a power struggle is present. Mukesh does not position Tina as an experienced recruitment manager who is knowledgeable in her area of expertise. The following extracts illustrate a power struggle that derives from the rejection of Tina's situational and social identities such as: a recruiter, as a gatekeeper and as the expert. In the

next example, Mukesh attempts to explain to Tina what a previous company he worked for did in "layman's terms."

486.   R: perfect and XXXXXXX what do they do

487.   C: they do two way err radios their head office is based in Croydon

488.   south London

489.   R: oh k you worked in Croydon

490.   C: nah nah nah they had ahh building one three nine nah nah sorry

491.   on the eastern perimeter road near Heathrow

492.   [they're up there]

493.   R: oh okay [Fine….. fine]

494.   C: an derm what they do is they sell two-way radios in layman's terms

495.   walkie-talkies

496.   R: Oh (high pitch) K right

497.   C: and these walkie-talkies are built with mobile telephones inside

498.   them

499.   R: right

500.   C: so the main target market was construction organisations like XXXXXXX

501.   or XXXXX or XXX or the ministry of defence.

Tina asks Mukesh about his previous employment. In response to the question of what his previous company does, Mukesh responds with where they are based followed by what they do. Mukesh follows the structure that Tina has set in the interview. When answering what this company did he explains that they "sell two-way radios" and simplifies this to "walkie talkies" which he states is in "layman's terms" so that Tina can understand. This utterance seems to have instigated a subtle reaction as Tina's tone increases when she says "oh" (line 496), a tone that suggests she may have taken offence to his comment. Tina noticeably tends to use feedback cues that suggest agreement or encouragement such as "perfect" or "yep," instead, in the few utterances that follow she replaces this with a less agreeable "right." Unpicking this exchange, the issue that arises can be best described as "mansplaining" (Solnit 2019), a pejorative, trending term also used by new stories, tweets, blogs etc., to highlight "how rude, unthoughtful, patronizing, condescending and sexist men can be (Lutzky & Lawson

2019, p. 2). Tina did not ask for the two-way radio to be explained to her, more specifically the use of the term "layman" as he explains this to her can be received as patronising. Mukesh assumes that this phrase requires a level of simplification for his intended audience. Tina's response signals that this was not received well without expressing disagreement.

Shortly after, Mukesh explains to Tina where a competitor recruitment agency is located. Tina indicates that she is aware of the location, but regardless, Mukesh continues to explain its whereabouts. Tina's response to this is more direct than in the previous example:

Extract G

581.   C: [that was] a temporary contract

582.   through XXXXX accounting in just up [there]

583.   R: [just] there

584.   C: (mumbles) just down there yeah.

585.   C: you know that little alleyway where you go through

586.   R: yes I know Reed

587.   C: yeah

In this extract Mukesh refers to another local recruitment agency that is a rival competitor for Tina's agency. The rival agency had previously placed Mukesh in a temporary role. Being one of this company's largest competitors, Tina is knowledgeable of who they are and where they are based. Whilst Mukesh describes where the rival agency is based in the area, Tina interrupts to state that it is "just there" (line 583). Tina is silenced, as Mukesh dismisses this interruption and continues to explain to Tina where the agency is based. This results in Tina taking a more direct approach as she raises her tone to state, "Yes I know XXXXX." This direct approach suggests that Tina may have taken offence to the continuation of being explained something that she has already stated that she is aware of. As a recruitment manager she is required to be knowledgeable of the other recruitment agencies in her "patch." By Mukesh providing further explanation to a topic that she addresses as being aware of is another example of how Mukesh can be seen to "mansplain," whilst disregarding the professional knowledge Tina has.

4.5.7 Views

Drawing on the topic of gender in Extract D, where Mukesh voices that he has witnessed women "cry" due to the high-pressured requirements of the role, failing to consider Tina's transportable identity and how such comments may be received. In the following extract Mukesh sheds a light on his view of women and their roles in society, which Tina describes as "traditional," highlighting a misalignment in their views of gender and roles in society.

Extract H

347. C: [people don't give a crap] erm men up there are very

348. traditional they make such a good living where their

349. wives… okay quality and everything but really does a

350. woman really want to get up early in the morning work

351. and then come back and then take care of the kids and do

352. the cooking

353. R: right right okay that's quite

354. C: or whatever else not that women have to do the

355. cooking I'm not s- being sexist

356. *R: (laughs)*

357. C: I'm just saying

358. R: that's quite traditional]

359. C: women can can really enjoy their life out there

360. R: Really

361. C: you know, cuz they just chill and the men are [like er]

362. R: [at work]

It should be noted that there are views based on stereotypes, more specifically their own "private stereotypes." These are each of the interlocutor's views "ascribed by an individual to a large percentage of the target group" (Hewstone & Giles 1986, p.272) that the interlocutors do not share. Mukesh opens the sequence by foregrounding the decision makers, the group that he sees control the mainstream view of being "traditional" – the men (lines 347-347). He then questions whether women *actually* want to work in addition to their duties of cooking and looking after the kids (lines 350-352). Mukesh positions women as being responsible for

household chores and for the children, whilst for women, working is an option that would normally be left to men. The rhetorical question "does a woman really want to get up early in the morning and work?" highlights this view as the common view (line 355). He uses double-voiced discourse (Bakhtin 1984), by expressing his view of women's values and silencing the view of the recruiter by assuming his view is shared with the recruiter. Mukesh omits Tina's opinion entirely as he does not ask her for her view. The question is asked as a rhetorical question on behalf of all women, as if it is the common notion that women do not want to work in addition to cooking and having to look after children. Tina looks at Mukesh quizzically. She slows her pace and lowers her tone as if she is processing what he is saying and tries to search for the right words as she slowly says, "right right okay that's quite." Mukesh interrupts Tina's utterance, silencing her view. He realises that she does not share the same view and responds by stating "or whatever else not that women have to do the cooking." Mukesh attempts to rectify the situation by confronting the elephant in the room "I'm not being sexist" (line 355). The discourse strategy used here resembles discourse strategies highlighted in van Dijk's (1992) work on 'Discourse and the denial of racism', where denial is used as a strategy of "positive ingroup presentation," that shows a speaker's awareness of the surrounding norms and values. It is found that "the more racist discourse tends to have disclaimers and denials. This suggests that language users who say negative things about minorities are aware of the fact that they may be understood as breaking the social norm of tolerance or acceptance" (p.89). Therefore, in line with the phrase "I'm not being racist," Mukesh's similar statement of denial "I'm not being sexist" conveys that he is also aware of the surrounding social norms of sexism and uses denial as a positive self-presentation technique within his attempt at positive impression management (Brown & Levinson 1987; Brewer 1998; Goffman 1959; Tedeschi 1981).

Tina laughs and calls this view "traditional" (line 358). Tina's lexical choice positions her views of women as modern, and the opposing view of women as archaic. The candidate attempts to further his statement by mentioning how women "can" really "enjoy their life" in Uganda, as they can just "chill" (line 361). This again implies that women should not have to work and can afford to enjoy their lives by not working whilst men have no choice but to work. The verb "can" in women can enjoy their lives implies that women are able to enjoy their lives since they have that option because they do not have to work, whereas men cannot, because they

must work. There is a hesitation in line 361 as Mukesh does not finish his sentence, almost conveying that realises that his views are not being accepted. Instead, Tina sharply interrupts by finishing off his sentence with a sense of ridicule, as much to state that he understands that men would be "at work." Mukesh then compares this way of living with a fictional 1978 US TV series Dallas that is "centred around a saga of lust, greed, power and sex... done with big-budget glamor – high-fashioned wardrobes, richly furnished home..." (Creeber 2015, p.75).

Extract I

363. C: they like eh if you're familiar with the programme

364. Dallas

365. R: yeah Dallas yeah

366. C: yeah like

367. R: yeah of course

368. C: like JR Ewin   [they're all business] men out there

369. R: [yeah yeah yeah yeah]

370. C: so they're very transitional and the woman really just

371. they always dress up all the time and

372. R: oh nice

373. C: and they have like servants and stuff like that

374. R: oh really

375. C: so it's it's it it's like where it's like where if if if you

376. earn a really good good good good let's just say if you

377. earn a hudred grand a year

378. R: yeah

379. C: that that sort of money, take it up there every year you

380. could live like a king

381. R: yeah course

382. C: [could live like a king]

383. R: [yeah ye-absolutely]

Some may argue that Dallas was a programme where women were objectified and seen as serving men, which is a very interesting choice of comparison when aligning his ideological point of view from the male gaze of women. This is highlighted when he mentions that women

"dress up all the time" and have "servants." He uses this programme to support his own view of what women can do with their time if they do not work. The view is that women must all want to dress up all the time as they have the time to look after themselves without the need of having to do very much else. This time Tina does not react and instead, she provides a response that neither agrees nor disagrees with his utterance as she says, "oh really." Tina expresses no opinion.

Mukesh later shows awareness of how he may have come across in the interview and begins to overcompensate for perhaps coming across as sexist in the interview. He attempts to prove to Tina that he is not sexist by using an anecdote of how he was able to learn from women in his life.

Extract J

874. R: Yeah perfect did you learn about that at university was it [or]

875. C: [Well] partly at university the rest

876. was erm some of it was from my ex-wife and er other ladies that I have had in my life over

877. the years

878. R: (Laughs)

879. They teach you excel hey

880. C: Nah nah I mean it's just like I mean it's like because what I've

881. noticed cuz my sister- I did a bachelors -my sister done a bachelors

882. and a masters and the way I see it is women are more cleverer from

883. what I've noticed

884. R: Yeah

885. C: Well your female I know you're going to say nah no they're not

886. but some are some aren't and from what I've noticed a lot of women

887. have really got their head screwed on right

888. R: Yeah

889. C: You can learn a lot from them

890. R: Yeah you can learn a lot from everybody that's why it's so

891. important to network [and sort of get] yourself out there

Mukesh describes his time at university, where he learned how to use Microsoft Excel. Mukesh brings up the topic of women, by indicating that he learned how to use excel from

the women in his life. Tina laughs and turns this into a joke about how women can teach Excel. He then compares women's intelligence to that of men. In his example he states that his sister has a master's degree and he considers her a lot more "cleverer" (line 882). He then mentions that "he knows" that the recruiter will disagree with what he has to say (line 885) as if men being smarter than women is the common view. He then makes a statement based on a conclusion he has made about women, namely that women have their "head screwed on right," (line 887) mentioned in a way that should be novel news to the recruiter. The recruiter approaches these comments by firstly using a positive agreement "yeah," and then disagrees by addressing this conversation collectively and stating that it is possible to learn from "everyone." She then relates this to work, and networking, diverting the topic away from binary gender differences.

4.5.8 Gatekeeping Power

Ultimately Tina holds power as the gatekeeper. After assessment of Mukesh's personality and traits, Tina manages to get Mukesh to agree to having interview training without coming across as offensive. Tina addresses the requirement of needing interview training in an indirect and subtle manner.

Extract K

829. R: yeah that will be great just to get an idea if you and obviously if

830. you need any consultative advice before your interviews

831. C: Yeah

832. R: cause it's been a while since you've been to a formal interview cuz

833. you've been so loyal to XXXXX

834. R: so if you need advice on before you go on on interviews because it

835. can be nerve wracking for anybody regardless of whether you're a

836. salesperson or not

837. C: Yeah

838. R: we can help you and we can give you some consultative advice

839. C: yeah

840. R: before you go regardless of whether that's through us or through

841. XXXX or through whoever

842. C: Yeah

843. C: Yeah yeah sometimes you forget the name because all you look at

844. is the basic and OTE

The recruiter starts off with a positive perspective, suggesting how "great" interview preparation is. She then repeats the preposition "if" (line 829) to emphasise that he has a choice and she isn't forcing this on him. Although, it is evident that Tina may be reluctant to put Mukesh forward for a client interview if he does not have any interview practice. Tina then highlights why he may need some interview help, because he might be out of practice having been so "loyal" (line 833), thereby complementing the candidate for his loyalty. Tina attempts to manipulate Mukesh into having interview practice by highlighting that interviews are hard for everyone, even for salespeople like himself (lines 834-836). There is another interesting persuasive method used here whereby she builds a problem (line 832), justifies the problem (line 835) and then she becomes the solution (line 838). Tina is persuading Mukesh to have free interview training as she openly suggests that he needs practice. The recruiter strokes the candidate's ego in order to get him to do what she wants him to do. But the condition is, if he goes for this preparation, he will be put forward. Here we have what can be seen as "institutional power" which has been "exercised" (Foucault 1982, p. 216) by Tina. Therefore, by answering the fundamental questions Foucault (1982) highlights when understanding how *power* is exercised: "what is power?" "where does it come from" and "what happens." As the gatekeeper, Tina has the backing of institutional power, where through her position, she is able to find Mukesh a job. However, she exercises her power by giving Mukesh an ultimatum. Mukesh will need to have interview training if he wants to proceed with the second stage interview with her client. It should be noted that even if the client is keen to meet Mukesh after reviewing his CV, the recruiter still has the power to decide against it.

4.5.9 Post Interview - Recruiter's notes

Following the interview, the recruiter described the candidate as "enthusiastic," with a good sales background. She mentions that "he comes across arrogant at first as he puts on a sales front but actually he's really nice." She described him as "definitely a west London boy, he felt relaxed with me, he said "crap" and "plum" he tried to use sayings but got it wrong." She

continues by observing that "it's not a cultural thing, but more of a west London way of talking, dropping his T's. He mentioned that he felt relaxed." The recruiter did not feel that there were any cultural differences and she did not make him do any in-house tests. However, she did feel that he would need some more practice with his interview skills, and she was not fully convinced that he would be completely reliable. During this point in time, she said that she could put him forward for internal sales, account management, SAP or CRM roles as he has a background in account management.

Upon my return to the agency three months later, I asked for an update on Mukesh's job search. Initially, looking quite concerned, Tina then smiled at me and stated that they will not be placing Mukesh as he is not a good "fit" for the clients that she works with. During this period, he had some more interactions with the agency, which after not being placed for any positions, he called the agency a waste of time. There were notes on the company CRM of the emails that were passed back and forth.

4.5.10 Candidate's thoughts of the interview

On a scale of 1-5 the candidate rated the interview as being 3, average. He felt that he would "perform better in an actual interview." He did not prepare for this interview and did not feel that he encountered any difficulties in this interview. The candidate wanted to use "relaxed" language. He is "usually very formal," but he felt relaxed. He felt that the recruiter was looking for someone who is well mannered, well spoken, concise, slow speaking, good manners" and who can communicate clearly. The candidate felt that the interview was engaging and that it was like sitting with a friend. He felt that the interviewer's style and language was "better" than he expected. He felt that he could have improved if he had "taken it more as an interview".

4.5.11 Conclusion

Taking into consideration both the candidate and the recruiter's reflections on this interview, there are a distinct misalignment in key areas of their performed identities, views and language. This has affected what should have been a very successful interview in terms of everything being set up promisingly for this candidate. It should be mentioned that coming

from diverse cultural backgrounds, the interlocutors have different interpretations and understandings of the communicative event and its expectations, i.e., pluralised "indexical interpretation" which would have placed "significant limits to negotiability" (p.8). One of the key areas to take from this example is that to some degree, using the information provided in the pre-questionnaire forms, both interlocutors share their backgrounds to a certain extent on paper, however, there are differences in their views about what is acceptable in the interview context. Therefore, stressing that these are clear "challenges to traditional ideas about the achievability of mutual understanding and the centrality of shared convention." (Blommaert & Rampton 2011, p.8).

Mukesh performance did not fit with what Tina expected as being a "competent performance" of this genre (Blommaert 2007, p.2). However, it must also be taken into consideration that Tina also had a role to play in Mukesh's performance of his identity construction of an appropriate "sales-like" candidate." It cannot be ignored that in Mukesh's reflection of the interview he mentions that "it was like sitting with a friend." In Mukesh's perspective, this therefore gives a reason as to why he may have been informal and "relaxed." From this view, it could be argued that Tina was in fact a "co-author" (Georgakopoulou 2011, p. 84). Mukesh has understood that when speaking to "a friend" it is acceptable to be informal, therefore Tina's role in acting like a friend made him not feel as if this was an "actual" interview. Conversely, according to Tina, as mentioned earlier in this section, she aims to obtain the best from her candidates by making them feel relaxed. To truly understand the candidates to see if they will be good fits for her clients, she will need to obtain a true version of them. According to Duncombe and Jessop (2012), interviewers "'do rapport' by 'faking friendship' in order to encourage the interviewee to open up" (p.119) through a more "personalised approach" that demands management of "their appearance, behaviour and self-presentation in such a way as to build rapport and trust with each individual respondent" instead of standardising the interview (p.110). From the perspective of the interviewer, the recruiter can assess "personality and behaviour" (Blackman 2002) as the candidate is freer to reveal their personality helping the recruiter to build a picture of the candidate. Conversely, rapport building in this example has masked the asymmetrical power relationship between the interlocutors, convincing the candidate that it was "like sitting with a friend." It is

however, up to the candidate to use this opportunity to perform a *likable* character that will also align with the recruiter's idea of a *marketabl*e candidate.

The candidate's ability to perform cultural fit, goes hand in hand with performing a likable and marketable candidate. The concept of marketability indexes the ultimate goal of the recruiter. The recruiter aims to successfully place candidates in suitable roles with acquired companies in their client base for financial gain. The recruiter will need to first market or "spec out" the candidate to the client, and if the speculative CV has had success, and the client wants to interview the candidate, the recruiter will need to trust that the candidate can perform well in the interview and impress the client. In this example, Mukesh has been described as not a "good fit" for the clients Tina works with, indicating that in Tina's assessment of Mukesh's performance, she is not willing to market Mukesh to other clients, even though he has the relevant skills and experience. Mukesh is not seen as a marketable candidate that will be able to display "fit" with prospective organisations in an interview. Tina does not define what exactly she believes her clients will be looking for in terms of fit, however, Tina mentions that it is something she has gaged from her own working relationships with her clients.

In addition to likability and marketability, successful performance of a trustworthy candidate that has been understood by the recruiter is significant in this interview as Tina has labelled Mukesh as not someone that she could rely on. Mukesh is seen as untrustworthy, and this has contributed towards his chances of being put forward to future roles. In this example, not only does Tina worry about the candidate being a good fit, but she also worries about whether the candidate would turn up to an interview with her client, where she could personally lose face, whilst impacting the company's reputation surrounding the calibre of candidate's they provide to organisations.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The key findings that pertain to the research questions of this study are discussed in this chapter. This chapter commences with the problem statement before discussing solutions that derived from the findings in this research. This research aimed to understand: how interlocutors perform cultural fit in a superdiverse recruitment interview context, and what makes some recruitment interviews successful and others unsuccessful? It also gives key consideration to the linguistic and paralinguistic features. The findings from the research questions form the main contribution of this research: the 9 areas of cultural fit. The bottom-up approach used when drawing on ethnography and interactional sociolinguistics enabled the emergence of the nine following areas: shared knowledge, views, power, code, formality, cultural backgrounds, identities, positioning and emotions.

This chapter will elaborate on the findings that are very specific to the recruitment interview such as: the requirement for the candidate to play a "power game" and participate in "faking friendships" in order to be perceived as marketable, the recruiters acting an enabler of cultural fit performance, the imperative nature of the recruiter's ability to provide an equal level playing field for all candidates in super-diverse settings, and finally, the recruitment interview being understood as a communicative event where the performance of cultural fit is "co-constructed."

This chapter is divided into the following four sections: 1) section 1, discusses the findings that pertain to the 5 case studies, 2) section 2, discusses the collective findings from all 30 of the interviews and questionnaires and how this remains relevant alongside the current developments in robotics and AI that are aimed at mitigating bias in the recruitment process 3) section 3, explains how to use the 9 areas of cultural fit and 4) section 4 further discusses this study in the context of the literature.

5.2 Section 1:The findings

5.2.1 The recruitment interview context – the problem statement

As addressed within the literature review, the concept of a "British job interview" proves to be problematic when researching job interviews in superdiverse contexts. According to previous literature in the field, the challenge faced by minority groups in particular is that they are required to align with the ideals of a one hegemonic view, this suggests that "those who are least knowledgeable about the British interview have more difficulty aligning themselves to the interviews and so face additional interactional demands during its course" (Roberts, Campbell & Robinson 2008, p.141). By acknowledging diversity in the gatekeeping practices found in cosmopolitan areas such as London, job interviews in such contexts can be seen as a significantly complex phenomenon. In other words, the hegemonic view is understood on an institutional level, yet within the parameters of this study, the view of interview practices is based upon the recruiter's own understanding of the world. The recruitment interview set within a superdiverse context is a place where gatekeepers may have different cultural backgrounds, resulting in disparities in views and perspectives among interviewers. This can therefore prove to be difficult for a candidate to do cultural fit correctly. From this stance, anyone who interviews in a superdiverse context can be at risk of being dismissed over a mismatch in cultural fit. Moreover, this perspective highlights the complexity of a candidate having to align with the norms set by the: recruiter, agency and hiring client company, which is not apparent in the previous literature due to the lack of definition surrounding the recruitment interview and how this differs from a business/client job interview. Such views are linked to a varied and dynamic concept of "cultural fit." This is a problem that is especially relevant to the recruitment agency style of interview, where an assessment model is based on the recruiter's: individual views, understanding of the hiring company's company culture and their own perception of the agency's culture. As a result, the introduction of this addition layer of complexity, suggests that a candidate must possess the ability to align with the differing views and requirements of their potentially culturally diverse assessors – the recruiters. The particular skill that is required is adaptability in order to be seen as "marketable" by the recruiter. It was also found that specific to the recruitment interview setting (which is explained in this study as being different to a business/client interview setting), a candidate's marketability is assessed through the power game that they are invited to play. The power game is one where the candidate is required to show both

interpersonal and professional skills that takes place within the faking of friendship dynamic. This dynamic is one where there are levels of acceptable informality in displaying this form of friendship that is deemed suitable by the recruiter. In addition to the requirement of successfully displaying friendship, the candidate must come across as: personable, knowledgeable and likeable. The perception of which lies with the recruiter's own views and understandings.

Another finding that was addressed in relation to this form of interview within the case studies is the concept of cultural fit. Cultural fit is a term widely used by recruiters and is acknowledged by both recruiters and candidates as a credible basis for accepting or rejecting applicants for a job post. This phrase, on the other hand, is poorly defined and can imply a variety of things to various people. It therefore raises the question of what is meant by culture and whose culture? Although cultural fit is regarded as important, many people are unaware of what it entails. As a result, the issue of recruiters' differing perspectives on what constitutes a "good candidate" that stems from cultural diversity is raised, highlighting the need for this to be addressed. It was found that when recruiters use "cultural fit" as a justification for discarding candidates, they refer to their own interpretations of "cultural fit." Noticeably, in interview contexts, it is a term that can be used superficially or loosely, providing no real feedback, but accepted as a valid parameter. It is therefore used as an acceptable term to justify why a candidate is unsuccessful, without necessarily needing to provide further information. In this sense, this can be seen an acceptable method of discrimination and a way of hiding biases behind a well-accepted phase. In the recruitment setting, this phrase was used when the recruiter did not assess the candidate as being marketable for the positions that the recruiter is recruiting for. Linking this statement to a super-diverse context, the additional problem that derives from the lack of structure in the recruitment interview, and the not-so-well defined, subjective nature of cultural fit (where gatekeeper's perceptions can vary based on different ways of decoding meaning), suggests that everyone that interviews in a super-diverse recruitment context is susceptible to being dismissed for reasons that relate to cultural fit. Going somewhat against the grain from previous research as set out in the literature review, this suggests that a framework is necessary to avoid cultural fit being used as a means of discrimination and for interviewing candidates to be given more of a fair chance at interview success.

As touched on in the previous paragraph, noticeably there was also a lack of structure in the recruitment interviews analysed in this study. Recruiters had various methods of recruiting and as reported in this thesis, did not ask the same questions to the candidates that were interviewed. This contradicts previous research where tensions have been described between what is seen as the standardisation of the interview design and candidate cultural diversity (Roberts 2021, p.4). Instead, the case studies in this research illustrate a lack of standardisation, and in some cases (taking Zenab & Steve's interview as an example), the absence of a standard structure can also prove to be discriminative in superdiverse recruitment interview contexts. In this view, the recruitment interview can be seen as an interpersonal process (Rivera 2012), one that carries subjective impressions (for example, a recruiter's liking of a candidate). In earlier research, the process of liking a candidate has been seen as being subjective, where homosociality and homofily exist within the decisions that are made (Rivera 2012 & 2015). It has therefore been argued that subconsciously or not, recruiters look for similarities. In particular, the hiring process is where "cultural matching" takes place, and where recruiters assess competency and look for "culturally similar" candidates (Rivera 2015, p.999). For instance, Bencharit et al. (2018) suggest that alignment in emotions can affect the outcome of the interview. The necessity of alignment to show similarities has also been found in the interviews analysed in this study. Alignment in certain areas, can result in a favourable interview outcome. The specific areas found in this study will be detailed under the explanation of the 9 areas of cultural fit in this chapter. In this regard, the reliance on the recruiter's personal views, coupled with the lack of standardisation suggests that this is a process that is heavily reliant on the recruiter's views and understandings of this setting, which allows for subjectivity in a way that can differ between different gatekeepers in superdiverse contexts. Consequently, not all candidates were given the same opportunities to be successful in the interview. The findings in this study also suggest that there was additional complexity within the diverse recruitment interview setting, as not all recruiters decode and encode meaning in the same way and, not all recruiters shared the same views. The following section will address what this means in relation to the concept of doing cultural fit in the recruitment interview.

5.2.2 Performing cultural fit: a solution discovered through the ethnographic findings

As addressed in the problem statement, there are two fundamental issues that have been brought to light in this research: 1) the concept of a "British interview" that takes place in a superdiverse setting, particularly where previous research has excluded the fact that in such settings, recruiters may have different cultural backgrounds and various views. 2) Dismissing candidates on the basis of not being a good cultural fit, where no framework is in place to show how cultural fit can be achieved. In this research it has been identified that there are specific criteria in relation to what cultural fit means within a recruitment context, setting it apart from the business/client job interview. The recruitment interview process is not standardised in a way that has been described in previous literature in the field. Through this context, the ethnographic approach used in this thesis enabled an in-depth understanding of interview success through real interview performance, whilst questioning how candidates *do cultural fit* in their culturally diverse recruitment interviews.

According to the ethnographic research, it was found that *it is* possible to perform "cultural fit" in a superdiverse recruitment interview context even when the interlocutors are from different cultures. Candidates were able demonstrate similarities by performing "cultural fit" in interviews, even if the interlocutors seemed to be culturally different. Success in demonstrating "cultural fit" with one another derived from the interlocutors' ability to successfully align with each other. In addition, the analysis illustrated that while the candidate is expected to demonstrate and perform cultural fit, the interview outcome is also influenced by the recruiter's ability to execute and perform cultural fit themselves in the interview. Together, the interlocutors co-construct the interview outcome.

Taking this into consideration, by using ethnography as the methodological approach, it was found that there were seven main outcome possibilities that took place in relation to the interlocutors performance of cultural fit and the interview outcome. The first possibility is where a recruiter enables cultural fit with the candidate. In this instance, the recruiter minimises the risk of penalising the candidate for being "different to themselves" and avoids the possibility of decreasing the candidate's chances of not performing good cultural fit and therefore, being put forward for a role. The second possibility is where the recruiter does not perform cultural fit. In this scenario, a recruiter does not give the candidate a fair chance, making the interview more difficult for the candidate. The third scenario relates to how the

candidate performs cultural fit with the recruiter. If cultural fit is performed in a way that aligns with the performance and expectation of the recruiter, the candidate is accepted by the recruiter as a good cultural fit. Dissimilar to the previous example, the fourth possibility is where a candidate does not perform cultural fit with the recruiter, or to the degree in which the recruiter believes is good cultural fit. With this possibility, by not showing good cultural fit, this impacts the candidate's chances of being put forward for current or perspective roles. The fifth outcome is where neither the recruiter nor the candidate performs cultural fit, therefore the recruiter does not enable cultural fit to take place, and the candidate does not perform cultural fit that aligns with the recruiter's view of cultural fit. This decreases the likelihood of a successful interview outcome. Dissimilarly, the final outcome is where both interlocutors perform cultural fit. The recruiter enables cultural fit and the candidate successfully performs cultural fit that meets the recruiter's perspective of good cultural fit. The recruiter gives the candidate a fair chance at doing well in the interview. The candidate has a better chance of being understood and not being disregarded if the recruiters acknowledge their own prejudices and try to comprehend the candidate's behaviour especially as the candidate has met the job criteria on paper. Where the candidate successfully demonstrates cultural fit, this enables them to be perceived as likable and therefore marketable. A candidate that is understood as marketable to the recruiter greatly increases their chances of interview success. So much so, that it has been noticed that a recruiter may go out of their way to find a marketable candidate a role, to the extent of sending their CV as speculative to their clients and other businesses, in hope of securing the candidate a job. Ultimately, successful co-construction of cultural fit through alignment enables the interlocutors build a strong rapport and increases the likelihood of interview success.

After careful examination of the data, it was discovered that the following 9 factors contributed towards the way in which interlocutors successfully displaying cultural fit. This addresses the study's research question that aimed to understand what makes some interviews successful and others unsuccessful and more specifically what these mechanisms were. It was found that misalignment in the following key areas contributed towards a negative interview outcome, whilst alignment in these specific areas contributed towards interview success:

Table 7 - 9 areas of cultural fit

	Candidate:	Justin	Steve	Mukesh	Surjeet	Yasmina
	Recruiter:	Star	Zenab	Tina	Jennifer	Star
9 Areas of cultural fit	Views	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
	Identity	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
	Backgrounds	✓	✗	Shared, not aligned ↑	✗	✓
	Emotional	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
	Formality	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
	Positioning	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
	Codes	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
	Shared knowledge	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
	Power		✓	✗	✗	✓
Interview Outcome		**Successful**	**Unsuccessful**	**Unsuccessful**	**Unsuccessful**	**Successful**

This table shows the differences between the successful and unsuccessful interviews, and the 9 areas of cultural fit they aligned with. Yasmina and Justin aligned in all 9 areas of cultural fit and both had a successful interview outcome.

This section will now summarise how alignment or misalignment in each of the above areas contributed towards the co-construction and performance of cultural fit, which had an impact on the interview outcome. It should be noted that the following areas are not exclusive to each other as exemplified in the analysis of the recruitment interviews.

5.2.2.1 Power dynamics

The power dynamic in a recruitment interview has proven to be a noteworthy factor in this form of interview. It has been observed that within a recruitment interview, masked power takes shape in the form of "faking friendships" (a construct that is specific to the recruitment interview). In comparison to the client interview, the recruitment interview is more relaxed. The recruiters aim to achieve the more relaxed approach through the method of faking friendships with the candidate. Consequently, this requires the candidate to be knowledgeable of this style of interview for them to succeed as the candidate must: a)

replicate and correctly respond with faking friendship towards the recruiter, whilst b) being conscious of the fact that the recruiter is still a gatekeeper and that their power is being disguised as the recruiter assesses the candidate. Below illustrates how power dynamics manifest in three interviews which have been reported in the previous sections:

In Star's interview with Yasmina, Yasmina has understood, and plays what is described in this study as "the power game." The power game requires the candidate to acknowledge and understand that there is an asymmetrical power dynamic, whilst aligning with this idea of a superficial friendship. Yasmina illustrates that she is very aware of the hidden power dynamic, allowing Star to take the lead as she works to align with Star's position. It is also observed that humour within this context also played a role in indexing the power dynamic, as it reinscribed the hegemony of the roles of recruiter and candidate. Yasmina does not resist the ascribed power roles, which Surjeet does as she is interviewed by Jenifer, being detrimental to Surjeet's interview success. Mukesh on the other hand, falls into the trap of the friendly façade and states that he felt as if he were speaking to a friend, as such he seemed to have misunderstood that the recruiter was a gatekeeper and not a friend.

There are rules associated with the power dynamic, where the candidate must subordinate and align with the recruiter's ascribed power whilst conforming with the friendly dynamic. Surjeet does not conform to the requirements governed by the over-ruling, asymmetrical power dynamic. Surjeet does not submit to the relevant recruiter and candidate power dynamic. This is suggested by the interlocutors' struggle of control in the interview. The interlocutors speak over one another, ignore each other, and continue to hold the floor whilst the other attempts to take the floor. Sujeet tries to assert her control from the moment she enters the interview; attempting to own the space and lead the conversation, whereas Jenifer seeks to assume power by not reacting or making eye contact, relying on silence as a powerful tool to reclaim control of the interview. The question-answer sequence that is specific to this context, ascribed to the roles, and enables the recruiter to assert control over the topic and direction of the communicative event is violated. Surjeet occasionally ignores Jenifer's questions, she continues to talk over Jenifer, and interrupts Jenifer in the middle of her utterance to tell Jenifer what she instead believes to be crucial information that will help her get a role. Jenifer attempts to use politeness strategies instead of a direct approach to assume control. Jenifer uses discourse markers such as "perfect" or "brilliant" *twenty-eight times* in

the interview as a method of attempting to change the topic. Surjeet ignores these attempts and continues talk on topics that she wants to talk about. Surjeet reacts fittingly only after Jenifer takes a more direct approach, stopping Surjeet mid-utterance and assertively stating that they will be starting from the back of Surjeet's CV. Surjeet responds to the structure. Structure appears to be crucial in where the issue lies. Jenifer's questions are vague, allowing Surjeet to cover all the bases in her answers of what she believes the recruiter wants to hear. The open-ended questions and lack of structure gives Surjeet the freedom to continue to talk about what she feels the recruiter is looking for in her answer, attempting to steer the conversation in the direction that she feels is appropriate. It is noticed however, that where Jenifer does not take control of the direction of the interview, she is unable to obtain all the information she requires to assess the candidate's fit for the roles she has available. There are further implications of the interlocutors not adhering to the norms of their assigned positions, as the interview progresses this leads to tensions and further misunderstandings.

When it comes to confronting the power dynamic, it is observed that a candidate can do so in a constructive way that can lead to a positive outcome. Dissimilar to previous research in the field that depicts the powerless candidate, a candidate in a recruitment setting has the ability to balance scales of power by being marketable as well as having connections. For example, a marketable candidate could be seen by the recruiter as someone who, could secure them a placement and as a result may earn them good commission. In the same way, a candidate with relevant professional contacts, could be seen as an opportunity to help the recruiter secure new business, and as a result will be seen as valuable and therefore, have power. An example of a candidate raising their position in the interview through their marketability and having contacts with businesses that the recruiter wanted to secure work with is Justin's interview. Justin augmented the scales of power by demonstrating his value, so much so that Star mentions in the interview that she did not have a role for him at that moment, but she will certainly find something for him. Star managed to successfully put Justin forward for a suitable position in only three weeks. In effect, it is noticed that by performing cultural fit, the candidate can tip the power scale in their favour. Through demonstrating fit the candidate can increase their currency and value, and therefore increase their power in this context.

The analysis of the interviews illustrated that power was a crucial, recurring theme that requires the interlocutors to successfully play, what can be described as a "power game" by acknowledging and occasionally playing tribute to the asymmetric power dynamic through naturally performing friendliness and informality in an unnatural setting, staying within the unwritten rules (e.g. allowing the recruiter to lead and ask questions). However, it is not to say that the power dynamic is static. Whilst the candidate submits to the governing power relationship of the recruitment setting, the candidate can also elevate their power status through demonstrating that they are good at doing "cultural fit" and as a result, they are valuable to the recruiter by being a good commodity that can make the recruiter money.

5.2.2.2 Shared knowledge

Shared knowledge has been an important factor in the way in which the interlocutors established good rapport through their participation in the "faking friendship" process (Duncombe & Jessop 2012) by demonstrating informality through informal topics that they are both knowledgeable of. Yasmina and Star demonstrate shared knowledge of: Iranian food, local companies, the local area and a mutual person in common. The mutual person in common is Yasmina's colleague who had previously interviewed with Star. With various areas of shared knowledge that the interlocutors were able to draw upon, they were able to have more friendly, and less formal discussions. The interlocutor's shared knowledge and multiple discussions surrounding local: companies, locations, and restaurants, enabled them to affiliate and identify as locals.

Shared knowledge of recruitment practices has also been linked to power. There is a key moment where Yasmina conveys her knowledge of recruitment agencies and reveals that she is also an interviewer. This knowledge places Yasmina in a position of power, as she demonstrates knowledge of the recruitment process, and aligns herself as an insider, whilst positioning herself as someone who could be useful in lead generation. The power balance is more even because she shows that she might be able to assist the recruiters with her knowledge.

Dissimilarly, in Steve and Zenab's interview they did not display similar knowledge of common interview practices. Steve highlights that he has not been involved in any face-to-face, formal recruitment agency interviews as he normally has a few informal exchanges with agencies that specialise in blue collar work. Zenab is a recruiter who specialises in office support positions rather than blue-collar work. Based on this alone, it is evident that a shared knowledge and understanding of the interview is missing. Both interlocutors' experience this interview differently to their previous experiences in interviews. Unfortunately, Zenab's lack of knowledge in blue collar interview practices coupled with not asking Steve the right questions to exhibit his expertise, does not give Steve a fair chance at interview success.

This is remarkably similar to Surjeet's interview with Jenifer, as they also misalign in their knowledge of the expectations that surround a recruitment interview. Surjeet does not align with the hidden power dynamic. Surjeet attempts to take control of the interview by trying to give Jenifer all the information that *she* believes is necessary to help her secure a role. As a result, Surjeet attempts to exhibit her knowledge, but in doing so, she does not allow Jenifer to ask the right questions and manages to speak over Jenifer when Jenifer attempts to get the information she needs to assess Surjeet's suitability for prospective roles. In the same way, Jenifer asks Surjeet to confirm her reason for leaving each of the roles on her CV, a repetitive question that (as evidenced from her other interviews) she asks all her candidates. In this particular context, Surjeet's work durations were not considered very long due to working temporary roles, however, Surjeet misunderstands the reason for the repetition of this question and takes this negatively, leading to instances of hostility and misunderstandings between the interlocutors.

The key points from this section are: being seen as knowledgeable, sharing the same knowledge to discuss a topic and the interlocutors having the same shared knowledge can be beneficial towards building a good rapport, and in some cases, this can enable the interlocutors to avoid instances of communicative turbulences and misunderstandings.

5.2.2.3 World Views

Differentiating 'world views' from 'shared knowledge,' interlocutors may share the same knowledge (e.g. the local area) but may not necessarily have the same view of the local area.

Yasmina and Star are knowledgeable of Iranian food but have very different views of Iranian food. It is the way in which the interlocutors negotiate a middle ground of a shared view that is significant. It is this eventual alignment in the interlocutor's views that had an impact on how the interlocutors demonstrated "cultural fit." Yasmina demonstrates her ability of being able to re-align and accept different views to her own in a way that does not threaten the recruiter's face. A prime example of this is where Yasmina initially states that she does not normally dine in Iranian restaurants as in her opinion, the food is too heavy. Dissimilarly, Star declares her predilection for the food served at the Iranian restaurants, to the extent of declaring her and her colleagues' strong affiliation to their local Iranian restaurant as they are regular customers. Instead of revisiting the fact that Yasmina does not find Iranian restaurant food appealing, she has understood Star's predilection for Iranian restaurant food, and due to this, Yasmina speaks positively about other attributes that she likes about Iranian restaurants, such as the decor. Yasmina also uses the lens of her friends to discuss their appreciation for Iranian restaurant food and how she takes them to these local restaurants as a basis of aligning with Star's view. It is noteworthy that Yasmina does not disregard Star's view of Iranian restaurant food based on their differing views. Instead, Yasmina aligns with Star's view in a way that promotes an informal, positive conversation, and includes others present in the office in their discussion. This turns out to be a rather friendly, dynamic, informal, and positive chat.

This alignment in views differs significantly to that of the interview with Tina and Mukesh. In this example, the topic relates to views of women and a woman's role in society. Mukesh portrayed women as weak when compared to their male counterparts in a sales environment. Mukesh highlights that in his experience, women in a sales environment would cry if they did not hit their targets. This comparison depicts women as weaker and more emotional than men. Mukesh, however, does not seem to consider Tina's present role as a leader in a sales environment, having successfully worked her way up to a branch manager in a target driven, sales environment. In response, Tina uses humour whilst still managing to assert her own view by stating that she has equally seen men cry in the sales environment when not meeting their targets. The topic of gender and related roles re-emerges when Mukesh assumes that Tina has a similar view of women, as he questions why women would *want* to wake up and go to work in the morning, in addition to having their responsibilities of looking "after the kids and

do the cooking." Tina confronts this view as "traditional." Mukesh indicates that he understands his view of women to be the shared, common view. This is illustrated as before he mentions that he believes women are smarter than men, he points out that he knows that the recruiter will disagree with what he is about to say, but he feels that some women have their "head screwed on." Mukesh's attempt of re-aligning his opinion of women to that of Tina's again fails as he believes the common view of women resembles his own understanding of women. Mukesh makes further attempts to re-align with Tina's view of women, by stating that he is not "sexist," but he does not realise that this statement conflicts with: a) what he says and b) how he says it, for example the fact that he is occasionally patronising towards Tina. Mukesh tends to "mansplain" (Olson & Everbach 2020) to Tina by breaking things down and explaining things that she is already aware of. Mukesh's misjudgements lead to Tina becoming more assertive towards Mukesh.

In both examples, it is evident that views of certain culturally attributed topics such as: food, gender and so forth, can in fact enable mutual inclusiveness or where conflicting, can become an enabler of displaying cultural polarity. It is emphasised that the interlocutors do not necessarily need to have the same view, but instead, must possess the ability to understand the other view through: contextual cues, their cultural identities, affiliations etc., and align with these by creating positive conversation towards the other view without the other losing face. It is recognised that this process requires a certain level of cultural awareness and understanding of the other, that ultimately can help mitigate occurrences of misunderstandings and misalignments in views.

5.2.2.4 Code & formality
5.2.2.4.1 Code
Linguistic alignment has been a recurring theme in the analysis of the video recorded interviews. Recruiters have been found to use a candidate's choice of code as a reason for not putting them forward for opportunities on multiple instances. Steve's and Mukesh's interviews were both examples were the recruiters reported on the candidates' use of language where, in their view, the candidate's inappropriate lexical choice was used as evidence to contribute towards their decision of not selecting the candidate for future work.

Complicating the notion of "correct" language use even further, contrary to the previous finding, it was also noticed that using too much of the standard or using language that may be considered too professional, and as a result, could be understood as too formal. This is especially important in this style of interview where the "faking of friendship" dynamic takes place. It should be noted that this dynamic is specific to the recruitment interview setting where the recruiters in this study actively seek to establish a good rapport to get the best out of the candidate.

It has been noticed in the analysis of the recorded interviews that a candidate can build a rapport through effective communication and being seen as likable by the recruiter. An example of where a candidate's ability to adapt and tailor their language to build a good rapport with the recruiter, to the extent of being seen as likable and therefore marketable is reflected in Justin and Star's interview. Justin managed to convey Linguistic alignment through appropriate code switching, by correctly reading Star's signals and understanding that they share common codes. Convergence through accommodation is noticed as Justin successfully aligns his language to that of the recruiter's. Justin codeswitched between professional code and London English, which ultimately enabled cultural alignment, by indexing their affiliation with urban, London and professional, expert identities, whilst also displaying their own in-group status and acceptance of the other's in-group status. Built upon their shared acceptance (which was also conveyed through Star's codeswitching), there was an accepted level of informality that signalled the interlocutors were collaboratively taking part in the "faking friendship" process though their choice of code. The interlocutors negotiated and agreed upon the accepted level of formality enacted through their working choice of language appropriateness for this particular interview. Nonetheless, it is not to say that the interlocutors did not encounter moments of miscommunication or misunderstandings. There are in fact particular instances of miscommunication and misunderstandings. Attention is drawn to how the interlocutors re-align their communication strategies by using repetition and asking questions before answering as they negotiate their understandings that enables them to successfully move past any further misunderstandings.

In the same way, Tina and Mukesh also share a west London background. However, dissimilar to Justin and Star, Tina and Mukesh share many similarities in their cultural backgrounds. Among those shared identities is that the interlocutors are both sales professionals. The

interlocutors align, understand and respond to the shared sales language that they both identify with; however, it is the more urban identities indexed through the use of London English and their use of the vernacular variety, which is where the interlocutors do not align. Even though Tina demonstrates that she understands the vernacular and the London English variety, Tina does not display affiliation by responding with the same choice of code. Therefore, Tina may share this cultural identity, however, she is not willing to "do" this identity in the interview context through her choice of code. Tina's non-affiliative views were expressed in her post-interview questionnaire, as she considered this language choice to be inappropriate for this context.

It is within this particular interview, when analysing the use of code, that emerged the issues surrounding the "faking of friendship" dynamic. It was found that when a recruiter actively takes part in faking friendship, but the candidate understands the recruiter to be friendly and as a result misaligns with the contextual formalities that surround a recruitment job interview, this can be deceitful. In Mukesh's interview feedback, he specifically mentions that he experienced the interview as if he were "sitting with a friend." In the analysis of the interviews, it was found that Tina uses the method of faking friendship to make Mukesh feel relaxed and to get the best out of him, however, Mukesh understands this as her enabling him to be himself and speak freely. Consequently, Mukesh incorporated taboo lexical items that Tina did not find appropriate in this context. Mukesh seemed to forget that this is a "real" interview and Tina is in fact a gatekeeper.

The deceptiveness of "faking friendship" is further evidenced in a similar situation with Zenab and Steve. Steve is open about not having much experience in this area. His sector of work can be informal. As a result, he uses more of the vernacular when greeted with Zenab's more conversational and informal style of language. Interestingly, it is learned that Steve understands the power dynamic and attempts to align with the expectations set by Zenab. The informal setting introduced by Zenab seems to have left Steve to understand that it is acceptable for him to use more colloquial lexical items. The deceit is captured after Zenab leads Steve to believe that she will find him work. Zenab later, in her post interview feedback, expresses that she felt that his language was inappropriate for this interview setting and consequently Zenab did not find him work.

In line with the literature in the field, the findings from this study suggests that there is a discursive style that synthetises both "personal and institutional discourses in their talk" (Campbell & Roberts, 2007 p.244). However, this is taken a step further as it is found that specific to the recruitment interview, there is a *level* of lexical formality that is deemed appropriate by the recruiter as the candidate is invited to take part in the faking friendship dynamic. The examples suggest that where one recruiter may accept a candidate using more forms of London English, another recruiter may not have the same view. This is strongly linked to the varying ideologies surrounding codes. This is a differing view of a hierarchy of codes and codes that are viewed as appropriate to this setting. Even though this is very subjective; it was found that a candidate's ability to codeswitch in line with the codes used by the recruiter played a significant role in a candidate demonstrating cultural fit and therefore building a good rapport with the recruiter. Furthermore, the candidate must not be misled by the informal interview construct that results from the recruiter's attempt to fake friendship. Instead, the candidate must be mindful that the recruiter is masking their power and is still a gatekeeper in this context and equally demonstrate their professional identity in particular, through professional discourse. Justin's interview is a good example of synthesising both professional and personal discourse, by allowing the recruiter to lead with their preferred language style, understanding the recruiter's preferred use of language and aligning with Star's attempt of faking friendship through her choice of code. Justin demonstrates a significant level of understanding through assessment of the style of language and applicable code that enables the interlocutors to fake friendship whilst keeping within the levels of professional discourse that is required for him to be considered for a second stage interview with Star's client.

5.2.2.4.2 Levels of Formality

Formality in this sense encompasses the various factors that contribute towards the co-construction of formality in the interview e.g., was the interview considered formal or informal? The acceptable level of formality that may differ between recruiters, especially where the faking of friendship takes place. This accepted level of formality is distinguished by the recruiter due to the asymmetrical power dynamic and is made apparent in: conversational cues, their body language, choice of topics and so forth.

It is evident that the successful interviews highlighted the importance of alignment in formality. An example of formality alignment is presented in Justin and Star's interview where the interlocutors manage to efficiently transition between various levels of formality. This is not just in conversational style, where Justin adjusts his style to match Star's, but the use of less formal topics that enables the interview to be more conversational, even within the question-answer sequence of a job interview. For example, whilst Justin describes a previous position at a tobacco company, he asks Star whether she smokes in a way to gauge the level of detail and interest in what he is saying. This dictates the direction of the conversation and the level of formality as he has also just learned something personal about the recruiter. Moreover, Justin has successfully understood Star's affiliation with the London urban culture and that she accepts a more conversational style of interview. As a result, following Star's reference to the daytime TV show – Jeremy Kyle, he refers to Jeremy as "Jezza." What is interesting is that when speaking about less formal topics, he matches his own level of formality and speech style to the less formal topic. In the same way, when discussing professional, more formal topics, he draws upon a more formal persona and successfully demonstrates his knowledge and expertise, therefore maintaining a certain level of formality.

Drawing on a similar situation, Mukesh and Tina's interview also conveys occurrences of switching between different levels of formality. It is also worth noting that this interview should have been only a formality because, based on Mukesh's CV, he was deemed the best fit for a vacant position that Tina was recruiting for. Even with so much in common misalignments in formality seem to derive from a misunderstanding of "faking friendship" in the interview, Mukesh misjudged the accepted level of formality in the interview. Tina considered Mukesh as being too informal, and in the same way, Mukesh admitted that in hindsight he was quite informal as it felt as if he were speaking to a friend. Mukesh differentiates his formality in this interview to how formal he would be in a "real" interview. Arguably, Mukesh has not understood that this is a real interview. The misalignment in the understanding and enactment of the appropriate formality for this interview context has contributed towards a negative interview outcome.

5.2.2.5 Backgrounds

There are three types of culture that is acknowledged in this study: the client company culture, the recruitment company culture, and the individual culture. Due to the complexity of this recruitment setting where the client company culture may vary from client to client and the recruiter may not always be forthcoming on the company culture the candidate is still invited to portray cultural fit. Within this study it emerged that company culture was rarely discussed in interviews. It also emerged from the empirical data that alignment in cultural backgrounds by drawing on cultural resources proved to be imperative in the process of the interlocutors identifying one another as similar, more specifically, an *in-group member*. In other words, drawing on similarities of cultural resources enabled interlocutors to convey cultural similarities which promoted the interlocutors ability to build a strong rapport. Drawing on the definition of culture that this study employs (where culture is seen as fluid), having similar backgrounds does not mean that the interlocutors must be of the same nationality. Star and Justin's interview can be used as a key example of where the interlocutors have different heritage and carry many different backgrounds. The interlocutors do, however, share and affiliate with the urban London culture, as they have both grown up in West London. Justin and Star display their affiliation with the urban London culture through their conversational topics, and their shared language.

This interview can be compared to Mukesh and Tina's interview where the interlocutors possess very similar cultural backgrounds, but do not draw upon these similarities effectively or align in this area to help them build a strong rapport. At the other end of the scale, Jenifer, and Surjeet, do not share similar cultural backgrounds, and in the same way, misalign in this area. The two interlocutors in this example decode each other's meaning differently to that of the intended meaning. This leads to instances of misunderstandings and tension as they display that they are culturally dissimilar, drawing on learned experiences that occurred in different geographical locations that impacts their understanding of what is culturally acceptable in this setting.

The key findings in this section are that cultural awareness is important not only for candidates who should be aware of their own biases that may arise as a result of cultural differences, but also for recruiters, whose lack of cultural understanding and awareness can lead to misinterpretations and *enable* a negative interview outcome. As such, cultural

awareness is crucial, especially since the interview conclusion (in this study is seen to be) co-constructed, with both interlocutors having an impact on the interview's success.

5.2.2.6 Identity & Positioning

5.2.2.6.1 Identity

Another important theme that emerges from the interviews is identity. Alignment in the identities to which the interlocutors both feel they have ingroup status has proven to be crucial in how the interlocutors display cultural fit by drawing on their shared identities. During Justin and Star's interview, Justin was able to demonstrate and develop multiple identities through his storytelling that highlighted: 1) what his actions say about him 2) what others say about him and 3) what he says about himself. Justin's multiple identities, and the way in which he wanted to be conveyed, was accepted by Star. It is noteworthy that while Star and Justin are quite different demographically, they share two commonalities, namely their West London urban backgrounds and their professional identities. There are numerous examples of how they both convey their ingroup status while actively accepting the other person as being an ingroup member. These two particular transportable identities are indexed and displayed in their performances, which enable them to achieve trust and build a good rapport.

Dissimilarly, Mukesh and Tina share multiple identities however, they do not align on how they establish and work to achieve their in-group status of these shared identities. The interlocutors have: cultural similarities, shared work identities as sales professionals and shared language. The ingroup status is challenged by the disassociation and rejection of certain common identities. Mukesh draws on more of the urban identities that they share, which is rejected by Tina as she does not find it appropriate for this setting. Both interlocutors see themselves as sales professionals, but Mukesh makes distinctions between the genders in sales and their capabilities, therefore not accepting Tina as an equal, ingroup member in the sales environment. Tina illustrates that she believes gender is irrelevant as she has also seen men "cry" when they do not meet their targets. Furthermore, Mukesh fails to recognise Tina's current situational identity as a gatekeeper, a person who assess and wields authority

in this context. Mukesh does not appear to acknowledge that he is in an *actual* interview environment, claiming that he would perform and act differently in a "real" interview.

Alignment in identities is imperative in illustrating cultural sameness, even if the interlocutors do not share the same nationality or upbringing. Acceptance of identities is shown to be as important as associating oneself to a shared identity, whereby the interlocutors must work towards successfully co-constructing their shared identities.

5.2.2.6.2 Positioning

Appropriate positioning has proven to be imperative in the acceptance of identities. The positioner must appropriately position the other, whilst the person being positioned must accept and "take up" this position (Tan and Moghaddam, 1995 pp. 389), whilst aligning with the expectations attached to the identity they have been positioned with. In the same way a positioner can also position themselves with an identity. In this case, it has been noticed that the hearer must also accept the speaker's desired position and align with the position that the speaker placed themselves in for overall effective positioning to take place. In other words, positions can be accepted and rejected, which is as important as the reflexive positioning that takes place, and as such, the successful positioning in this research has been seen to be both negotiated and co-constructed by the interlocutors.

Within Yasmina and Star's interview, Yasmina positions Star as an expert in recruitment, being knowledgeable in employment matters. Star takes on the position of an expert and aligns her language, tone and meaning to suggest that she has knowledge in this area. By Yasmina positioning Star in this way, Yasmina conveys that she acknowledges Star's position as both a recruiter and an expert as well as conveying her acceptance and knowledge of the asymmetrical power dynamic as she looks towards Star to provide her with advice and guidance.

In the same way, a recruiter is also able to position a candidate as an expert, enabling them to take on an expert role. In Star's interview with Justin, there is a clear example of the positioning process that take place whereby Star *positions* Justin with an identity, Justin *takes on* this identity, and Star *accepts* this performed identity in order for the positioning process to be successful. Star positions Justin to take on more of an expert identity, and through her use of questions and the way in which she engages with Justin's answers, she positions herself

as a learner. Justin aligns with this by showcasing his knowledge, using technical language, and adjusting his tone and pace to take on this professional and teacher-like role. Justin provides Star with information that she may not have been privy to. Interestingly, Star continues to negotiate this position, by asking more questions and contesting his answers, before she finally accepts and conveys her trust in his momentary teacher-like identity, completing the process of Justin being positioned in the negotiated professional and expert identity.

It was also discovered that the process of positioning a candidate as an expert, is important in giving a candidate a fair chance at performing their professional identity. In Steve's interview with Zenab, Zenab did not position Steve as an expert in his field of work, nor as a trustworthy professional. In the absence of successful positioning, this managed to contribute towards the negative interview outcome. It is also noticed that in the absence of positioning enablement, where a person attempts to position themselves towards a desired identity, and is faced with the identity being rejected, this can impact the direction of the interview. Thus, Steve successfully positions Zenab as the expert through her situational identity, as he does not violate the question-answer sequence, enabling her to lead and take control of the interview. Zenab is placed in a position to enable Steve's positioning as an expert in his field, so that he can talk about his experience and his skills. Instead, Zenab's questions surround Steve's short duration in his roles, and how he found the jobs, which did not provide Steve with a fair opportunity to perform his professional and expert identity. Zenab manages to position Steve as untrustworthy through her type of questions and lack of empathy towards Steve's work injury, leading Steve to spend a large portion of the interview trying to explain his injury without violating the question-answer sequence in order to win over Zenab's trust. It should be noted that when compared to Zenab's successful interviews, the candidates were all positioned as experts in their field, having been given the opportunity to discuss their work history and exemplify their skills (see example in appendix 15).

It has been observed that positioning is co-constructed and it is important for the interlocutors to align with the appropriate identity that they have been positioned with. It is as important for the identity to be accepted on two levels: 1) accepting the identity that the candidate/recruiter has been positioned with and therefore, performing this identity when called upon and 2) the identity that has just been performed must then be accepted by the

hearer, therefore validating the positioning process. Additionally, in this context it is important for the recruiter to position the candidate as an expert in their own area in order to give the candidate a fair opportunity in demonstrating their skills and expertise, as this could negatively impact the interview outcome.

5.2.2.7 Emotional connections

According to Allwood there are strong ties between a person's understanding and factors of emotions and attitudes. It is stated that "it is probable that a lack of understanding more generally, and particularly if it leads to misunderstanding, is connected with negative emotional reactions. As emotional reactions are usually associated with desire and dispositions towards behaviour, the consequence can be that both verbal and other actions are taken and built upon misunderstanding and hasty negative reactions" (Allwood 1985, p.05). Emotional alignment, empathetic responses and showing emotion is something found in human-to-human interactions (Ashgar et al 2020). In Yasmina and Star's interview, Yasmina manages to appeal to Star's human, compassionate side. Yasmina does this by describing her feelings towards being in a non-progressive situation in her current workplace. Star is not dismissive of Yasmina's feelings of struggle, sadness and desperation and responds with empathy. Through this connection, Star obtains truthful answers regarding Yasmina's reasons for leaving. The honesty and trust that derives from emotional alignment enables the interlocutors to create a stronger bond as they progress through the interview.

Unlike Star and Yasmina's emotional alignment that enabled them to establish a connection on a more friendly and less superficial level, Steve and Zenab misalign in this area. In this interview, emotional misalignment was another contributor towards the direction of Steve's employment story. Steve seeks understanding from Zenab regarding his reasons for leaving his roles within short periods of time and gaps in his employment history. Respecting the question-answer sequence, Steve talks about his accident at work aiming to receive a response that suggests understanding, sympathy, or alignment with his reasoning. The lack of empathy in Zenab's response drives Steve to continue to discuss the topic further. He and refers back to it on multiple occasions by bringing up more details of the event and the pain that he was in. Steve continues to do this until he obtains an empathetic response from Zenab. It seems that the required response is empathy, however, in the absence of this, there is a

slight change in Steve's goal, as he aims to portray himself as truthful and trustworthy. Steve then diverges from using the floor to discuss his skills and experience and instead revisits the accident and its impact. In the same way, Zenab's goal has also changed, having made up her mind quite quickly, her questions focus on the agencies that found Steve work, their patch and so forth, instead of understanding Steve's experience and his skills. From such questions it is noticeable that her goal is more orientated towards generating new leads to potentially obtain new business opportunities. Zenab does not provide Steve with a fair forum to showcase his skills as she has control over the direction of the interview and he does not contest this control by relating the questions back to his work experience. As such, Zenab has control over the direction of the interview and how he is positioned. Through lack of empathy, Zenab manages to position Steve as untrustworthy by not aligning emotionally with his victim identity. The issue of trust within their encounter is further exposed when Zenab asks for references. Steve explains that he is happy to provide references for other companies outside of his last employer who he is taking legal action against due to his injury. Zenab still pursues these details and draws upon her institutional power to obtain the reference details, which Steve submits to. Tying in with other research in this area, Kereskes' (2006) research suggests that candidates who are perceived to be misleading, dishonest insincere etc, are normally associated with an unsuccessful interview outcome. However, this interview extract provides an example of where the recruiter, in her position of power and control, can position the candidate as 'untrustworthy' and through her questions and lack of empathy, which ultimately contributes towards the unsuccessful interview outcome.

Within the examples it is noticed that there is a strong link between empathy, trust and understanding. It is interesting to point out that emotional alignment that derives from the hearer portraying understanding towards an emotion and communicating this through empathetic responses is useful in obtaining a truthful response from the candidate rather than a standard textbook approach that includes no negative comment. On this, Van de Mieroop, Clifton and Schreurs (2019) point out that "popular how-to books on employment interviews claim that such negative comments are tantamount to inviting negative assessments and result in rejection," thus requiring candidates to possess a "positive and enthusiastic attitude and refrain from criticizing others." However, within their corpus, it is found that "candidates regularly make negative comments about third parties, and we also

observed that candidates who made such comments were often successful" (p.562 – 563). Within the interview interaction it was found that "these candidates succeed in moving away from a restrictive form of institutional interaction to a more symmetrical and conversational form of interaction that allows them to construct an acceptable personalized and trustworthy identity" (p.580). Taking this form of "personalised" and "trustworthy" identity and shifting to Yasmin and Star's interview; by personalising through empathy, it enables Yasmina to move away from a more formal and institutional interaction and towards a more personal interaction that becomes more natural. It must be considered however, that the emotional alignment and the way in which emotions are expressed has links to culture (Smollan and Sayers, 2009). As such, in superdiverse encounters, this requires a level of understanding between both the recruiter and the candidate, where a candidate must be able to judge whether a recruiter is accepting of emotive language, and in the same way, a recruiter must be able to provide empathy in order to get the best out of their candidates.

The following section will delve into a discussion of all of the 30 interviews and the overall findings, before delving into the suggestions of possible ways forward and how the 9 areas of cultural fit can be used as a framework for both recruiters and candidates. Alignment in the 9 specific areas can provide a basis for recruiters to enable cultural fit to take place in the interview, whilst allowing for the candidate to "do cultural fit" through alignment in the same areas.

5.3 Section 2: Discussion of findings from all the interviews

5.3.1 The minimum requirement

The focus of this thesis was on the in-depth analysis of five fully transcribed interviews, which were used as examples of successful and unsuccessful interviews. However, it should be noted that all the interviews were reviewed and analysed, with successful interviews being examined in order to determine what factors contributed to the interview's success. The aforementioned nine key areas were recurring themes within the successful interviews, and as a result, through quantification of the success indicators, it was found that the successful candidates aligned with their recruiters in a minimum of 7 out of the 9 characteristics. To a greater extent, the common themes across all successful candidates were specifically alignment in: power, views, identity and positioning. To understand whether these four areas

of alignment are sufficient in contributing towards interview success will require further investigation in more interviews.

5.3.2 The importance of doing cultural fit

The performance, understanding and acceptance of cultural alignment has been a key contributor towards the success of the interviews. It has been observed that a recruiter's performance and how they enable cultural alignment to take place can also impact the interview outcome. The significance of finding similarities can be understood further when drawing on the hard data that derives from the number of candidates put forward for roles against their cultural backgrounds. In this manner, the table below demonstrates the importance of portraying cultural similarities in the interview. It is first noticed that candidates that were of ethnic minorities were put forward by recruiters who were of an ethnic minority themselves. For example, Star who is of mixed heritage, and an ethnic minority, puts forwards two candidates; one who is also an ethnic minority and the other who was of mixed heritage. For Zenab, all 5 candidates that she put forward for interviews where ethnic minorities, in particular, 4 out of the 5 candidates had either Pakistani or Indian heritage. This remains consistent with Ralph and Mel, who described themselves as English and put forward one candidate each, both of whom were non-ethnic minorities. Taking Pitt's (2005) view of diversity being described as 'a social-psychological phenomenon based in a sense of "likeness" and "otherness," it is noticed within the data that similarities play a significant role within the success of the interview. As a result, this highlights the importance of dissecting "cultural fit" into a framework whereby interlocutors with perceived cultural differences can perform cultural sameness within their interviews.

Table 8 - Summary of recruiter's interviews

Recruiter			Interviews output			
Name	Background	Languages	No. of interviews	Candidates selected	Non-ethnic minorities	Ethnic minorities
Hillingdon Borough						
Jenifer	English	English	3	1	1	0
Zenab	Indian/Pakistani	Urdu/English	9	5	0	5
Ralph	English	English	1	1	1	0
London Borough of Hounslow (LBH)						
Star	Pilipino	Tagalog	8	2	0	2
Mel	English	English	3	1	1	0
Key: Yellow = Non ethnic minority Green = Ethnic minority						

5.3.3 Why is the absence of a cultural fit framework in recruitment a problem?

Where diversity is acknowledged, there seems to be a scarcity of resources made available to effectively work with diversity as a phenomenon in a superdiverse recruitment context. The recruiter's lack of cultural awareness has brought to the surface multiple concerns with applicants who are culturally dissimilar being dismissed as not being a good cultural fit. This does not provide a fair and equal process for all candidates and as a result, on a macro scale, this can have an impact on the local workforce (e.g. in areas where there are less BAME recruiters, this may affect the number of BAME candidates in local workforces. However, by having more BAME on the selection panels may link to an increase in the number of BAME candidates that make it through promotion or in higher roles). On a micro level, it was identified that recruiters who were not aware of their own cultural biases and were also not aligning in the 9 areas of cultural fit. This poses a number of issues. The first being that recruiters who are unaware of their own personal cultural biases could find themselves favouring candidates that they share more commonalities with when compared to others who may appear culturally different. This does not provide a fair interview process to all candidates and as such, suitable candidates may be dismissed as not a good cultural fit. Secondly, recruiters with English as L1 could overlook candidates with English as L2 due to occurrences of misunderstandings and miscommunication in the interview. This may also contribute towards candidates appearing to not fit in with a recruiter's understanding of good

cultural fit. Thirdly, suitable candidates may miss the opportunity of a successful interview by not understanding the power game that is integral in this form of interview, particularly where recruiters are looking for marketable candidates that they can "sell" to other companies.

Nevertheless, the underlying issue remains that unintended biases may affect the recruiter's judgment of the candidate's success. This is a very well-known problem as there are alternative interview methods, and further advancements made to help overcome such biases through the use of robotics or artificial intelligence (Kammerer 2022; Naim et al 2018). The use of robots and artificial intelligence in job interviews is seen as a step towards being more objective in hiring decisions, and therefore fairer. However, using robotics to understand cultural fit has proven to be more difficult without human intervention. Kammerer (2022) highlights the advancement on using AI in hiring processes to evaluate fit through assessment of vocal cues, facial expressions, and non-verbal gestures, however, although the aim is to mitigate human biases from the process, there are further implications of algorithmic bias and data privacy issues, that have yet to be overcome. In the same way whilst it is suggested that interviewers can create a misleading impression of the candidate (Cuddy et al 2015), it has been found in Nørskov et al's (2022) study that face-to-face interviews were perceived as being fairer when compared against the robot-mediated interviews. Humans are also able to provide emotional responses and can build a rapport with the candidate (Rivera 2015) and may also provide the candidate with an insight into the company culture. In relation to the recruitment interview itself, it still seems that the human element of being able to "know," understand and connect with candidates is important in being able to find the right match for the right role.

Taking this to account, it is evident that there are still some obstacles in the path of fully using robotics in the area of recruitment especially, where the recruitment setting in particular is one that heavily relies on connections, understanding and rapport. Whilst it is the case that humans are still required within this process, the use of a specific framework to help mitigate the effects of the recruiter's own biases and one that can be drawn on by the recruiter to help increase their chances of interview success is useful. The proposed framework can be used for candidates' to show cultural fit, and for recruiters to help enable fit through alignment.

The overall goal is to help provide a fairer playing field for the candidates that interview in superdiverse contexts.

5.4 Section 3: How to use the 9 areas of cultural fit as a framework

The themes that have derived from this study have shaped the following framework that can be used to further aid both candidates and recruiters to collaboratively do cultural fit. The following framework has been broken down into three key areas: guidance for the candidate, guidance for the recruiter and the specific requirements to successfully align in the 9 areas of cultural fit:

Power:

The candidate: Power dynamics are a governing norm of the gatekeeping process because of the nature of the interview, where the candidate is expected to conform to the assigned power roles. The concept of "faking of friendships," which is exclusive to the job interview, is important for the candidate to demonstrate their marketability, adaptability, and likeability. By pretending to be a friend, the recruiter conceals their authority and masks their power as they invite the candidate to play what is described as the "power game." Candidates can draw on politeness strategies to acknowledge the power asymmetry and to convey friendliness, whilst avoiding face threatening acts. In addition to friendliness, the candidate must also demonstrate likeability in a manner that is considered to be natural in a relatively unnatural context. The unnatural stance results from the fact that the interview is conducted between two strangers who are required to quickly establish a strong rapport in an assessment setting, where the candidate must also show awareness of, and keep inline with the unwritten rules of this setting. Candidates must be able to discern these boundaries and the level of friendliness the recruiter anticipates from them. A candidate can, however, elevate their position of power in this type of interview by demonstrating that they are likable and marketable through their performance of cultural fit.

The recruiter: A candidate may not always understand the boundaries that are set within this form of interview. This research highlighted that the friendly nature of this interview may be

misleading to candidates who are not aware of the masked power, more specifically, the power game that they are invited to play through the faking of friendship assessment. As a result, it is imperative for recruiters to initially set boundaries, making it apparent that it is still an interview and not just a conversation between two friends about potential jobs. It is important to establish these boundaries when it is clear that a candidate is not meeting the level of formality deemed appropriate for this context. To prevent jeopardising the candidate's prospects of a successful interview outcome, in instances where the candidate may be unaware of the dynamics involved in the faking of friendship process, steps must be taken to ensure that the candidate is informed.

Alignment required: The two areas where alignment is necessary in this case are: the ascribed power and a professional friendship. The likelihood of a successful interview outcome can be increased where both interlocutors can align in these two areas. It should be noted however, that the candidate must align with recruiter's construction of power in this context.

Formality

The candidate: The level of formality required for success in the interview is governed by both the activity type and the level of formality set by the recruiter. The recruiter's performance and use of: lexical items, formal/informal forms of language, register, tone, and body language (opened, closed) will show an indication of the level of formality that they decide as being acceptable. The candidate should make an effort to emulate and pick up on the levels of appropriate formality as shown in the aforementioned areas by the recruiter.

Recruiter: The recruiter must proactively attempt to find a middle ground by assessing the level of formality that has been understood by the candidate. For example, if the candidate has understood the friendly nature of the recruitment interview to be informal due to the misunderstanding of masked power, steps should be taken to be transparent and honest of the expected requirements within the interview process. Where it has been found that the friendly nature of the recruitment interview has been misinterpreted by the candidate, further steps could be taken to provide the candidate with additional interview training.

<u>Alignment required:</u> To successfully align with the formality characteristic, is to dynamically attempt to negotiate and align on an acceptable and appropriate level of formality that permits friendliness, openness but also the professionalism that is expected in this setting.

Code

<u>The Candidate:</u> The ability to tailor code to match the recruiter's is demonstrated as an effective technique that not only shows similarities but also assists in creating a rapport. Where various forms of identities have been illustrated through the use of codes, the recruiter may demonstrate their affiliation with identities by codeswitching. The candidate can also synchronise with the recruiter's use of code and forms of codeswitching to demonstrate affiliation. In order to form connections, the applicant may also employ the appropriate lexical field, such as drawing on the lexical field of friendship. The candidate must also show that they are able to synthesise professional, technical (institutional), and personal discourse while being mindful of the required and acceptable level of formality within their personal discourse, for example, use of the vernacular may not be considered appropriate for this type of interview. As a result, the candidate must take the recruiter's lead and actively align with the aforementioned forms. Specific examples that candidates can pay attention to are: prosodic features, lexical items, language use (including body language) and technical language.

<u>The Recruiter:</u> Similar to the characteristic of formality, the recruiter sets the parameters for the acceptable levels of code that are regarded as appropriate in this context. In instances where a candidate may deviate from the code that is deemed appropriate to this form of interview, the recruiter should be mindful that the faking of friendships dynamic may deceive the candidate into drawing on more colloquial or informal forms of language. This may not necessarily be an indicator that this is their own understanding of acceptable code for all job interviews. This is evidenced in this research where candidates have attempted to fit into a casual interview process, which has resulted in to using forms of the vernacular. Where certain codes may be considered unsuitable, the recruiter should attempt to be transparent about this still being a form of interview and for boundaries of appropriateness to be set. In the same way, the recruiter should also consider that the candidate's prior perceptions and experiences (or lack of) with recruitment agencies may influence the forms of discourse. For

example, Steve was accustomed to working with agencies that specialised in blue collar work, which has a less formal approach when compared to agencies that recruit for white collar roles. This was the first time Steve had an interview with a recruitment agency that specialises in office-based roles.

Alignment required: To successfully align in this area, interlocutors must pay close attention to and dynamically negotiate in attempt to align in: code-switching, prosodic features, lexical items, language (including body language), technical, personal, and institutional discourse as well as the levels of language formality.

Shared knowledge

The Candidate: This can be driven by the candidate through their story telling and narrative. As an illustration, Yasmina's interview shows how discussions in areas that demonstrate shared knowledge between interlocutors can contribute towards informal, friendly conversation. Taking Star's lead, Yasmina's interview draws on the shared knowledge of locales, discussing topics such as local restaurants and cuisine, local companies, and agencies, that builds informal conversation and falls in line with the faking of friendship dynamic. There is a balance of informal conversation that takes place alongside the processional, work history related topics. However, attempts should be made to not assume that the knowledge one has is shared. For instance, although Zenab and Steve have experienced the recruitment interview, they do not share common knowledge and understanding of the expectations of the recruitment interview (as this differs between white-collar and blue-collar agencies). Therefore, the assumption that there is a shared knowledge of the expectations within this form of interview is problematic. As a result, the candidate should attempt to: display their knowledge, align with a shared knowledge, whilst being aware of differences which will help avoid miscommunication.

The Recruiter: The recruiter must be conscious of the fact that what they assume to be common knowledge may not always be shared knowledge between themselves and the candidate. There may be differences from their own understanding of what common knowledge is. Therefore, it is crucial to be aware of areas where knowledge gaps/differences exist and to be mindful of one's own biases. The recruiter should ask questions to avoid on assumptions, and where a candidate explains that this is a first time (for example interviewing

with an office specialised recruitment agency), then the recruiter must try to explain their own understanding to provide a more level playing field.

Alignment required: Where narratives are used as a way of bringing up relevant points of discussion that can demonstrate the speaker's knowledge, attempts should be made to align towards a shared knowledge and demonstrates a common understanding. This will therefore make it easier to engage in less formal discourse that fits with the dynamics of the faking of friendship.

World views

The candidate: Similar to shared knowledge, through storytelling the candidate can introduce their views. Even through the goal in this area is to align on viewpoints, it does not necessarily imply that the interlocutors must have the same view. In this regard it is how opposing viewpoints are handled in this situation that is crucial. For instance, in Yasmina's interview the interlocutors had different opinions on Persian restaurants. Yasmina admitted that she does not enjoy Iranian restaurant food, but after learning that Star does, Yasmina begins to talk about it favourably through the perspective of her friends. This is very different to Mukesh's approach, where he continues to make his view known even though it does not align with Tina's. In contrast, Mukesh continued to express his views during the interview, despite the fact that it did not match with Tina's views. There are multiple misalignments on the topic of women and society, where there were strong differences in views that resulted in Mukesh being understood as unable to display good fit. The candidate must make an effort to comprehend the recruiter's views and, where those viewpoints may differ, try to identify common ground in order to demonstrate alignment in this area. Avoid further discussion on the subject if agreement cannot be reached in this area. It is evident that stark differences in views in particular, can result in the emphasis of difference between the interlocutors, facilitating the process of being understood as the "other" and thus hindering the chances of co-constructively doing cultural fit.

The recruiter: Recruiters need to be aware of their own biases. In particular, understanding that their own world views are not the only view, and their own world view is not necessarily

the right view. In this context, the recruiter should ask questions about views that appear different to their own, as this will allow for the recruiter to comprehend the candidate's worldview. Differences in views should not necessarily prevent a candidate from being considered for the position.

Alignment required: Attempt to align on mutual views. If differences in views are found, attempt to avoid, or move away from strong views on serious topics. Try to ask questions and understand a different view, so that views can align through understanding.

Backgrounds

The candidate: Once it is found that shared backgrounds are present and affiliation with such backgrounds have been made, interlocutors can attempt to draw on these backgrounds to show their own affiliation with the shared background(s) displayed. Shared in-group status can be constructed where there is a mutual, reciprocal, favourable comprehension of the backgrounds the interlocutors have in common. For example, Justin was able to draw on the shared affiliation the interlocutors have with West London. This helped them build a strong rapport. In the same way, it should be understood when certain backgrounds are rejected, for instance, Mukesh attempts to draw on a shared urban London culture, which Tina rejects. The continued attempts to draw on this rejected background further highlights differences through misalignments in the affiliation of similar backgrounds. In this respect, the candidate must pay attention to signs of where the recruiter may not want to be associated or affiliated with a certain background.

The recruiter: The recruiter plays a significant role in displaying, accepting, and making it feasible to co-constructively align in shared backgrounds. To facilitate the co-construction of alignment in this area, the recruiter should attempt to actively draw on shared backgrounds that are identified in the interview. Recruiters should make an effort to realign with another common background if they find themselves rejecting their affinity with the proposed shared background.

Alignment required: Recognising the backgrounds that are appropriate to draw from and collaboratively attempt to agree on the backgrounds that are negotiated as being acceptable. The candidate must take the recruiter's lead on suitable shared backgrounds to draw from in

the interview, and to align with these. Similarly, to enable the rapport building, the recruiters must make an active effort in drawing on shared backgrounds to make it possible for the candidate to align and demonstrate shared affiliation.

Identity

<u>Candidate and recruiter:</u> Both interlocutors must attempt to draw on, display, perform and align with the appropriate: transportable, situated and discourse identities. Identity construction in this sense is seen as dynamic and co-constructed. Therefore, an identity may be given to the hearer by the speaker. The hearer can then accept or reject the given identity through their performance prior to it being approved and validated by the first speaker. In the same way, the speaker can also construct and perform a desired identity which needs to be validated by the hearer. In the latter statement, identity is not given, but instead is chosen as a desired identity by the speaker which needs to be approved. Through this view, the dynamic nature of the identity construction in this setting, where the displayed or given identity that is considered mutually positive is accepted by both interlocutors can assist a positive outcome. Similar to the benefits of the desired identity being accepted, the interlocutors can exhibit in-group status when they demonstrate that they positively share a common identity.

<u>Alignment required</u>: The interlocutors must attempt to actively align in demonstrating, performing, and accepting shared identities, whilst also drawing on the situated, transportable and discourse identities and appropriately aligning performances with its requirements.

Positioning

<u>The candidate:</u> consistent with the research findings surrounding the characteristic of identity in performing cultural fit, positioning plays a key role in how shared identities and perceived identities are co-constructed and accepted. Through storytelling, the candidate can position themselves as a desired identity. The recruiter can enable the candidate to take on this position by asking further questions allowing for the candidate to perform the desired identity. In this regard, positioning is co-constructed. However, as crucial as it is for the recruiter to position the candidate as an expert, it is equally as important that the candidate

also positions the recruiter as an expert in their field. Surjeet's interview revealed that it is conceivable for a candidate to not position the recruiter as an expert or in a way that their situated and discourse identity ascribes. Where Surjeet, interrupted, spoke over the recruiter and attempted to control the direction of the interview, this disrupted the question-and-answer sequence that was necessary for the recruiter to obtain the information she needs to support with her assessment of the candidate's fit for her open or future job roles. From this perspective, it is imperative for candidates to align with the ascribed identities associated with the recruitment interview context.

<u>The recruiter:</u> Positioning is co-constructed. With this view, a desired identity can be obtained by the way in which the recruiter positions the candidate, for example, Star positions Justin as an expert by engaging through the types of questions that she asks. In this sense, an identity is dynamically given, accepted and enacted within the candidate's performance. It is imperative that the recruiter positions the candidate as an expert through the questions asked so that the candidate is given a chance to take up and perform their professional expert, or desirable identities. In the same way, the recruiter must be able to position themselves in a way to take control of the interview situation in order to get the relevant information they need to help the candidate find work.

<u>Alignment required:</u> Candidates and recruiters should both actively attempt to position each other with their situated identities to allow for the interlocutor to take up a desired or situated identity. In this regard, alignment is important when positioning the interlocutor with the desired identity. This means giving, accepting, and performing the desired identity

Emotional connection:

<u>The candidate:</u> Emotional connections were noticed as being significant in the rapport building process because having, expressing, and sharing emptions is part of what makes us human. As a result, this stresses the significance of signalling mutual understanding, shared feelings and generally creating a more friendly dynamic in this somewhat unnatural setting. Candidates should attempt to assess the appropriate emotion to draw on. One that aligns with the faking of friendship dynamic that is important to this form of interview. For example, drawing on humour by telling a joke, or making light of a situation can be used to evoke

laughter as a response by the recruiter. Where laugher has successfully been obtained in response to an appropriate joke, this helps foster a strong rapport. Justin's interview can be used as an example of where an appropriate emotional connection was displayed through the use of humour and Star's acceptance, appropriate response, and reciprocation of humour enabled a strong rapport.

The recruiter: Building an emotional connection is a dynamic and co-constructed process. The recruiter is imperative in facilitating a comfortable and supportive environment for this to take place, and to also respond with the desired response appropriately. Using empathy as an example, Yasmina expresses her disappointed feelings towards her current employer. Star's response aligns with Yasmina's desired response of empathy. Having multiple instances of successful emotional alignment between the interlocutors, this served to create an emotional connection and therefore, facilitated a strong, friendly rapport. The significance of misalignment in this area can be found in Steve's interview where the absence of the required emotional response created a disconnect between the interlocutors. The first disconnect related to the desired response of empathy and the absence of an emotional response. The second disconnect is the way in which Steve understands the recruiter to perceive him through the absence of the desired response. Misalignment in this area indexed issues surrounding trust and being seen positively in the eyes of the recruiter. It is therefore imperative for recruiters to be able to align correctly with the required emotion in order to help build a rapport.

Alignment – To successfully align in this area, the candidate and recruiter must negotiate the appropriate emotional connection that is acceptable in this context. The interlocutors must attempt to understand the speaker's desired response and to align their answer to signal the required emotion. Successful alignment in this area can facilitate an emotional connection between the interlocutors, which can ultimately enable a strong rapport to be built.

5.5 Section 4: This study in context of the literature

Diversity as a concept that focuses on differences has been identified as an issue in the literature, where emphasis is on "all the ways in which people are different, this includes individual, group, and cultural differences' (Bucher & Bucher 2010). The gap arises in how such differences can work well together when a common goal is present. Before focusing on how differences can work together, the definition of culture was significant. It was found that when understanding culture as nationality alone, this highlights differences and otherness. However, understanding culture more broadly, as something that is fluid and changing, whilst employing a social constructionist view illustrated that similarities are a lot easier to identify. As a result, this study bridges a gap in the scarcity of literature that is available in language, culture, and recruitment interviews by creating a framework where interlocutors can work together in superdiverse recruitment contexts by performing cultural fit in the communicative event.

The term "performance" fits in with the current research and literature within identity studies that has shifted towards fluidity and performance rather than the fixed differences that derive from being either "male" or "female" for example. It is through this lens that finding similarities rather than differences are seen as a possible as it reinforces how individuals can adapt, perform, facilitate, and align with various identities.

Another gap in the literature is the emphasis on the candidate and their interview performance. Bridging this gap, by focusing on the interlocutors collectively, rather than the candidates alone, this promotes more of a holistic understanding of the events by drawing on: Institutional power, contextual implications, and the recruiter's own bias. Taking this into consideration, the recruiter's impact on the co-constructed activity can also be analysed. Incorporating the concept of "co-construction" by analysing the turn-by-turn sequence and its relational impact, it was possible to understand how the recruiter also managed to impact the direction of the interview. As a result, the 9 areas of cultural fit can be used as a framework to help both recruiters and candidates to improve upon the chances of interview success, as the recruiter provides a fair and equal level playing field for all candidates, whilst the candidate can demonstrate their marketability through "cultural fit" and therefore driving their chances of interview success.

Campbell and Roberts' (2005) "fitting stories into boxes…" draws on the first ever "substantial set of video-recorded job interviews in the UK." This quote indexes one of the major problems faced in conducting research within the private sector, the problem of access to video recorded data for empirical research. The data collected for this research bridges a gap of being able to use new data that also derives from real, video recordings of recruitment interviews. Within Campbell and Roberts work, they highlight the issue of "homogenised, replicable interviewing practice" that requires "the candidate to be bureaucratically processable" through their ability to "construct a simplified, coherent narrative" of themselves, which is argued as being difficult to do for those born abroad as they may not be aware of interview rules and subtle contextualisation cues (p.46-47). This ties in with previous research in the field, where the main difficulties faced by those who are at more of a socio-economic disadvantage is to do with their unequal access to institutional or organisational discourse and/or understanding of the institutional requirements (Goffman 1974, Fairclough 1989). Taking this into consideration within this study, another issue was found, which was specific to recruitment interviews that took place in a superdiverse spaces was that recruiters were also culturally diverse, and as a result cultural diversity is present within such hiring practices, posing different ideologies within these interviews. This proves to be challenging to candidates as they are required to meet the potentially varying requirements of a "good candidate." Therefore, this study validates the importance of a candidate's language use and their ability to synthesis personal and institutional discourse, but with the added requirement of levels of formality, whilst also highlighting a problem that arises from having multiple views of a good candidate and how to work with diversity as recruiters can provide an equal opportunity for their candidates to be successful within an interview.

As Campbell & Roberts (2007) identifies a "language game" that considers the "linguistic capital that outweighs the selection criteria" as candidates must meet the linguistic demands of the interview by synthesising institutional discourse with personal discourse (p.82-83). Within the specific context of the recruitment agency, this study has revealed another game that the candidate must participate and succeed in- the power game. Being somewhat different to the more formal company interviews, the candidate in the recruitment interview is invited to play the power game by taking part in the faking of friendship dynamic, whilst demonstrating that they are still aware of the asymmetrical power relationship to build a

good rapport with the recruiter and show that they are marketable. There are therefore different skill sets that are required for a recruitment interview than that of the employer job interview. It is evident that the set of skills required in a recruitment interview, in order to get them job interview with the client, is for the candidate to successfully display their "marketability" to the recruiter. A good example of this is where Yasmina's synthesis of professional and personal discourses, flouts the standard textbook approach by being very open and honest about her dissatisfaction with her current employer, using more emotive language whilst successfully playing the power game as she fakes the friendship and signals awareness of the asymmetric power dynamic. This goes to show the different set of skills that are required for this type of interview, where being able to display marketability through performing "cultural fit" and building a good rapport is crucial. As such, the viable means of achieving this is through displaying cultural similarities by performing cultural fit. Performing cultural fit correctly and being able to adjust to the interviewer in front of them requires skills of adaptability, cultural awareness, and understanding of the behaviours of the other by reading signals and contextual cues, which can be performed through alignment in the 9 characteristics of cultural fit.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study. It presents an overview of the research aims and the methodology used before outlining the main findings. This chapter will then detail the contextual, current and future implications as well as suggesting avenues for future research within this under-researched, yet significantly relevant employment context.

6.2 Aims and methodology

Drawing on 30 real life video recorded interviews, this research aimed to: 1) understand how interlocutors perform cultural fit in a superdiverse recruitment interview context and 2) as a result, what makes some recruitment interviews successful and others unsuccessful? More specifically, what are the key considerations in relation to the linguistic and paralinguistic features? The findings that derived from the research questions formed the main contribution of this study: the 9 areas of cultural fit.

Utilising an ethnographic approach to both observe and participate (Rampton et al 2004, p.2), enabled me to fully immerse myself in the day-to-day recruitment setting within one of the largest recruitment agencies in the world. I managed to obtain approximately 30 hours of recorded recruitment interviews that took place between 9 recruiters and 30 candidates, alongside their responses to pre-and-post interview questionnaires.

Taking on a social constructionist stance, understanding identities and culture as fluid, emerging and dynamic, whilst utilising Interactional Sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982a) as a framework, enabled me to examine the similarities between the successful interviews and the similarities between the unsuccessful interviews. As a result this formed the following

nine areas of cultural fit: shared knowledge, views, power, code, formality, cultural backgrounds, identities, positioning, and emotions.

6.3 Summary of Key Findings

This study highlighted that there is a clear need to address culture in the workplace, targeting significant roles in society that are core to ensuring cultural fit and equality and diversity in the workplace. Within this research, recruitment companies are seen as the first step in the process of having cultural diversity in the workplace. This is significant due to the number of companies that rely on recruitment agencies within their hiring process. The lack of research in recruitment firms, coupled with a loosely used phase "cultural fit" that can be used as a trusted and legitimate reason to justify a candidate's unsuccessful interview outcome, reveals a huge gap in how culture is addressed within the initial selection stages that contribute to diversity in the workplace. Being knowledgeable about personal cultural biases when in a gatekeeping position is imperative to ensure that those who are subconsciously understood as being different are not disregarded for not fitting into one subjective perspective of cultural fit. In today's workplaces, companies have diversity policies in place and recruit individuals from various cultural backgrounds, however, it is noticed that cultural training is not always provided to those who are integral in ensuring diversity in the workplace.

The 9 areas of cultural fit emerged from this study when looking for any correlations between successful and unsuccessful interviews and whether the alignment/ misalignment of language, ideologies and identities presented through performances impacted the interview outcome. These 9 key areas contributed towards a framework of how interlocutors could "do" cultural fit. It was noticed that the interlocutor's alignment in these 9 areas contributed towards interview success. More specifically, it was discovered that, aligning in 7 out of the 9 areas of what this study enables the performance of doing cultural fit, therefore likelihood of a successful interview outcome. As such, the findings of the 9 areas of cultural fit can be used to equip candidates with a framework to show cultural fit and deal with areas of cultural difference. In the same way, the findings of this study highlight the importance of recruiters providing a level playing field to candidates to enable the candidate to successfully perform

cultural fit by providing a basis of a good rapport to be built. This is especially significant in today's BAME context, where candidates who are seen to be culturally different to the recruiters can be provided with a fair and equal level playing field so that they have a fair chance at interview success. The 9 areas of cultural fit provides a framework and serves only as a starting point of how interlocutors can successfully work together in superdiverse interview contexts.

In addition to the findings of 9 areas of cultural fit as a framework, there were a number of additional high level key findings made within this study. The first finding is that London is a city that can be described as a *superdiverse*, despite its criticisms, it is argued in the literature review that superdiversity as a concept captures the complexity faced in cosmopolitan contexts through its plethora of codes, identities, and cultures, and brings to the surface what this means in interaction. As a result, this study questions the notion of a *one* British view of recruitment interview in superdiverse recruitment interview contexts. It suggests that although there are governing norms of a "British interview" that can be found in textbooks and interview self-help guides, the concept of a British interview is far more complex in superdiverse locations. In superdiverse contexts in Britain, recruiters derive from various cultural backgrounds, bringing with them their own views and perceptions of both the interview process and the ideal candidate. In this regard, there are differences in the interview style, views of the recruitment interview context and the attributes of a good candidate. The analysis of the study has revealed the importance of rapport building in recruitment interviews, which aligns with the findings that derive from existing research in the field. Through the use of interactional Sociolinguistics, it was possible to draw on similarities, and even though differences that may be present in a superdiverse recruitment interview context, it is possible to successfully do cultural fit by aligning in the 9 areas of cultural fit. By successfully doing cultural fit, the candidate can come across as: adaptable, likeable, and marketable, through their ability of building a good rapport with the recruiter. There are key qualities that recruiter in this particular interview looks for as they aim to market candidates to their clients and, if a vacancy exists, their aim is to secure the placement.

Secondly, It was found that recruiters were dismissing candidates for being a good "cultural fit." This has become an acceptable reason, without requiring further justification or a clear definition. This can be seen as an acceptable way to discriminate against candidates who do

not meet the recruiter's expectations. The lack of standardisation in questions and shared structure in processes is seen to be problematic due to the additional layer or subjectivity. As a result, this illustrates a need for further understanding in this area, and more specifically, a framework that details how cultural fit is both performed and assessed in the recruitment context. Recruiters were found to deviate from their own applied general structure, usually based on their initial opinion of whether the candidate is "suitable." Therefore, by not asking questions about a candidate's: background, CV, experience, and skills does not give the candidate a fair platform to showcase their experience and how they are a good fit for the role. This can in fact penalise the candidate due to the recruiter's own personal bias and pre-judgment of the candidate, making it imperative to ask the right questions and to encourage the candidate through alignment in the 9 areas of cultural fit to give the candidate a fair chance of interview success.

This research found that cultural fit was justified based on the recruiter's own learned view of cultural fit and what makes a good or marketable candidate. A recruiter's misunderstanding, personal bias, and lack of understanding of various cultural differences can (as evidenced in these interviews) penalise a candidate by not giving them a fair and equal chance of interview success. Currently there are advancements in artificial intelligence to help tackle this known issue, however, currently research suggests that human involvement is still required in assessing and doing cultural fit with the candidate. This further validates the need for the 9 areas of cultural fit that provides a framework for interlocutors to build rapport and minimise bias. This is because, a recruiter has the ability to manipulate the outcome of the interview when unaware of their own cultural biases. As a result, doing cultural fit with the candidate is significant as recruiters provide a fair chance to all candidates at interview success.

Success in the recruitment interview is revealed to be co-constructed and therefore, co-dependent as both of the interlocutors' performances can impact the success of the interview outcome. The recruitment interview is more complex than a candidate fitting into a pre-defined criterion. The recruiter can be an enabler or an obstacle of the candidate's cultural fit performance. As a result, successful alignment in the 9 areas listed above are ways in which the interlocutors "do" cultural fit in the recruitment interview, which contributes towards a successful recruitment interview outcome.

Thirdly, the candidate's ability to "do" cultural fit is vital to the recruitment interview process in particular because marketability is an important trait that the recruiters are looking for in their candidates as recruiters are required to sell to their clients. As a result, likability, adaptability and being able to display cultural fit is important in being seen as marketable. The assessment of which, takes place during the "faking of friendship" dynamic. The candidate is invited to play a power game through the faking of friendship, showing that in addition to being suitable for the role, they are also likable, adaptable and marketable. In this regard, the candidate must acknowledge the power dynamic and play (what this research describes as) the *power game* correctly in this context.

Dissimilar to the positive findings of "faking friendships" in interviews that has been obtained from the limited research in the field, faking friendships in this type of interview can have a negative impact on this interview outcome. Faking friendships can actually be deceiving to the candidate. Candidates can fall into the trap of not being aware of the asymmetric power dynamic and can also fall into the trap of not seeing the recruitment interview as a real interview. This highlights further need for more research to be conducted in this area, to create awareness of the interview differences and expectations of the recruitment interview and the client interview. It has been found that a candidate's lack of awareness surrounding how to respond to "faking friendships" and the level of formality expected by the recruiter, can cost the candidate the interview.

Finally, this study highlights a gap in the literature where clear distinctions are not made between the business (client) interview and the recruitment interview. It is found that there are distinct forms of culture that manifests itself within the recruitment interview, which includes: the company client culture, the recruitment agency's company culture, and other forms of individual culture that are pertinent to the recruiter. The recruiter therefore represents the views on cultural fit from the perspective of the client company, the agency they work for and themselves. The added complexity of a superdiverse recruitment interview context makes it a difficult task to perform cultural fit, a gap which this research attempts to address.

Another finding in relation to the differences between the client and recruitment interview was that the recruitment interview requirements also differ from a client interview because of the informal nature of the recruitment interview. Specific to the recruitment context, the

candidate is required to present themselves as marketable through their ability to do cultural fit. The candidate must play the power game and successfully take part in the faking friendship dynamic, aligning with the required level of formality dictated by the recruiter.

A key contextual difference between the client interview and the recruitment interview, is where the recruiter conducts 360 recruitment. In this regard, a recruiter is not only hiring for multiple businesses, but is also trying to obtain new business. This entails that whilst the recruiter is looking for a good candidate, they are also trying to actively search for companies to do business with. It was found in this study that a lack of interview structure, means that the recruiter can become too lead oriented in their interview. As a result, a recruiter's goal of obtaining leads can penalise the candidate, where the right questions are not being asked.

6.4 Challenges: Present and future

Since Roberts at al's linguistic study in recruitment job interviews, it has in fact been around 40 years since similar, video recorded ethnographic research in this area has been reproduced in the UK. The key challenge faced is evident within the scarce amount of literature in field within the private sector, as this demonstrates the difficulties academics have in accessing and recording real life data, and in conducting ethnographic research within this area. There is reluctance from the institution, staff members and candidates upon requesting access for video recorded data. This has proven to be even more difficult with the changes to applicable data protection regulations. During the length of this study, the UK moved from the Data Protection act 1998 and introduced the GDPR and UK Data Protection Regulation 2018 and following Brexit – the UK GDPR, where since the DPA 1998 there are stricter measures that have come into force to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data. The clear challenge that can be faced through stricter measures and tougher Data Protection fines is that companies may become increasingly less favourable towards using their employee, client, or candidate data for academic purposes, and for it to be shared outside of their own organisation. As such, the new changes to regulations may have implications on how researchers do ethnography in the future within the private sector.

There is in fact a real interest, and a real need for further research to be conducted in this field, especially as the complexity of job interviews is a relatable issue across all sectors. With the limited data obtained from real life interviews in the field, it is imperative to not dismiss historic research as old and therefore invaluable, but instead, they must be seen as relics, events that took place in a particular period of time. This approach can enable researchers to understand whether much has changed since. It is noticeable that key themes that emerged in the televised Crosstalk, which first broadcast in 1979, presented itself today. Due to globalisation and what this means in relation to cultural diversity in our everyday lives, interviews still have instances of: miscommunication, misunderstandings, communicative turbulence etc that arise from cultural differences. Furthermore, 40 years on, the issue of recruiters not having sufficient intercultural communication training to be able to deal with the complexities of cultural diversity in their workplace is still very much present today.

During the course of this research, there has also been a shift from face-to-face interviews to online interviews, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. With the current pandemic, it has been noticed that an increasing number of interviews have been conducted online, through tools such as Zoom, Microsoft teams and Skype to name a few. This interview medium poses further complexity in how interlocutors interact virtually and illustrate cultural fit without real, physical presence. As a result, this highlights the importance of interlocutors being able to understand and "do" cultural fit effectively, whilst being able to build a strong rapport in the absence of physical presence. There are new considerations such as online interview etiquette and doing cultural fit virtually which will require further investigation in the field.

6.5 Future research

Since Covid 19 pandemic virtual interviews have become increasingly common, and since, within academia there has been a rise in topics of AI, robotics and the interview used as a way of minimising human bias in the selection process (Balconi et al 2022). However, as humans are still seen as being integral in the rapport building process through the ability to connect with candidates, it is clear that human recruiters are still required within the process. Outside of robots and artificial intelligence, there are numerous pathways that this type of research

could pursue, including virtual interviews and intercultural dialogue inside private organisations. Examples of the multiple avenues of research that this form of research could take:

Example one: Additional research could be carried out in the effectiveness of using the 9 cultural characteristics in interviews, which uses a more deductive approach.

Example two: Applying the 9 characteristics in other areas of the workplace, for example in: meetings, sales encounters, HR grievance process, manager interactions, annual review meetings and so forth, and understanding its effectiveness in each context.

Example 3: Similar research on a larger scale, with focus on particular sectors e.g. Oil & Gas recruitment, Fintech/technology and IT recruitment etc., where recruitment practices differ.

Example 4: Further research in recruiter's differing perspectives of the candidates. Therefore, interviewing multiple recruiters to understand their views of candidates and whether their views change following intercultural communication training.

Example 5: Understanding recruiters' views of candidates before and after the candidate uses the 9 areas of cultural fit framework.

Example 6: For candidates to assess the recruiters' ability of demonstrating "cultural fit" in the interview before and after using the 9 areas of cultural fit framework.

Example 7: Further research to be conducted in how recruiters from different backgrounds but in the same industry assess "cultural fit" and how in practice, they "do" cultural fit across similar backgrounds.

It should be noted that the various avenues of similar research to be developed is largely due to the lack of research in the area, coupled with the need for this research to be conducted, particularly in the recruitment sector.

6.6 Suggestions of possible ways forward

In addition to the aforementioned framework, there are key solutions that have come out of this study that relate to: the organisation, the recruiters, and candidates:

What can employers do? At present, cultural diversity practices surround ensuring diversity through statistics in the workforce. It was found that none of the recruiters in this study had any form of intercultural/ diversity training. This creates a gap in superdiverse contexts where recruiters regularly work with different cultures. As a result, recruitment companies should prioritise having intercultural communication and diversity training as part of the company's equality and diversity policy.

What can recruiters do? Recruiters must ensure that they make efforts in being aware of their own personal biases, request intercultural/ diversity training, pay attention to what they mean when they assess company culture and how they personally assess cultural fit in an interview. Recruiters can use alignment in the 9 areas of cultural fit in order to give the candidates a good and fair chance at performing cultural fit in their interviews by providing the foundations of a good rapport to be built. Recruiters can also communicate what they mean by cultural fit with the candidate and become more open about their expectations.

What can candidates do? Due to the less formal setting in recruitment interviews, candidates must be aware of the power game. They must also attempt to demonstrate cultural fit by building a strong rapport with the recruiter through successful alignment in the 9 areas of cultural fit.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – An overview of the research provided to Recruiters and Candidates

1.2 Section A: Research Overview

PhD Research Information pack

Researcher: Nilma Ramsahye

Research supervisor: Prof. Zhu Hua

Institution: Birkbeck University London

Super-diversity, language ideology and performances in intercultural job interviews.

This research has undergone assessments to ensure that risks, gaps, or ethical issues are mitigated within this research project. The research has therefore received approval from the ethics committee at the university of Birkbeck. A copy of this letter can be found at the end of this document.

Research:

Super-diversity, language ideology and performances in intercultural job interviews.

Brief:

This research aims to analyse intercultural communication in recruitment interviews where differences in culture can lead to ideological mismatches, miscommunication, and misunderstandings within the co-constructed activity. The concept of culture plays a pivotal role in the way in which we perform identities in interviews and becomes an interesting topic in "superdiverse" locations such as London. The implication of a "superdiverse" London brings to light the following questions: mat are "British" interview practices? What cultural ideologies do individuals bring with them? How do people perform in recruitment interviews based on their cultural understandings? How does language use in a recruitment interview affect the overall outcome?

With a lack of literature in the private sector, and more specifically - the area of language and recruitment, it is important to understand the complexities of language ideologies within the changing dynamics of globalisation and its impact within recruitment interviews in order to understand whether practices need to be embracing and evolving alongside this change.

Contributions of this research:

• Considering the number of businesses that heavily rely on recruitment agencies to find suitable candidates, there is little literature in the workings of recruitment agencies.

•   There is very little linguistic research conducted in the private sector. Past literature mainly focused on the candidates, but this research focuses on the activity being co-constructed and therefore incorporating the recruiter's background as well as the candidate's.

Duration:

Once a week for the duration of roughly 4 weeks.

1.3 Section B: The recruiters
1.3.1 Recruiter consent form

Recruiter consent form

Dear recruiter,

Your company has kindly accepted my proposal to conduct PhD research surrounding recruitment interviews in your branch.

The study seeks to explore language use within interviews and to understand how language use, miscommunication and mismatches in shared ideologies impact the overall outcome of an intercultural interview. As a professional in a position to both interview and place candidates, I am sure that may have come across some difficulties that surround interviewing candidates from various backgrounds.

This study is being conducted at Birkbeck University of London under the supervision of Professor Zhu Hua in the department of Applied Linguistics who can be contacted by the following email address:

Confidentiality

A code will be attached to your data so it remains completely anonymous. The analysis of your interview will be written up in a report of the study for my degree. In addition to myself, any anonymised data may be made visible to the supervisor of this project, examiners and potential journal editors, however you will not be identifiable in the write up or any publication that might ensue.

Analysis of the data within the thesis and articles will be in largely aggregated form and with the use of anonymised quotations.

Once your data has been submitted you will not be able to withdraw your information.

Please note, in order to be compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998 Act, if in the unlikely scenario that a candidate may request a copy of their recorded interview/ transcript, they will be permitted to access this data, however, any other individuals, logos etc. will be unidentifiable within the footage.

As the researcher, I will ensure that I will uphold anonymity if recruiters provide information that could be interpreted to conflict with the Equality Act.

Number of interviews to be recorded:

Approx. 30

Incentive for candidates:

As an incentive for candidates, they will be entitled to feedback on their on their language use. It will be mentioned that analysis on this is not the views & perspectives of the company.

The procedure:

Step:	Details	Appendix reference
1	To request permission from recruiters and candidates to record registrations. Procedure: - Recruiter permission will be obtained on-site. - Candidate permission requests will be emailed to the candidate directly.	Permission slips refer to Appendix 1 & 2
2	Participating recruiters fill out a short question form (one form throughout duration – 2 minutes).	Appendix 4
3	Record registrations	
4	Candidates to fill out a short form to accompany their registration Once in at the end of the day, the recruiters will be asked for a meeting on their thoughts of the interviews at the end of the day.	Appendix 5

Recruiter Questionnaire

Background questions for recruiter

Recruiter number:

Your participation within this study is greatly appreciated!

Please could you fill out the following information about yourself (questions 1-4 can be ignored if you have completed the questionnaire for those in a position to hire):

1)   Spoken languages:

2)   Ethnic Background:

3)   Area of residence (town):

4)   Were you born in the UK? If No, please indicate the number of years that you have lived here:

5)   Have you lived in any other countries or cities besides London? If so, please state:

  _____

_____

6)   Please indicate your highest level of qualification, stating subject and grade:

  _____

_____

_

7)   Please list other positions that you have worked in. (If this is the first job that you are applying for, please state "first role."

1.4 Section C: The candidates
1.4.1 Candidate Consent form

Candidate Consent Form - Part A

Dear candidate,

An opportunity has arisen for you to be involved within a linguistic study. The study seeks to explore language use within interviews by identifying areas of miscommunication and misunderstanding, and how cultural differences may impact the outcome of the interview.

This study is being conducted as part of my PhD research in the Department of Applied Linguistics at Birkbeck, University of London. The study has received ethical approval.

Title of Study: Super diversity. language ideology and performances in intercultural job interviews.

Name of researcher: Nilma Ramsahye

If you agree to participate, you will be provided with informal feedback on your interview in relation to language use. Please note, that any feedback provided is not related to, or associated with the views and beliefs of the recruiter involved. Feedback provided will solely be based on the views of the researcher.

The research will include a recording of your interview and an additional short written questionnaire about your overall thoughts of the interview. If preferred, this can also be conducted verbally.

Please note that you are free to stop the interview and ask questions at any time. Once your data has been submitted you will be unable to withdraw.

Confidentiality

A number will be attached to your data so it remains completely anonymous. The analysis of your interview will be written up in a report of the study for my degree. In addition to myself, any anonymised data may be made visible to the supervisor of this project, examiners, and potential journal editors, however you will not be identifiable in the write up or any publication that might ensue.

The study is supervised by Professor. Zhu Hua, who may be contacted by the following email address: zhu.hua@bbk.ac.uk

In order to take part, please could you complete the consent form attached and return it at your earliest convenience.

Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact me directly on:

 XXXXXXXXXXX

I look forward to hearing back from you soon!

Kindest regards,

Nilma Ramsahye

Please could you sign below to state that you have read, understood and are happy to take part in this research.

• I have read the information sheet and understand the nature of this study and willingly consent to take part in it.

• I understand that my information and participation in the interview will be kept anonymous.

• I am aware that I can ask questions at any time and that any questions I do have, have been answered to my satisfaction.

• I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.

• I agree to provide information to the researcher with the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission. I agree to provide information to the researcher with the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission.

• I am aware that the information will only be used for this research and publications arising from this research project.

• I am over 16 years of age.

Signed by: _____   Date: _____

Signature: _____

Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact me directly on the contact details below.

Yours Sincerely,

Nilma Ramsahye

Email:

Mobile:

(Two signed copies - one for the recruiter and another for researcher)

Candidate Consent Form - part B

Title of Study: Super diversity, language ideology and performances in intercultural job interviews.

Name of researcher: Nilma Ramsahye

I have read the information sheet and understand the nature of this study and willingly consent to take part in it.

• I understand that the content of the interview will be kept confidential.

• I am aware that I can ask questions at any time and that any questions I do have, have been answered to my satisfaction.

• I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.

• I agree to provide information to the researcher with the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission.

• I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and that I have the right to ask for the video recording to stop at any time. I am also aware that once my data has been submitted I will not be able to withdraw.

• I agree to provide information to the researcher with the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission.

• I am aware that the information will only be used for this research and publications arising from this research project.

• I am over 16 years of age.

Name _____

Signed _____   Date _____

There should be two signed copies, one for participant, and one for researcher.

Candidate questionnaire

Candidate Number: Interviewer number:

Following your interview today, please could you answering the following questions?

Your participation within this study is greatly appreciated, and I wish you all the success in your future role!

Age:

Spoken languages:

Ethnic Background:

Area of residence (town):

Were you born in the UK? If No, please indicate the number of years that you have lived here:

What countries have you lived in?

———————————————————————————————

Please indicate your highest level of qualification, stating subject and grade:

———————————————————————————————

Please list other positions that you have worked in. (If this is the first job that you are applying for, please state "first role."

———————————————————————————————

———————————————————————————————

———————————————————————————————

1)   Using a scale of 1 - 5 how do you feel the interview went?

5- Excellent	4 - Adequate	3 - Average	2 - Poor	1 - Terrible

2)   What are your thoughts of the interview and how do you feel you performed?

———————————————————————————————

———————————————————————————————

3)   Did you prepare for the interview, if so, how?

_____

_____

4)   Were there any difficulties that you encountered during the interview?

_____

_____

5)   How did you intend to be perceived in the interview? What language did you use to make you come across this way?

_____

_____

6)   What do you think the interviewer is looking for? (In what way do you think an interviewer would expect an "ideal candidate" to perform? What characteristics would they have? What would they say and what would they do?)

_____

_____

7)   Was the interview what you expected, or you think that the interview could have been conducted differently?

_____

_____

8)   Did the interviewer's style or language use meet your expectations? Yes No

Why?

_____

_____

9)   If you could have the same interview again, how would you improve your performance? Or is there anything that could be improved on in the overall interview?

_____

_____

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Your time and help towards this study are greatly appreciated.

Kind regards,

Nilma Ramsahye

Tuesday, 16th August 2016

Nilma Ramsahye

Title of Project: Super-diversity, language ideology and performances in intercultural job interviews

Dear Nilma,

The School of Social Sciences History and Philosophy Ethics Committee has scrutinised this proposal and has given it ethical approval.

Please find in the accompanying e mail, the Report re your application, which has now been reviewed by tH0 external reviewers. It is approved in principle, but minor amendments are required to be made to the information sheet for participants. This is detailed in the attached report.

Please keep this letter as official record of the approval for future reference.

Good luck with the research.
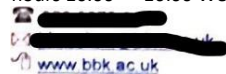
Regards

School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy
Læabon 117 28 Russell Square

Postal address: Brkbeck Colleoe, Malet Street, London, WCIE 7HX Usual office hours 10.00 — 16:00 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

www.bbk.ac.uk

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ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
2006

Appendix 2 – Post Interview Questionnaire

Meeting Notes:			
Date:		Number of interviews:	
Recruiter's present (Use number reference):	* * * *		

Role	Candidates put forward
	* * * * *
	* * * * *
	* * * * *
	* * * * *

About the job(s)

Role	Criteria	Additional information

Appendix 3 Office Layouts

3.1 Layout of west London Office – London borough of Hillingdon (HB)
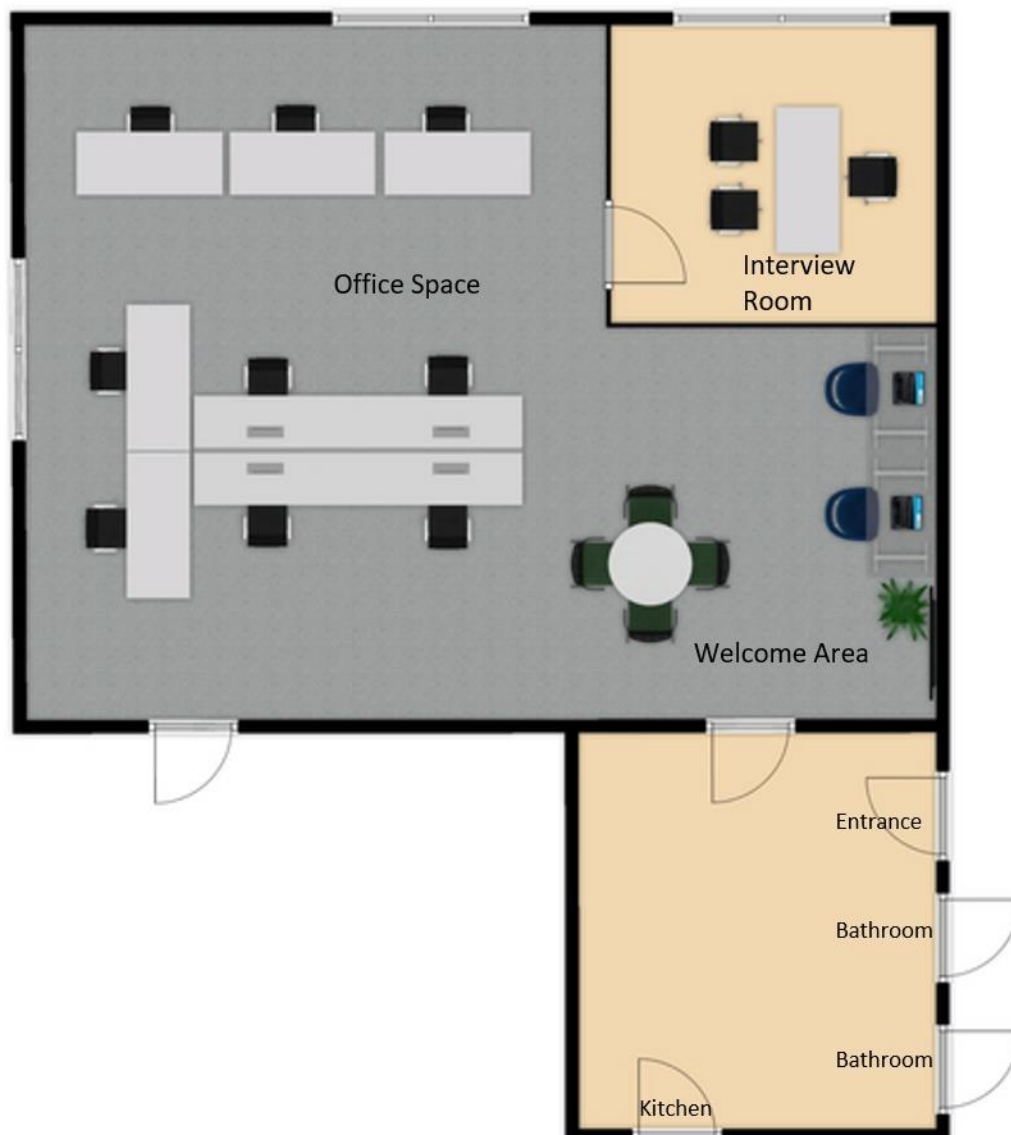
3.2 Layout of West London Office

3.2.1 First floor

Welcome Area

To Office Upstairs

3.2.2 Second floor
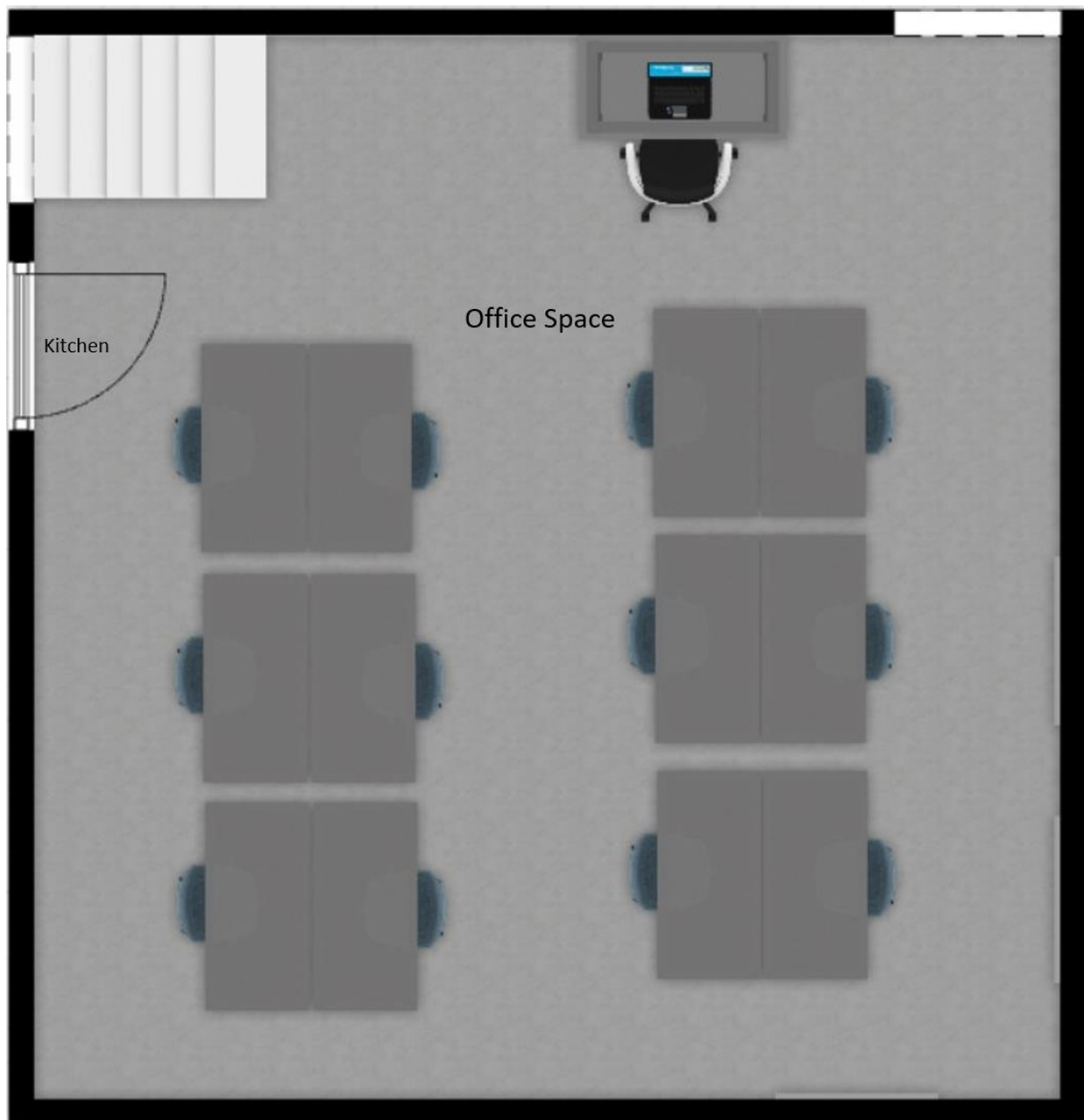
Appendix 4 – Candidates Accepted

Number	Background	Languages	No of interviews	Candidates put forward	non ethnic minorities	Ethnic Min
Uxbridge						
R2	English	English		3	1	1	0
R3	Indian/Pakistani	Urdu/English		9	5	0	5
R5	English	English		1	1	1	0
Chiswick						
R6	Philipino	Tegalogue		8	2	0	2
R8	English	English		3	1	1	0

Appendix 5 – Transcript Star and Justin

Full Transcript can be accessed here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sqOrtDidy-QMDmtQjEmg_AlKXvC7iy8E1f_PSAdosxw/edit

From Field notes - Researcher's interaction:

Justin walks into the interview room where I greet him and ask how he is. He smiles, responds, and reciprocates my question to him. He informs me of his interview with Star and introduces himself by first name. I ask Justin to take a seat whilst I notify Star of his arrival. Whilst he waits, I offer him a beverage. He politely asks for water and repeatedly thanks me as I return with his beverage. I tell Star that her candidate has arrived. I then return to Justin to let him know that Star will be with him shortly and hand him over the agency paperwork. I also inform him of my research and to ask whether he would be interested in participating. Justin was a candidate that stood out to me for his enthusiasm. He was very enthusiastic and interested in the research topic, he asked questions about my own interest in the topic and shared his own experiences of culture in the workplace. He also spoke of his own mixed heritage and his ability to "fit in" as he had gained good cultural understandings from his own experiences. Not only did he display his fascination of the topic, but he repeated his keen interest in taking part. The main characteristic that stood out to me was that he was very friendly.

Appendix 6 – Transcript Zenab and Steve

Full Transcript can be accessed here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sqOrtDidy-QMDmtQjEmg_AlKXvC7iy8E1f_PSAdosxw/edit

From Field notes - Researcher's interaction:

I see Steve enter the room and approach him to greet him. He informs me that he has an appointment scheduled with Zenab. He wears an opened navy and grey hooded jumper that reveals a red polo shirt with dark denim jeans. Before I ask Steve to take a seat, Zenab greets Steve and asks that he follow her as she walks towards the interview room. Steve follows Zenab, where she asks him to take a seat. Zenab mentions that she will leave him with me go through the forms with him. I introduce myself and I hand over the company forms before speaking to him about the study. Without asking any questions, he agrees to take part in the study. Prior to handing him the information pack and consent form to review and sign, I asked him to let me know if he has any questions or concerns after reviewing the information. He acknowledges this with a gentle nod. I offer Steve a drink. He politely declines "no thanks." My first impressions of Steve were that he was quiet, but not necessarily timid. He leaned back into his chair and took up the space around him. He curiously looked around his surroundings and rarely made strong eye contact. Steve would interact only when approached.

Appendix 7 - Transcript Jenifer and Surjeet

Full Transcript can be accessed here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sqOrtDidy-QMDmtQjEmg_AlKXvC7iy8E1f_PSAdosxw/edit

From Field notes - Researcher's interaction:

The candidate arrives approximately 15 minutes early for her interview. I immediately notice her smart attire. She wears black trousers and a matching cardigan with a purple blouse complimented with a silk accessory scarf woven around her neck. I approach the candidate at the entrance and welcome her in. She apologises for being so early. I offer her a beverage as she takes a seat. She declines. I inform her that I will let the recruiter know that she has arrived. The recruiter, Jenifer, asks me to bring the candidate into the interview room once the candidate has completed her forms. I return to the candidate, giving her the company's registration forms to complete before her interview. Whilst she commences filling in the company forms, I inform her of my research, what I am doing, my purpose in the agency and what the research involves. I let the candidate know that if she decides to participate she will be recorded where signed consent will be required. I also make sure that she is aware that she can withdraw at any time. The candidate agrees to participate, as she repeats that she is willing to take part as it is "all in the name of research." My initial impression of the candidate was that she was well spoken, polite and talkative. As she completes the pre-interview questionnaire, she asked about my experience studying, displaying an obvious interest in the importance of education. She spoke to me of her own predilection to learn and how she would like to further her learning and describes the struggles of studying whilst having children. She also spoke of her children and how they were doing very well at school, she is very proud of them. Not only did I notice the friendliness to her and dynamic energy she has when she speaks, but I also had the impression from our conversation that she had strong values for family, work and education.

Appendix 8 – Transcript Star and Yasmina

Full Transcript can be accessed here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sqOrtDidy-QMDmtQjEmg_AlKXvC7iy8E1f_PSAdosxw/edit

From Field notes: Researcher's interaction:

The bell rings. I walk down the stairs from the office into to the common area and greet a candidate that is scheduled to meet the recruiter, Star for an interview today. I ask the candidate to take a seat and offer her a beverage, which she politely declines. I inform Star of her candidate's arrival and return to the candidate to give her the company forms to complete. I also provide her with some information about the nature of my research. I learn that the candidate's name is Yasmina. Yasmina seems extremely interested in the research topic as she relates this to her own experiences having interviewed and worked in both Iran and the UK. She mentions how she feels that as a woman she needs to be more outspoken and assertive in the UK as there are more discussions in a UK interview that what she has experienced in Iran. In Iran she describes there being more tests on skills and it having importance on references and "who you know." Her interest in the topic makes it surprisingly easy to obtain consent. Nonetheless, I still provide her with all the information that is available for the candidate, informing her in more detail of: what the research will entail, her rights and permissions as well as an information pack that she could take with her, which included my contact details should she ever need to contact me in the future. After Yasmina provides her consent to take part in the research, she continues to mention how very pleased she is to be able to take part in this research as she herself has felt strongly towards cultural differences within the UK. As Yasmina spoke, I couldn't help but noticed her very poised nature. She has a noticeably strong and professional demeanour about her, she sits with her back straight and head held high. She speaks slowly giving the impression that she really thinks about what she says before the words leave her mouth. To me, she came across as confident, polite and relaxed. I also notice that as she speaks she does not use many hand gestures, leaving her very composed.

Appendix 9 – Transcript Mukesh and Tina

Full Transcript can be accessed here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sqOrtDidy-QMDmtQjEmg_AlKXvC7iy8E1f_PSAdosxw/edit

From Field notes: Researcher's interaction:
The candidate - Mukesh, is late for his interview. Mukesh arrives 15 minutes late, accompanied by a friend. Upon their arrival, Mukesh rushes towards me as I look up from my desk to greet him. At this moment, Mukesh sees me as a member of staff. He explains that he is 15 minutes late because he could not find any parking space. I tell Mukesh not to worry and I will inform the recruiter of his arrival. I ask him and his friend to take a seat and offer a hot or cold beverage.

Mukesh wears a suit without a tie and tends to vigorously shake his leg, whilst sitting up very straight. His body language is quite open, he uses a lot of space even whilst sitting. He has a serious expression indicating that he could be either anxious or agitated.

After informing the recruiter of Mukesh's arrival, I let Mukesh know that the recruitment manager, Tina will be with him shortly. I use this time to inform Mukesh of my study and he instantly agrees to participate. I inform him of my role as a researcher. I provide him an information pack to go through with further information on my research, before I obtain written consent from him and ask him to complete the initial "pre-interview" questionnaire. Mukesh skims through the document, quickly completes the questionnaire and asks how long the recruiter will be as "time is money." His friend nods and laughs awkwardly.

This particular interview really stood out to me as Mukesh came across as very confident. I found his statement of "time is money" whilst waiting for the recruiter particularly interesting as he arrived 15 minutes late but has been waiting for the recruiter for no longer than 10 minutes. I was already informed that Mukesh did not show up to a previously arranged interview and this is the agency's second attempt to get him in the branch to register and interview with them for a specific role for which on paper he seems a perfect fit. The agency gave him another chance because his CV had already been passed on to one of their clients for a sales position and the client was very keen to interview him. Not only did Mukesh not turn up to a previous interview, but he also arrives late and is accompanied by a friend who is dressed very casually and waits for Mukesh in the waiting room for nearly an hour as Mukesh completes his registration and interviews with the recruiter. In essence, I realised that in Mukesh's understanding of the world, it is his time that is money, not the recruiter who waits for him on two occasions, nor his friend's that waits almost an hour for him to complete the interview process.

Appendix 10 – Example of Zenab with a successful candidate CA016

The following transcript is of a successful interview, where Zenab manages to find a candidate work despite the limited amount of work experience that the candidate has. Zenab shows understanding, empathy, asks the right questions and even re-words the candidate's answers, which provides the candidate with a good basis to perform cultural fit.

R: *(ruffles papers)*

1.   R: *(mumbles)* Thank you for filling out all these uh details let me just double
2.   check that we've got everything we need *(Ruffles through papers,*
3.   *accidently flicks her pen away. She picks up her pen and continues to write)*
4.   R: *(whilst writing)* what time do you need to have to the dentist for *(looks up at the candidate)*
5.   C: eleven thu ee
6.   R: *(looks at time on her computer screen)* [Inaudible] quick
7.   So wots, so wots sort of work is it that you are looking for yourself
8.   C: just –e based in the office and just taking calls or replying back to emails
9.   R: yeah so is it mm –o sort of admiiin or receptionist positions yeah
10.   C: yeah
11.   R: Yeah *(mumbles and writes)* that's okay *(continues writing)*
12.   (long pause whilst writing) and whad is it aboou erm sortov admin *(looks up)* work
13.   and service work that appeals to you
14.   C: let's just say that you get more experience out of it and as previously I used to work
15.   in an [office] I enjo[yed it]
16.   R: [ok]   [Okayy]
17.   C: whereas em I moved in to work in childcare childcare wasn't for me
18.   R: yeah […] what woz it that yy you felt like just wasn't for you what aspects
19.   of it did you think no I can't do this
20.   C: i-it just gets too much
21.   R: yeah
22.   C: Yeah
23.   R: Buh how many kids did you sort of erm deal with at a time
24.   C: there was a ratio for three so three children [at one]
25.   R: [three]
26.   C: its easy cuz um I've got my own niece and nephew and I used to do it
27.   since I was 14 so as I got older I was thinking should I go into childcare as
28.   I went to childcare it was not for me.
29.   R: you just thought no its not alright yeah let me just pull up your CV
30.   and we can just go through that and where which places are you sort of
31.   happy to travel to
32.   C: either there's either slough reading or xxxxx […] maidenhead as well
33.   R: *(takes notes)* Slough Reading or xxxxx yeah
34.   C: yep
35.   R: and what sort of pay rate are you looking for
36.   C: minimum wage is 6:70 isn't it
37.   R: [yeah]
38.   C: [Yeh so] I wouldn't mind that cuz currently when I
39.   woz working I was doing a apprenticeship so it was three thirty it wasn't

40.   [enough]
41.   R: [okay] And how did you fin dit with the apprenticeship did you feel like you
43.   learnt a lot there or
44.   C: I did learn a lot I know a lot about childcare now but it's just it was [too hard]
45.   R: [yeah]
46.   but you've just you've been there and your happy with the training you're
47.   given but you just sort of want to move away from that now [yeah]
48.   C: [yeah]
49.   R: okay *(writes)*
50.   And would you be comfortable working in sort of big teams
51.   C: yep
52.   R: yeah so [five or six people]
53.   C: [jus just not] yeah just five or six apart from if it's twelve then I won't be able
54.   to work in them cuz I used to work in group of twelve in XXXXXXX and it was
55.   really hard
56.   R: oh really [what was] so hard about it
57.   C: [Cus people used to talk]   whilst someone else was
58.   talking people used to talk over so you weren't no one was really listening to you
60.   R: yeah you weren't really being [heard] about your opinions
61.   C: [yeah]
62.   R: and wot sort of environment do you feel comfortable working in
63.   C: outgoing ones you just get […] *(stops whilst recruiter writes)*
64.   R: would you be happy working in a corporate environment
65.   C: yeah
66.   R: so very sort ov business faced
67.   C: yeeh
68.   R: *(writes)* because things like this are important to know cus the last
69.   thing you want is to put you into a position you want to look for
70.   something chilled out all that is not so corporate and we put you in a you
71.   know a really formal environment you know it's just it could be horrible
72.   you know you going in ah and after a few [days your]
73.   C: [not feeling comfortable]
74.   R: yeah exact and it's not going to end better for anyone so at least this t [sic]
75.   way at least we know so I know what you are looking for when a job
76.   comes out I can actually say you know what at least we can say do you
77.   know what this will be great for you urm and can - what sort of hours
78.   could you do
79.   C: either morning which is seven till four [or] evenings I don't mind doing
80.   R: [yeah] *(writes)* so you don't mind about evenings
81. either
82.   C: [yeah I don't mind]
83.   R: [yeah… so] sometimes we have like usually for full time positions are either from
84.   eigh [sic] o'clock to four thiree [sic] or eigh thiree [sic] to five five thiree
85.   C: yeah that should be
86.   R: and sometimes they do have when they want someone to be four thiree to
87.   four and then eleven to seven would that be okay [for you]
88.   C: [yeah that] should be [fine]
89.   R: [yeah] (writes)

90.   What's the latest that you can do?
91.   C: eleven one pm
92.   R: *(writes)* so you can work till eleven pm
93.   C: yeah
94.   R: okay that's perfect are you happy to go into a position at a part time position rather
95.   than find y- find you something full time
96.   C: yeah
97.   R: in customer service [yeah] *(writes)*
98.   C: [yeah]
99.   R: erm so the contracts that I deal with are in the local areas like university, XXXXX and
100.   XXXXX now we have one so within the university we do have a XXXXX who do tend to
101.   recruit for sales assistants urm is that something you would be interested in
102.   C: is it just sale-ing or just –
103.   R: no so it's not much selling so it's just a XXXXX news agent store in the university so
104.   you'll just be most likely you will
105.   be on the till so just scanning the products telling what the amount is and just
106.   C: [okay] yeah that should be fine
107.   R: [yeah] at times… so usually the placements that we produce everyone is erm on the
108.   till at times uhm there will just be the general duties taking in the deliveries stock take
109.   erm cleaning the shelves erm stock replenishment, that sort of work
110.   C: yeah that should be [fine]   [yeah]
111.   R: [is that] something [you'd] be interested in yeah it does get
112.   quite busy and the store is small so they they want someone who can
113.   C: that's quick
114.   R: yeah
115.   C: yeah
116.   R: yeah
117.   C: that's [fine]
118.   R: [perfect] *(writes)* So at least this way once we got everything if a position does
119.   come up we can just say do you know what we've got work for you
120.   you can start tomorrow are you available as soon as
121.   C: ye-eah
122.   R: do you have any sort ov holidays appointments commitments going forward in the
123.   next few weeks
124.   C: n-no
125.   R: okay *(writes)* okay perfect ive got everything that I needed and I don't want to keep
126.   you longer than I have to know but only [because you're running late]
127.   C: [do you want the photocopies]
128.   R: yes please I'm so sorry about the [eh delay]
129.   C: [that's okay] that's fine
130.   That's just the ID that I had because um my passports sent off but that's quite old
131.   R: *(checks documents)*
132.   R *(talking to herself)* I'll take this […]and
133.   C: I got a reference but it's on my emails is it okay if I email it to you
134.   R: yeah definitely because wot we'll need to do is I can help look at that reference for
135.   now if it is on a letter headed paper then I can accept it if it's not urmm then
136.   C: it's just on normal email
137.   R: okay let's just see what the *(mumbles)* can you just send me your cv as well please

138. C: okay
139. R: it's just at least *(mumbles and gets up to go and photocopy the documents)*
140. R: so I've had a look at the documents that you sent me now I'm going to try my best
141. to get you into work asap okay now just make sure you keep your phone on you erm
142. so I can just give you as soon as I give you a call we can just sort of take it from there
143. now I'll be looking at sort of customer service work at that place that I told you in the
144. erm university but I also'll [sic] be looking at sort of receptionist work for you as well
145. ermm any assignment that we call you for so if I ever call you and say look I got a job
146. x y and zee don't ever feel like you have to take it just because you know it's a job that 147.
we're offering you if you feel comfortable with it
148. C: [Inaudible] (mumbles)
149. R: yeah because the last thing we want is if you go in and 2 days later you come back
150. it's not going to help anyone erm so it's just you know best if
151. C: [best if you're just honest]
152. R: [honesty yea-ah and] don't ever feel that you're sort of pressured into
153. anything because you're definitely not here it's just if it's for you great perfect and if
154. it's not then that's fine and we'll carry on looking for you yeah…
155. C: okay that's fine
156. R: I'm going to give you my card give me a call if you do uh find additional work please
157. do let me know because I definitely will be working on your details and there's my
158. C: thank [you]
159. R: [card] thank you and I'm so sorry [about] the waiting again
160. C: [it's okay]
161. R: hopefully we'll be able to find you work soon
162. C: [thank you]
163. R: [you take care] thank you
164. C: bye
165. R: and if I have troubles with references I'll give you a call just to let you know yeah
166. thank you
167. cheers bye