Ways in which teacher discourses, namely, *praising* and *scolding* contribute to the
construction of gender identities of learners.

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that except for the sources used or quoted, which have been acknowledged in the bibliography, this study is my own work and has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university.

Signature: ---

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents a critical study of the ways in which teacher discourse, mainly *praising* and *scolding*, contributes to the construction of gender identities of learners. It is based on data obtained from teacher-learner interactions during class-time from group interviews with learners and from individual interviews with teachers.

The purpose of this study is to explore ways in which educators employ instances of praising and scolding and the effect these have on the construction of gender identities of male and female learners. Following Kamins and Dweck's (1999) classification of praising and criticism, this study further differentiates between person praise and criticism and process praise and criticism.

The findings in this study indicate the presence of similarities and differences in the ways in which educators use praising and scolding. Some evidence reveals that female educators make a greater attempt to implement Gender Equity in the classroom than male teachers do.

The study argues that it is essential for educators to keep abreast with new developments, particularly in the education sector and to ensure that they effectively implement Gender Equity in their classroom interaction.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation presents a critical study of the ways in which teacher discourse, mainly *praising* and *scolding*, contributes to the construction of the gender identities of learners. It is based on data obtained from teacher-learner interactions in the classroom and interviews after teaching hours. It should be noted that from Chapter 3 of this dissertation the word 'educator' is used instead of 'teacher'.

In this chapter I discuss the rationale for the choice of this topic. This is followed by the discussion of the background to the research context. I then outline the problems and issues to be investigated and, finally, I provide a broad overview of the structure of the dissertation.

1.1 Rationale for study

My interest in this topic emerges from a conviction that teacher discourse and teacher interaction with learners play an essential role in learner success. Within this broad topic I am focusing on one variable, that of gender, which also appears to be implicated in learner success. In the secondary school where I teach, girls are observed as being less committed to their studies than boys, and as a result, are further perpetuating their subordinate role in the community. This is a case-study of the Zulu community where patriarchy is still very much in place. While Zulu traditional gender understandings in this community may be playing a substantial role, teachers, both male and female, too, may be unwittingly supporting these understandings. I wish to investigate the extent to which this may be detrimental or supportive of more equitable gender identities by looking into the methods used by both male and female teachers to *scold* and *praise* male and female learners while teaching them.

Secondly, my interest in this study was prompted by the fact that there is a long tradition of classroom research around gender and education issues, especially in the UK and USA, where girls are regularly found to be performing better than boys (Spender, 1982; Coates, 1986; Romaine, 1999; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003 and Sunderland, 2004).

Although studies have been done abroad, little comparable work appears to have been undertaken in South Africa and Africa more broadly. Amongst the studies done in Africa is a study by Ogbay (1999) in a Kenyan secondary school, where girls were found to be resisting the help offered by educators and resisting the educational process (Romaine, 1999).

The issue of gender in schools has been addressed from the point of view of curriculum and teaching material (Balfour, 2003). Mkhize (2003) focused on directive-response sequences of male and female teachers. Other studies concerning gender in schools have been made abroad. One study in Canada investigated the effects of the gender of the teacher, the gender of the student, and the classroom subject (Mathematics vs. English literature/ language) on teacher-student interactions (Duffy, et al., 2004). It was found that female Mathematics teachers, male literature/language teachers, and female literature/language teachers tended to interact somewhat more with male students.

In another study in the United States, a great deal of concern was expressed suggesting that boys were being neglected, mistreated or even punished by an education system geared to support girls at the expense of boys (Basow, 2004). The article examined how boys and girls fared in the education system in the United States. It has been noted though that even though there has been a shift in some aspects of education toward more gender equity, boys and girls in general still learn, and are reinforced for traditional gendered behaviours. Of great interest is the similarity between the United States and South Africa, in the sense that the issue of Gender equity is stipulated in the South African Constitution. It is also part of the national teacher training course. It would be interesting to find out if the same traditional gendered understandings of male dominance still prevail in the South African context.

There has, however, been very little study of *praising* and *scolding* in the classroom context and its contribution to constructing learners' identities as gendered which is the gap this thesis would like to fill. There are three specific studies concerning *praising* and *scolding*.

Firstly, there is one by Brophy (1981) where he argues that teacher *praise* does not function as a reinforcer but it is determined by the teacher's perceptions of students' needs rather than by the quality of the students' performance or conduct. His conclusion is that *praise* as an extrinsic reward can reduce rather than increase motivation. Secondly, Kamins and Dweck (1999) studied person versus process *praise* and *criticism*, where person *praise* focused more on students' abilities, goodness or worthiness after performing a task. Their conclusion was that *process praise* which focused more on the student's strategies and efforts was more encouraging and motivating than *person praise*. The issue of *person* versus *process praise* and *criticism* evokes great interest in this study. It will be demonstrated in this study that *person praise/criticism* has a lot to do with identity construction. It would be in the interest of the research, therefore, to determine the type of gender identities created by *person* and *process praise/ criticism* and the effects these have on the identity of learners.

Thirdly, and lastly, a more recent study examined whether teacher-initiated interaction with students, such as *praising* or blaming, varies as a function of student gender (Jones and Dindia, 2004). The study suggests that teachers initiate more overall interactions and more negative interactions, but not more positive interactions, with male students than with female students.

There has been very little study of *praising* and *scolding* with regards to the construction of gender identities of learners. This general paucity of research and the lack of discourse classroom discourse studies in the area of *praising* and *scolding* (criticism) from South Africa in particular, have prompted my research interest.

South Africa has been modernizing rapidly since 1994. Amongst the values enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa is the promotion of gender equity. In Clause 187 the Constitution stipulates that a 'Commission for Gender Equality must promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality'. It furthermore 'has the power, as regulated by national legislation, necessary to perform its

functions, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby, advise and report on issues concerning gender equality'.

However, there is no doubt that at grassroots level in many Zulu communities traditional cultural values of patriarchy are still upheld. While the younger sector of the community, mainly the learners, is becoming familiar with new ideas about gender relations, they are perceived as extremists by the older traditional community members who hold on to old patriarchal principles and fail to accept new gender dynamics. Furthermore, as stated above, in line with the new Constitution, the Department of Education has sought to support gender equity by including this in teacher-training curricula so that teachers become familiar with these issues and therefore try to promote them in their teaching. Even though the teachers' backgrounds may be different from the range of backgrounds of their learners, they are still expected to promote gender equity in learners as expected by the Department of Education. The questions to be asked would be whether these teachers see themselves as contributing to this task or not, as well as which gender perceptions their discourse represents and what it contributes to learners' perceptions of what it means to be male or female.

1.2 <u>Problems and issues to be investigated</u>

This research focuses on investigating ways in which teacher discourse of *praising* and *scolding* contributes to the construction of gender identities of learners.

In my observation in Zulu communities, traditional cultural values of male dominance are still perceived as being of high value to such an extent that female oppression is a generally accepted practice. This becomes visible in certain ways in which women and girls are treated. For example, they are typically *praised* for showing humbleness and for not being aggressive. They are *scolded* for making mistakes, for being impolite and not showing respect. Men and boys tend to be *praised* for being manly, which means for not crying and for being brave and physically strong. They are *scolded* for behaving like a woman.

In such a context, teachers may find it difficult to promote gender equity. At the same time they are obliged to do so since it is promoted by the Department of Education, as required by the Constitution of South Africa.

1.3 Research Questions

Since the study seeks to find out if the discourse used may be supportive or detrimental (i.e. positive or negative) to the learners' gender identities it aims:

- To establish whether and to what extent teachers are familiar with gender equity and are prepared to implement this policy in their teaching.
- To establish whether male and female teachers differ in the way they use *praising* and *scolding* towards male and female learners.
- To examine learners' behavioural responses to the *praising* and *scolding* used by teachers.

To address these issues, I hope to establish answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent are these teachers in these classes familiar with issues of Gender Equity?
2. To what extent do they see themselves as implementing these in their teaching?
3. (a) How frequently do male and female teachers use *praising* and *scolding* towards male learners and towards female learners?
   (b) What is the content of the *praising* and *scolding* directed by male and female teachers towards male and female learners?
4. What messages about gender identities is the teacher discourse constructing?

1.4 Outline of Study

The thesis offers a contribution to the understanding of how teachers utilize language to construct gender identities of learners in a Zulu community in KwaZulu-Natal. The topic is discussed in six chapters. The topic, research context, problems and issues to be investigated, and the research questions are discussed in Chapter 1.

The literature review follows in Chapter 2 where theories of language and gender are explored. This is followed by the discussion of the Theory of Speech Acts as explored by Austin (1962). This chapter is concluded by the discussion on the frequency of classroom *praise* and c*riticism*.

The methods of data collection and analysis are discussed in Chapter 3 of the thesis. An in-depth study of the methods informing this research is made here.

Chapter 4 analyses and interprets the data. An in-depth exploration of each teacher that participated in the research is made in this chapter.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of this study.

Chapter 6 which is the last chapter concludes the research and makes recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The main aim of this study is to explore the ways in which teacher classroom discourse, exemplified by *praising* and *scolding* in both isiZulu and English, contributes to the construction of gendered learner identities. This marks discourse (language) as central to the thesis.

I will therefore begin by reviewing literature on classroom discourse and identity construction. I will focus on a study by Halliday (1978) who maintains that language is a powerful resource for making meaning and Pujolar (2001) who maintains that language possesses the resources and the potential to express the unique culture or world of its speech community. This is relevant to my study since it looks at language as a potential tool for constructing gender identities of individuals. Other studies maintain that language does not come alone, but carries with it social relations, cultural models, power and politics and values and attitudes (see for instance, Gee (1996); Fairclough, 1989 and Thondhlana (2004).

 Secondly I will review literature on language and identity where I will focus on the studies made by Freeman & McElhimny (1996) and Kamwangamalu (2000) who perceive language as a tool through which social identities are maintained, managed, negotiated or renegotiated and constructed as gendered by both men and women. A study by Zegeye (2001) where he views identity as open-ended, fluid and in the process of being constructed and reconstructed is central to this research since it is the construction of learners' gender identities that is being investigated. Slabbert & Finlayson (2005) and de Kadt (2005) maintain that multiple identities are thus created through discourses and practices that are experienced throughout an individual's life and daily living. The discourse used by teachers to *praise* and *scold* learners may be creating multiple identities of these learners as well. This will be fruitful to investigate.

Thirdly, literature on language and gender is reviewed based on the studies by Lakoff (1975) who highlighted the Deficit, Dominance and Difference approaches which marked differences between females and males. Women were seen to be disadvantaged and men

were viewed as makers of language (See also, Tannen, 1990); Bem, 1993; Cameron, 1992, 1999; Finlayson and Valentine, 2002 and Moore, 1994).

Fourthly, research on the classroom as a gendered space is reviewed in the studies made by Romaine (1999); Pujolar (2001); Sunderland (2004); Pande (2004), and Paechter (2006). These studies perceive the tendency of children to separate more by gender from as early as kindergarten to high school. In these studies the how and the extent to which gender, language choice and attitude constitute the speaker's identity construction is examined. This is relevant to my research since I also seek to examine this in the context of a previously patriarchal Zulu community. The various approaches cited above have, therefore, been used as a frame of reference in this study.

Finally since *praising* and *scolding* are speech acts, a review of speech act theory as envisaged by Austin (1962) and Cohen (1996), and then further developed by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), and applied by de Kadt (2003) though not in the same context, will be discussed.

I will then define *praise* and *criticism* (a term for which I use '*scolding*') according to Brophy (1981) and Kamins and Dweck (1999) as well as classification of *person praise* and *process praise* by Kamins and Dweck and *damaging discourses* by Sunderland (2004). These are the analytic tools I intend adopting in my examination of ways in which teacher discourse contributes to the construction of learner gender identities.

2.1 Theoretical approaches in language and gender

2.1.1 The Role of classroom discourse in gender identity construction

Language is a tool an individual uses to express him/herself. It is through language that we know and hear what an individual wants and how he/she feels. In other words, language is perceived as a powerful resource for making meaning (Halliday, 1978). Furthermore, Pujolar (2001) notes that language possesses the resources and the potential to express the unique culture or world view of its speech community. In short, language is a tool for expressing and making meaning, as well as expressing the unique culture of its community.

However, scholars and theorists propose that language does not exist in a vacuum, but carries with it social relations, cultural models, power and politics, values and attitudes (see for instance (Gee, 1996; Thondhlana, 2004). The implication is that language is used to mark power and powerlessness (Fairclough, 1989; Thondhlana, 2004), to express cultural norms and the values of individuals and of groups (Thondhlana, 2004), as well as to shape individuals according to societal and cultural norms and standards. Language, therefore, is perceived as a marker of social identity (Slabbert & Finlayson, 2005) since it plays a major role in the construction of identity of individuals and of groups (Gee, 1996).

In a school situation, language is used in the classroom as a means of interaction, language of learning and teaching as well as a means of communication. The language that the teacher uses carries a message which is received by the learner. The message that the learner receives has the potential to construct positive or negative gender identities. The reason for this may be the ways in which a male/female teacher interacts with male/female learners. This, therefore, puts gender into perspective. In the school under investigation, it is the teachers' (male and female) use of languages, which are isiZulu and English, towards learners (male and female) that is being explored. It is also in the interest of this study to explore which message that the learners receive from the teacher

may be contributing to the learners' gender identity construction, that is, whether it is constructive (positive) or destructive (negative).

Recent work on gender and language has shown that the selection of English over isiZulu by bilingual speakers (school pupils and students) also appears to be gendered (Appalraju, 1999; de Kadt, 2003). Appalraju & de Kadt (2002) maintain that women in rural areas maintain a strongly Zulu identity by speaking the language themselves and transmitting it to their children, while this behaviour is observed in males in urban areas.

My research seeks to critically evaluate the above claims in language and gender studies within the Zulu community in the rural context but more specifically by looking at the discourse constructed by *praising* and *scolding*. It will examine how teachers contribute to the construction and perpetuation of gender stereotypes through their language usage.

2.1.2 Multilingualism in South Africa

In multilingual settings such as the one in South Africa, constructions of sociolinguistic identities are extremely complex.

The diverse communities strive to get a clearer understanding of the multiple identities in relation to languages spoken in the country (Kamwangamalu, 2000). These communities use language to manifest the self. This self is, however, a social construction governed by current and all previous interactions. As a human interacts with other selves, language is used to manifest various configurations of collective selves. This is echoed by Thondhlana (2004), when she maintains that speakers in multilingual settings may use different languages for specific purposes. In each specific setting, they would identify themselves with a different speech network to which they belong, and from which they seek acceptance. In other words, a language can be used for reasons of both affiliation and disaffiliation (Slabbert and Finlayson, 2005). South Africa has been seen, therefore, as a playground of multiple identities. It is clear that it is through language that different types of people including types of selves are created. "To be the right type of person for a given time and place (context), words, deeds, values, other people and things in integral

combinations for specific times and places need to be put together to react to the given situation, while also letting others do the same with us as well." (Slabbert & Finlayson, 2005)

I prefer to use the term 'discourse' as used by Gee to refer to language (Gee, 1996: viii). It will be noted that this is the term that is used throughout this study. Talbot (1995) describes discourse as interaction between people in a specific context, e.g. classroom discourse. Gee and Sunderland maintain that users of language use Discourses (with Capital letter 'D'), described as 'ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking' to draw on, invoke, produce and reproduce multiple identities (Gee, 1996; Sunderland, 2004). Fairclough sees Discourses as ways of seeing the world with reference to power and domination, and they can only be recognized in traces of talk or written texts (Fairclough, 1996; Sunderland, 2004). Discourses have been seen to also 'subject position' individuals and this subject positioning is sometimes gendered, e.g. women are positioned as carers by default, meaning that this is how the society has designed them to be. This subject positioning is viewed as very powerful as it can enable or hinder. There are different ways of interpreting what one hears and reads, which includes negotiating or contesting what one hears or reads, and resisting discourse subject positioning.

It will be in the interests of this research, therefore, to study the type of discourse that teachers use in class and how it subject positions male and female learners as well as male and female teachers. It will also be of great interest to find out if the positioning enables or hinders the learners' constructions of gender identities that. The study of the different ways in which these learners interpret the discourse used will benefit the research a great deal in the sense that it may be deduce whether the discourse used assists in the construction of gender identities of these learners or not..

2.1.3 Language and Identity

Research on language and identity has shown that language is a medium through which social identities are maintained, managed, negotiated or renegotiated and constructed as gendered by both women and men (Freeman & McElhinny, 1996 and Kamwangamalu,

2000). Zegeye (2001) views identity as open-ended, fluid and constantly in a process of being constructed and reconstructed as individuals move from one social situation to another, resulting in a self that is highly fragmented and context-dependent.

In addition to the role highlighted above, language plays a major role in the construction of the identity of both the sender of the message and the recipient of the message. Slabbert and Finlayson (2005) maintain that language is a 'marker of social identity'.

Each language and language variety that an individual speaks can create a range of identities (multiple identities), a term that replaces identity. Language creates different 'types of people' as well as multiple types of selves and these are acted out through language (Gee, 1996: viii-ix). It not only symbolizes an individual but also a group's identity (Gee, 1996). He further claims that each of us is a member of many discourses, since each discourse represents one of our multiple identities. Furthermore, Gee (1996) emphasizes that activities and identities are rarely enacted through language alone (or words alone). He maintains that they are also enacted through one's body, clothes, gestures, actions, interactions, ways with things, symbols, tools, technologies, values and attitudes and beliefs. He further adds that when discourse is welded integrally with non-language factors to enact specific identities and activities, then Discourses are involved. According to Gee (1996), we are all members of many different Discourses, which often influence each other in positive and negative ways, and which sometimes breed with each other to create new hybrids. Accordingly, Gee (1996: viii- ix) maintains that when you 'pull off' being a culturally-specific sort of 'everyday' person, you produce, reproduce, sustain and transform a given 'form of life' or Discourse. He further maintains that life for all of us is just a patchwork of thoughts, words, objects, events, actions and interactions in Discourses (Gee, 1996: viii- ix).

Various discourses and practices create multiple identities and these are seen as something that one 'does' throughout one's life and daily living (de Kadt, 2005). This (stipulating what Gee emphasizes above) means that each person creates and acts out

different or multiple identities in different or multiple contexts (e.g. a person's discourse differs when at home, school, work, social gatherings, etc.).

The above discussion encompasses one of the approaches this thesis attempts to follow as it delves into the different types of gender identities that are created and how these are created through the discourse that teachers, both male and female, utilize in class during interactions with both male and female learners.

2.1.4 Theories of language and gender

It has long been established in gender studies that gender is not innate or inborn, but is learned, taught and reinforced. Johnson (1997) and Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), for instance, maintain that people watch each other and then copy from each other. Furthermore, they envisage that gender is not individual but a collaborative affair connecting to the social order. Gender, language and identity (as seen above) are all dependent on social, situational and cultural contexts.

The classrooms under investigation are constituted of both boys (males) and girls (females) taught by both male and female teachers. From my observation as a teacher these educators come to school with new gender understandings which they have learned in teacher training institutions as stipulated in the Constitution of South Africa, to meet learners coming from a community with largely patriarchal gender perspectives.

Past theories around language and gender have perpetuated patriarchal gender understandings. The earliest studies of language and gender by Robin Lakoff (1975) and other researchers highlighted the *Deficit, Dominance* and *Difference* approaches which marked differences between females and males by asking questions like 'How do women and men speak differently. The *Deficit* approach looks at women as disadvantaged. This theory proposes that women speak a language which was deficient (inferior) to that of men due to prevailing patriarchy in the society (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990). The *Dominance* approach sees men as the makers of language, a notion proposed by Spender (1982), thus viewing women's discourse practices as being unequal. The *Difference*

approach also acknowledges the differences in both men and women's discourse practices but only views them as having equal value.

Early scholars in the 1960s and 1970s (see for instance, Lakoff, 1975), had already pointed out that feminine and masculine behaviour was divided into two mutually exclusive sets of behaviours which do not correspond to female and male (Bing & Bergvall, 1998). The term *gender* was then borrowed to refer to *behaviour that was socially acquired* (Bing & Bergvall, 1998). Later studies by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) expounded this by maintaining that gender is not biologically innate or inborn but is learned and socially constructed. These studies propose that men and women speak differently and this difference is linked to gender differences. They maintain that gendered linguistic practices are pre-determined by sex.

The above studies reinforced the predominant assumption that men and women exhibit essential linguistic differences. However, more recent studies (Bem, 1993; Epstein, 1998) which recognize gender roles as socially constructed, have led to the traditional gender questions being reframed to "How are women and men taught to *speak* differently?" These studies, however, still reinforce essentialism which maintains that men and women are essentially biologically and linguistically different.

Cameron (1992) argues that if linguists continue to stick to the traditional question on language and gender of how women and men speak differently, their discoveries of difference may be co-opted for purposes of strengthening gender polarization. Realizing this problem she then starts with a question, "Why have linguists been relatively inactive in the growing area of research on language and gender?" This question leads Cameron to explore why language and sociolinguistic aspects are neglected in gender studies. She argues that in the context of *deficiency*, *difference* and *dominance* models most linguists are most comfortable with the difference model. She warns though that although linguists are trained to work with descriptive paradigms and to be non- judgmental about differences and may be impartial, the general public is not. For instance, women are still advised by the press on how to become more successful in business by sounding more

like men. This proposes that women are still perceived as linguistically inferior and different to men in a male dominated society. This situation is proof of the existence of patriarchal gender understandings in societies today. Presumably, this also holds true for the communities that these teachers and learners come from.

Cameron (1992) challenges language and gender researchers, therefore, to ask new questions: Instead of "How do women and men behave linguistically?" questions like "How do particular language practices contribute to the production of people as women and men? This is the approach this thesis attempts to follow.

In her study Moore (1994) explores why other cultures place a lower value on women. She notes that some cultures distinguish between human society and the natural world. Culture is seen to be of controlling and transcending nature. It is, therefore, seen to be superior to the natural world and it seeks to mark out nature in order to regulate and maintain relations between society and the forces and conditions of the environment. Men are associated with culture, while women are identified or symbolically associated with nature. She claims that culture is noted to be seeking to control and transcend nature, and therefore, it is seen to be 'natural' that women, by virtue of their close association with 'nature', should also be controlled and contained (Ortner, 1994). Men are, therefore, identified with society and public 'interest', while women are associated with family, and therefore with socially fragmented concerns. These associations are not biologically inherited but are culturally constructed and powerfully reinforced by social activities which both define and are defined by them (Moore, 1994).

In her study of women's language, *[Isihlonipho sabafazi],* Finlayson & Valentine (2002), notes that the 1990s brought a dramatic change in the South African socio-economic, political and linguistic landscape. She states that the traditional socially accepted form of behaviour and customs and beliefs were affected by new beliefs, customs and traditions which resulted from urbanization and modernization. In their study, Finlayson and Valentine (2002) identify the tradition known as '*isihlonipho sabafazi*' or 'women's language of respect'. This rule forces the woman to deliberately omit the syllables that

occurred in the names of a woman's family and the in-laws in particular. This could be applied to the names of father-in-law, mother-in-law, their brothers and their wives as well as mother-in-law's sisters and their husbands. She maintains that this starts in early childhood where a male infant (known as '*usana*' in Xhosa) would not be accorded any gender until he could play a role in society. The infant would first be taught the rules of living to be an acceptable member of society. He was taught to herd calves when he was six, then to take care of livestock, hunt, play games and fight with sticks (Finlayson, 2002). A girl, on the other hand, had to learn how to do household chores and then cook and make clothes while working in the garden, which meant ploughing fields (my observation). Finlayson further maintains that the boy and the girl were taught to respect elders (Finlayson, 2002). The above discussion clearly illustrates that an infant would be later accepted as a reputable member of society when he/she had learned and assimilated into rituals and all the rules and regulations of living, as stipulated by his/her society.

Finlayson and Valentine (2002), however, note that the linguistic custom of respect, described as '*hlonipha*' or conscious avoidance in the woman's everyday speech of syllables occurring in the family names of the husband, has been viewed as a mark of dominance by male members of the family. Similarly, Dowling (1988:6) in Finlayson and Valentine (2002) claims that males 'tailor' '*hlonipha'* customs in order to maintain power. These researchers note that women in the traditional Southern African Bantu-speaking societies, particularly wives, are awarded a socially inferior status to their male counterparts.

It is noted that the above tradition may no longer be totally or even partially applicable in the urban households as it used to be in the traditional households. This, she maintains, could be because husbands and wives tend to be closer as they choose each other in the first place. In the married life they are less involved with their parents and in-laws and are more aware of their exclusive responsibility for their households from early stage (Finlayson & Valentine, 2002).

The above understanding could also be due to the fact that people in urban households are now becoming more educated. Their perceptions of life may differ from that of rural households where patriarchal gender understandings still prevail. This study may not be able to explore all of the above (meaning how the society and culture shapes individuals) as it is limited to studying only the ways in which the language, and more specifically, the language used by teachers in *praising* and *scolding*, constructs learners' gender identities.

A study by de Kadt (2003) heeds the above call when it reveals that traditional patriarchal gender understandings embedded in the various local indigenous languages and cultures are under siege (de Kadt, 2005). This means that they are undergoing certain changes. This, she argues, is because of the new gender understandings encompassed in the new Constitution of South Africa (de Kadt, 2005). The context she refers to, however, is a Zulu society in an urban University context where individuals are more educated and well versed in new gender understandings. In a rural society that has been underprivileged and living in a strong culture of male dominance and suppression of women like those under investigation, few or no changes have been noted.

In spite of what has been highlighted above, it is still currently noted in most recent studies, for instance, in a study by Paechter (2006), that the society still pressurises boys and girls to assume a traditionally constructed and accepted masculinity and femininity as their own.

In an attempt to heed the call by Cameron (1992), this thesis, therefore, seeks to study the ways teachers and learners use language to construct multiple gender identities in a bilingual setting and for which purposes: whether it is to simply communicate, to mark power and powerlessness (Fairclough, 1989), to express cultural norms and values, to demonstrate affiliation or disaffiliation or to perpetuate patriarchal structures in a society that disempowers females.

2.1.5 The classroom as a gendered space

Nearly all studies from kindergarten to high school show a pattern of self-chosen gender segregation with many researchers finding an increase in gender separation peaking in early adolescence. Researchers have also shown that in some cultures children are more likely to separate by gender (where they are grouped in the same category) than in others.
.

Romaine (1999) also observed that the tendency for children to separate more by gender in the same age group may be to avoid teasing, because children of the same age are more likely to be seen as potential girlfriends and boyfriends. This is relevant to my study since it has been observed that male and female learners tend to concentrate more to relationship issues than in their education or future. In another study by Pujolar (2001) where he examined how and the extent to which gender, language choice and attitude constitute the speaker's identity construction, he found that the Catalan language was used by speakers under formal circumstances and Spanish was used under informal circumstances. It would be interesting to note what sorts of gender identities are constructed through the use of isiZulu and English.

Studies conducted amongst small children and university students in classroom contexts, where Catalan was used as a medium of instruction, found that many Spanish speakers were starting to use Catalan, although Spanish still predominated in the informal domains. Pujolar (2001) maintains that the way language is used in these studies plays a role in the construction of identities and ideologies as well as in the struggles over those identities and ideologies.

Again, on the issue of the classroom as a gendered space, it has been argued that girls tend to talk less and get less attention from teachers in mixed-sex groups (Coates, 1986). Girls and women are noted to take fewer risks on examination and tutorial tasks involving essay writing, or be reluctant to engage in competitive argument with their tutors. This is noted to be causing women's poorer performance in certain subjects such as history. Coates notes that in mixed-sex classrooms, boys tend to dominate while girls wait patiently. Boys are also seen to be doing well in Maths and Physics while girls do

better in English/O level (Coates, 1986; Romaine, 1999). Coates (1986) claims that girls often end up in poorly paid jobs. Furthermore, boys are noted to be receiving more disapproval and more praise than girls particularly because of their tendency to be troublesome in class while at the same time participating actively during classroom interaction. On the other hand girls' getting into trouble is perceived as showing lack of knowledge or skill. Teachers seem to offer boys more attention than girls, thus encouraging boys to act more independently than girls. As a result, girls develop low self-esteem.

In a further study (Romaine, 1999) which showed children's self-chosen gender segregation, girls were more likely to be depressed than boys. Girls' attention tended to shift from academic work to physical appearance and romantic relationships, while boys became satisfied with their bodies at this stage. In the late teenage years, girls became more interested in marriage than higher learning (Ogbay, 1999 quoted in Romaine, 1999). Girls in school were seen to be resisting the educational process as a result. In higher learning institutions, women students were seen to be speaking only to support their classmates' statements while teachers were noticed to be asking three times as many questions of male than female students, and gave a great deal of praise to males. They even concentrated their activities more to the area of the classroom where males were seated. The above discussion clearly shows the inferior treatment of women compared to males. This phenomenon emphasizes the patriarchal gender understandings which still prevail even in an international setting.

Other studies concerning gender in schools have been carried out abroad. One study in Canada investigated the effects of gender of teacher, gender of student, and classroom subject (Mathematics vs. English literature/ language) on teacher-student interactions (Duffy, et al., 2004). It was found that female Mathematics teachers, male literature/language teachers, and female literature/language teachers tended to interact somewhat more with male students. This tendency was not the result of male students having initiated more direct verbal interactions with teachers. It was the immature and

disruptive nature as well as low language learning abilities of male students which attracted the educators' attention.

More recent studies, however, show much improvement for girls compared to the previous studies which see girls performing poorly. For instance, a study by Sunderland (2004) reveals that girls had improved academically. They were performing better academically, at least at Secondary level. Boys' underachievement had, in that study, become a common phenomenon (Epstein, 1998; Sunderland, 2004). Educators now sympathize with boys who are now performing poorly since it is taken as a norm that they are expected to perform better than girls (Sunderland, 2004).

The limitation to the above studies is that, although these studies look at theories of language and gender in identity construction, they do not show how these differently separated genders react to male and female teachers' discourse of *praise* and *scolding*. This will be worth investigating in the adolescents under investigation, who are now more cautious of themselves since they have become more familiar with their rights as enshrined in the new Constitution of South Africa. It would be interesting to see how their gendered identities, which they presumably developed in their early years, are affected by the kind/type of *praise* and *scolding* teachers use in their interaction with these learners.

"The school institution is not benign or neutral but it is marked by asymmetrical power relations enacted through gender, age, authority and social distinctions around socio-economic, ethnicity, disability and language. Gender relations and boundaries within the institution are part of the hidden curriculum and students' informal learning, through which feminine and masculine identities are constructed and reinforced. It has been noted in previous research, that the teaching style of teachers often perpetuates gender differences." (The Mid Atlantic, 1993). This study found teachers directing more attention and encouragement at boys while girls were often overlooked in class. Teachers were also observed to exhibit differential behaviours which depended on the sex of the

student. Teachers often directed more praise, criticism, acceptance and remediation toward boys.

The school under investigation has seen a lot of girl dropouts in the previous years. It has been observed that girls constitute a higher percentage of dropouts than boys each year. This could be caused by other factors such as pregnancy and personal reasons. This research, however aims to investigate if there could be another reason causing this. For instance, could the type of discourse/language used by teachers be affecting these learners (both male and female) and how.

This thesis seeks to validate the above claims about women and men and further investigate in what ways the language assists in constructing and perpetuating gender stereotypes (Pande, 2004). This is because it is still currently noted in most recent studies, for instance, in a study by Paechter (2006) that society places pressure on boys and girls to assume a hegemonic masculinity and femininity as their own. In the study that he conducted, he realized that the personal identity that boys and girls create through their interaction with peers and adults is constantly unfinished and is influenced by different social frameworks. The outcome of the research was that teachers treated boys and girls differently. It was the discourse used that marked this distinction clearly.

Current research on language and gender still portrays patriarchal gender understandings or gender inequalities. For instance, in a study which explored the interactive styles of primary teachers in the teaching of literacy and numeracy in English in a primary school, boys were found to be answering more in the lessons and were more motivated than girls (Smith, et al, 2007). Boys, however, did not become more involved (than girls) in interaction which stimulates higher order thinking. Girls were found to be more inhibited than boys when they are outnumbered in class.

In another study where a comparison of performance and attitudes in mathematics amongst the 'gifted' was made, teachers were seen to be paying more attention to boys than girls (Hargreaves et al., 2008). This was found to be similar in foreign language

classrooms and non-foreign language classrooms as well, but differed from the ones in English Second Language classrooms. Girls were seen to be more academic, able and well-behaved in terms of wait-time, language used and absence of negative cognitive feedback. Boys were seen to need attention partly because of their immaturity and were therefore more disruptive, partly because of their low language learning abilities.

2.1.6 Language and the Classroom in South Africa

In South African schools, language is used for interaction amongst teachers and learners as well as a medium of instruction and learning. It has long been established in the history of Southern Africa that in the previous Apartheid government, English and Afrikaans were made official languages of instruction and learning in the classroom. Since this was the case, isiZulu had no place in the classroom except in the isiZulu lessons. IsiZulu was consequently stigmatized, a situation that has continued to the present. Even though this became a problem about languages, it actually was a problem of ethnic identities. I will discuss this issue later in the chapter.

Under the Apartheid education policies, learners had to interact and receive instruction in English as well as Afrikaans. This situation led to the 1976 riots against Afrikaans in Soweto schools. Learners had to be proficient in English mostly because it was an international language and a language of the workplace. Teachers, too, had to be competent in both these languages for successful classroom interaction to take place. Between 1991 and 1994, Black parents felt obliged to send their children to the then 'Model C schools' to secure language proficiency and to assist them to acquire highly paid jobs. These schools only admitted a low percentage of Black learners since they were viewed as lowering the standard of education because they had been taught by teachers who themselves were not competent in English.

1994 saw a great change when South Africa became democratic and for the first time, all the nine provincial languages, including indigenous languages, became official. Schools were constitutionally allowed to choose a language suitable for them to be the language of instruction and learning. Because of the previously held status of English, nearly all

township schools felt the need to retain English as the medium of instruction because of the global status that English still holds. These schools are still adhering to this since they strongly believe it benefits the previously disadvantaged learners.

In KwaZulu-Natal where the research was conducted, my observation has been that isiZulu has been associated with being low class and being uneducated, both by the community and learners. Even though it is now one of the official indigenous languages in South Africa, the stigma it previously had, makes it low in status.

In KwaZulu-Natal, ethnicity constitutes a number of markers including history, language, culture and birthplace. Zulu identity is also centred on these markers (Dlamini, 2001) as well as on 'conventionalized' ways of '*hlonipha*' (respect) [Finlayson & Valentine, 2002] and of '*ukukhonza*' (to worship) with Zulu people. These Zulu cultural practices were not commonly associated with Western modernization and industrialization (Dlamini, 2001). It became difficult for individuals to engage in either set of practices without assuming or being linked to existing political organizations. The use of the Zulu language previously associated with bravery during the times of King Shaka, the Zulu King, was associated with being a member of the Inkatha Freedom Party. Zulus who joined the ANC were suspected of being agents of the Xhosas. Zulu was positioned as a 'neutral' local language, and represented ethnicity, Inkatha politics, and a language implicating ignorance and illiteracy. English was positioned as colonial, 'neutral' and a language of politics and education. Afrikaans represented Apartheid and an instrument for accessing economic resources. The multiple linguistic practices of individuals were hallmarks for the formation of their identities. The youth of the time created their own different identities besides the ones envisaged by political parties and the state. These were the 'amapansula', created in the 1970s, who associated themselves with 'black consciousness' based on Steve Biko's teachings of the 1970s (Capitalism and pre-colonization). The second group, created in the 1990s was 'amatsatsatsa' who dressed in high fashion clothing. They wanted nothing to do with the social activities of the townships and believed in a non-racial South Africa. The above discussion clearly shows

that individuals can and are able to create their own different identities which differ from those set out by society and culture.

The school under investigation is in a rural area. In the classes where the research was conducted, both the teachers and the learners are bilingual, speaking isiZulu and English. They both come to school with different patriarchal backgrounds comprising different gender beliefs, expectations and attitudes from their communities. These may greatly affect the gender and identity constructions taking place both in class and probably even outside the classroom situation. This may be because of patriarchal gender roles set by their communities from which the learners and teachers originate, for instance, the fact that the upbringing of women was different from that of men (Finlayson, 2002). Women had to remain at home and raise children, cook and take care of their husbands. Men, on the other hand, had to work and feed children. Women had to be polite and humble and not be inquisitive, while men had to be assertive and strong. My observations have been that being educated meant speaking English and going to work, so an educated woman would be a threat to a society who believed it was men who had to work.

In the light of the above it is clear that the community and the school under investigation may still be held captive by such patriarchal beliefs. Also, it may be true that language is still used as an instrument to instil these beliefs. The learners under investigation may also be using language to construct gender identities that are relevant to their community's patriarchal gender understandings. Even in the light and the presence of the Constitution it may be difficult to apply gender equity if teachers who teach these learners are themselves not familiar with it or in line with its principles.

This is the reason the study explores the discourse teachers use to *prais*e and *scold* learners. The aim of this study is to find out how this discourse contributes to the construction of learners' gender identities. The study hopes it will be fruitful to find out if this benefits or disadvantages learners.

2.2 Speech Acts

It is in the interests of this study to look at Speech Acts theory initiated by Austin (1962) and later Searle (1969). This theory was further developed by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003). It states that the gendering of people can be thought of as being accomplished through a series of acts, many of them linguistically mediated. It maintains that Speech Acts are embedded in social interaction. It is maintained that compliments, for instance, are gendered. Speech Acts are used to express *praise* and approval to make the addressee feel good. They are also believed to please and enhance the addressee's sense of self as admirable or likeable or successful. This theory has been applied in the South African context (de Kadt, 2003) but not in the same context as explored by this study.

2.2.1 Praise

In this study the term *praise* is used to commend the worth of a person, action or situation or to express approval or admiration (Brophy, 1981). It connotes a more intense or detailed teacher response to student behaviour than terms such as 'feedback' or 'affirmation of correct response' does. Brophy (1981) states that when teachers *praise* students they do not merely tell them the degree of success they have achieved (by nodding or repeating answers, by saying, 'okay', 'right', or 'correct' or giving letter grade or a percentage score). In addition to such feedback, a teacher's *praise* statement expresses positive teacher affect (surprise, delight, excitement) and/ or places a student's behaviour in context by giving information about its value or its implications about the student's status. In this thesis, I deal with teacher *praise* which goes beyond the mere affirmation of correctness of response.

In his study of *teacher praise*, Brophy (1981) argues that teacher *praise* typically does not function as a reinforcer and much of it is not even intended as reinforcement. He maintains that a teacher's ***verbal*** *praise* cannot be equated with reinforcement. He further maintains that such *praise* is used infrequently, without contingency, specificity or credibility. The teacher's verbal praise cannot be equated with reinforcement, therefore, because such teacher *praise* is determined more by the teacher's perceptions of student

needs than by the quality of student conduct or performance. He expounds that much teacher *praise* is dependent upon and under the control of student behaviour.

2.2.2 Criticism

In his study Brophy defines *criticism* as negative teacher responses to student behaviour which go beyond whatever level of simple feedback (negation) is needed to indicate that the specific behaviour is inappropriate or that the answers are incorrect (Brophy,1981). In this thesis 'criticism', (a term which I prefer to call "*scolding*" since this is how it is mostly understood by teachers), connotes expressions of disapproval, disgust or rejection. *Praise* and *criticism* must be distinguished not only from simple (affectively neutral) feedback, but also from more global attributes such as 'warm' and 'hostility'. These particular terms describe more generalized attitudes or emotional states although they may include *praise* and *criticism* as partial manifestations (Brophy, 1981). Reinforcement theorists apply the term 'reinforcement' to any consequence that increases the frequency of behaviour when performance of that behaviour is made contingent upon presentation of the consequence. These theorists maintain that individuals differ from one another and even within themselves over time, in their responsiveness to potential reinforcers. This means that consequences capable of controlling the behaviour of most people will not work with certain individuals and thus will not function as reinforcers for those individuals. Also, reinforcers are subject to satiation effects, losing their potency if used too often or too long (Brophy, 1981). It would be interesting to find out if praise and criticism do apply as reinforcement or not in the classes investigated in this study.

Praise is widely recommended as a reinforcement method used by teachers as it is perceived as more advantageous than concrete reinforcers. In Brophy's (1981) study *praise* is shown to encourage students, to help build self-esteem, to help build close teacher-student relationship. In the very act of *praising*, teachers can identify the specific behaviour they are trying to reinforce.

The disadvantages are that, firstly, the introduction of an extrinsic reward can reduce, rather than increase motivation and, secondly, that the person distributing *praise* takes the

role of expert or authority figure who is judging the behaviour of the person being praised.

2.2.3 Person versus Process Praise

Kamins and Dweck (1999) define **Person praise** as *praising* children's abilities, goodness or worthiness after their performance of a task. It expresses the adult's global/overall evaluation of the child on the basis of a child's performance. **Process praise** and criticism, on the other hand, is focused on making children examine their strategies or effort and that fosters more mastery-oriented responses to setbacks*. **Process praise** and **criticism** proved to encourage and motivate learners to do better than those who used **Person praise and criticism**.

Praise as reinforcement

Praise is recommended (advantageous) (Kamins & Dweck, 1999) as a reinforcement method for use by teachers because:

  ➢ *Praise* does not have the disadvantages associated with concrete reinforcers (which tend to be expensive and time-consuming to apply regularly in class), like making offers/promises, for instance, 'If you finish this project early I'm going to take you out on an excursion', and their use engenders objections ranging from nutritional fears to concerns about bribing students to learn (Kamins & Dweck, 1999).

  ➢ *Praise* is free and is usually seen as desirable because even though it is known to be an effective reinforcer, it also provides encouragement to students to help build self-esteem and to help build a close teacher-student relationship.

  ➢ *Praise* potentially allows a direct statement of the contingency between the behaviour and the very act of reinforcement. This means that, in the very act of *praising,* teachers can identify the specific behaviour they are trying to reinforce.

Other theorists, however, believe that *praise* is a disadvantage (for instance, Montessori, 1964) quoted in (Kamins & Dweck, 1999). They believe that learning is intrinsically worthwhile and rewarding at least when learners are allowed to follow their own interests

at their own pace. They argue that the introduction of extrinsic rewards (of which *praise* is one) can reduce rather than increase motivation, at least when the person has previously been performing the behaviour in question for its intrinsic value.

They further claim that the person distributing praise takes the role of expert or authority figure who is judging the behaviour of the person being *praised*, in this case, the teachers.

2.3 Frequency of classroom praise and criticism

Classroom studies of *praise* indicate that it occurs relatively infrequently. Kamins and Dweck (1999) could find only 10 studies, most of which used some versions of the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories System which included information on the rate of *praise* observed. They concluded that teachers use *praise* 'no more than six percent of the total time on the average' (p. 21). It was concluded that *praise* occurs relatively infrequently in most classrooms and in some instances *praise* (or approval) is found to be less frequent than *criticism* (disapproval). These studies are significant to my study which also explores frequency of classroom *praise* and *criticism*, and further examines if these are gendered. This study, however, looks at both the number and percentage of classroom *praising* and *scolding* (criticism).

Other studies found the rates of both *praise* and *criticism* are low in most classes, but their relative balance varies with students' ability levels and teachers' managerial skills (Brophy, 1981). Effective classroom managers (teachers) tend to criticize less frequently than ineffective classroom managers (Brophy, 1981). Also, there tends to be more criticism in low ability (low performing) classrooms than in high ability (high performing) classrooms, even when taught by the same teacher.

Past research on praise

There is ***ability*** *praise* and ***effort*** *praise.* Kamins & Dweck, 1999 found that there is mixed evidence on which of the two promotes motivation and performance. *Ability praise* was found to be somewhat more effective in promoting self-efficacy and performance acquisition.

Children who were offered **process** *praise* showed higher levels of challenge-seeking tasks and improved performance (Kamins & Dweck, 1999).

Past research on criticism

It has been established from previous research that students who are directed toward judging their ability or who feel that their ability level has been negatively evaluated are more likely to show lower expectations of future success and a more negative affect, that is, aspects of helpless response patterns than students who receive *criticism* for their effort or their strategies (Kamins & Dweck, 1999).

Present research findings

From the point of view of Kamins and Dweck (1999), *person praise* may convey to the child that their internal traits, such as intelligence, are the things that matter and that can be judged from outward performance. It also conveys that these traits are deep-seated (Kamins & Dweck, 1999). **Person praise** may be delivered when children perform well but may be applied by the children when they later perform poorly. This means that later when the children perform poorly, they will develop a sense of worthlessness and perceive themselves as failures. This is because it is the person/individual that is being *praised* and not the effort or strategy he/she puts into performing the task.

Process praise instead focuses on the effort and strategies, which can be readily modified when things do not go well. These results support an acceptable norm which has warned against globally criticizing the child instead of focusing on specific behaviours Kamins & Dweck, 1999) and further suggest that critiquing the process leads to a consistently more mastery- oriented pattern than criticizing the person.

This chapter has reviewed past theories on classroom discourse and identity construction as explored by Halliday (1978), Pujolar (2001) and other theorists. The studies propose that language is a tool for making meaning as well as expressing the unique culture or world of its speech community. Language is seen, also, to construct, manage, maintain, and negotiate/renegotiate social identities as gendered (Freeman & McElhimny, 1996 and

Kamwangamalu, 2000) as well as constructing multiple identities (de Kadt & Slabbert & Finlayson, 2005). The theory of language and gender which explores the Deficit, Dominance and Difference approaches as proposed by Lakoff (1975) has been discussed. This theory sees women and men as different. The chapter also discusses findings of previous research on the classroom as a gendered space, which perceives children separating more by gender from kindergarten to high school. This has been seen to have a greater impact since it leads to women and men being viewed and treated as different by society in the adult world. Finally, the Speech Act Theory as proposed by Austin (1962) as well as its application in the latter years by McConnell-Ginet & de Kadt (2003) has been discussed. Definitions of praise and criticism (scolding) as defined by Brophy (1981) and classified into person/process praise and criticism by Kamins & Dweck (1999) have been given, as well as past and present research on these has been discussed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter informs the reader about the procedures that were undertaken to answer the critical questions underlying this research project. The methods used in this study are those used frequently by sociolinguists today which include a qualitative approach where ethnography and discourse analysis play a significant role in providing an authentic and holistic understanding of the sociolinguistic dynamics at work (Rudwick, 2006).

The first section of this chapter describes the environment in which the investigation was conducted in order to provide a clear perspective on the circumstances under which the study was conducted.

Detailed information about the participants in the research project will then follow. They are divided into two categories: those who live in the area under investigation and those who come from the townships and urban areas. Since the research was conducted at a local high school, observations and interviews were done in the classrooms and in the staffroom.

The rationale behind this study is the belief that in order to adequately examine how languages (isiZulu/English) are used in the focused school community, it becomes imperative to study the people in that language situation. This means employing ethnographic approaches in order to study or examine culture and the linguistic dynamics as experienced by the participants. This is one of the approaches this dissertation intends to follow. As an 'insider' of this school community, a certain level of ethnography would be done 'naturally'.

3.2 The site of study

The research was carried out in a secondary school situated on the south coast of KwaZulu- Natal in an area called Umbumbulu. This school caters for pupils from Grade 8 to 12.

The school to be investigated has an enrolment of approximately 500 learners ranging from 15 - 23 years of age. The school has 17 teachers including the Principal, of which 7 are male and 10 are female teachers.

It is often emphasized that, in order to be a successful participant observer, the researcher must be accepted by the community (Rudwick, 2006). As an English educator and having personally taught at this school for 16 years, I feel that I have a good relationship with the principal, other educators who are my colleagues as well as learners. I received consent to conduct the research at this school. Learners, too, were willing to participate in the research. It was the educators who were reluctant to take part, many claiming that they did not want to be in the spotlight. Even though six educators agreed to participate, I also obtained further information from learners about other educators which will contribute to the analysis of the data.

A more detailed discussion of the subjects of my investigation as well as records of classroom interaction of *praising* and *scolding* is given in Chapter 4.

My role as an insider in the community as well as in the school will be discussed more fully in this chapter where a critical discussion of methods of data collection will be made.

3.3 The environment (school and community) and participants

The school under investigation is in an underdeveloped rural area with many socio-economic problems and a profoundly disadvantaged community. The school suffers under the pressures of being disadvantaged and under-resourced. Most learners, who pass Matric, cannot study further because they are poor and cannot afford their tertiary studies. Only a few of them manage to get bursaries. Some of those who fail to further their studies become discouraged. Other learners lose sight of the value of being at school.

In spite of the circumstances described above, the vision of the school under investigation, as envisaged in the mission statement is to "Deliver high quality education

and to develop responsible and productive citizens. It also aims to produce self-reliant individuals and decrease the level of illiteracy amongst the community members. Finally it aims to integrate its local community into the global community by exposing them to new developments" [School Mission Statement].

The majority of people in the community are illiterate, unemployed and poor. This is perceived to be hindering their eagerness to be involved in the education of their children. It should be noted though that this does not refer to the rest of the community. Some members of the uneducated community perceive themselves as inferior. This is displayed through their non-participation in any discussions held at school. The small percentage of the literate ones knows what to do, but they are outnumbered by the illiterate ones. This situation affects the learning of their children. Most of the illiterate ones believe that marriage will bring them some measure of financial independence. They, therefore, urge their children to marry, regardless of age.

In the study made by Romaine (1999) it was observed that learners were found to be more interested in romantic relationships and marriage than higher learning. In this study, however, it has been noted that it is the parents including the community that encourage learners to opt for marriage because of poverty. This is the type of environment that the learners under investigation are coming from.

Educators, of whom some are participants in the study as well, have come to the school from outside the area, for instance, from Umlazi (a township), Isipingo, Woodlands and Pinetown (urban areas). The values they have brought with them differ from those that exist within this community and amongst the learners, the majority of whom are from it since they come from sub-urban surroundings. Educators are expected to educate and develop individuals who are responsible and who will be able to face the future fearlessly. They have to assist these individuals in constructing their own identities through various activities in the classroom as well as through informing them about the importance of education. While these educators are doing this, they sometimes meet with resistance because their ideas clash with the values the community holds. Learners

develop negative attitudes toward educators too since their perceptions of what is right differs. Educators may similarly develop such attitudes if they feel that they are not awarded the respect that is due to them by the learners. Educators are also trained in gender equity principles and they have an obligation to implement this in their teaching. Even though the community may be aware of the Constitution, they hardly align themselves with it. Educators then may find it extremely hard to promote gender equity in an environment where male dominance over women still prevails.

3.4 Methods of data collection

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description of the methods of data collection and the methods of data analysis used in this research. In this thesis the word 'educators' is used instead of 'teachers'. The data consists of videos of six lessons taught by six educators, three females and three males together with interviews conducted with these six educators as well as with 138 learners: 55 male and 83 female, from Grades 10- 12. I have worked with this group of learners since they were in Grade 8 and 9, and, moreover, they have become very much aware of their gender. The interviews with both learners and educators were conducted for one hour each. Learner interviews were done as a group while educator interviews were conducted individually. To analyze the data I utilized qualitative methods where transcriptions are read to get the sense of the whole (McMillan and Schumacher 1997), followed by classification of instances of *praising* and *scolding* in terms of their gendered nature according to the Speech Act Theory.

I used three main sources of data:
  i.   Informal observations made since 2002.
  ii. Video-recorded lessons
  iii. Semi- structured interviews and video-recorded interviews
The informal observations were used to form basic data from which I could build my research.

 The second source of data collection was the video-taping of lessons conducted by the six teachers who agreed to participate: three female and three male educators. I then

followed this procedure by interviewing learners in the classes I mentioned above. Initially learners wanted to know the reason for the video-taping. I explained to them that it was for research purposes and stated, further, the nature of the research. Working with learners was conducive and fruitful because they were willing participants and they were enthusiastic about the interview since they were given the opportunity to air their feelings.

The third source of collecting data was the use of semi-structured interviews. Here I interviewed each educator and recorded their responses in writing. These are attached in the appendices.

3.4.1 Informal observations

The first method of informal observations laid a foundation for the research as well as for my interest in the topic. This method was used in the form of relating, comparing and contrasting what was happening in the lives of the learners since I came to this school. I preferred this method because it is based on genuine interactions and behaviours between educators and learners since they were unaware of anyone observing them.

3.4.2 Video-recorded lessons

The reason why I opted for video-recording was to capture the verbal and the non-verbal interactions of both educators and learners per lesson as well as their behavioural patterns. This is necessary for capturing the non-verbal interactions and the behaviour as well. A video-cassette stores a permanent record which one can revisit from time to time when analyzing the data (Mkhize, 2003).

I recorded six lessons as presented by six educators teaching Grade 10-12. The transcriptions of these lessons are attached in the appendices. These educators ranged from 38 to 52 years of age. The ages are not mentioned in the analyses since teachers were not comfortable with revealing their ages.

In order to widen my scope in data collection, I opted for video-taped learner interviews where my aim was to encourage them to share their actual encounters and feelings.

3.4.3 Interviews

3.4.3.1 Video-taped interviews with learners

I opted for video-taping to try and capture learners' verbal and non- verbal responses as well as certain behaviour relating to the questions being asked. An unstructured interview is a research instrument which is very much like a natural conversation (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997) and has no specific kind of questions. These theorists claim that it involves probing the interviewees to make them feel comfortable and therefore likely to offer spontaneous responses. The interviewer encourages the interviewee to respond to issues which interest the interviewee.

At this point I want to mention that while I was conducting these interviews I utilized ethnographic participant observation. In Rudwick (2006) it has been highlighted that ethnography is a fruitful method of data collection and analysis on the social and cultural aspects of language. The main method of participant observation was utilized in order to obtain a holistic understanding of the participants. This helped to provide detailed descriptions of the language/s they use, which is central to this thesis. My position was 'observing while participating and receiving more of an insider's perspective' (Rudwick, 2006: 162).

During the interview I asked the interviewees how they felt about corporal punishment. Subsequently, I asked them to share with me examples of *praising* and *scolding* normally used by their educators during teaching. The first question raised their emotions and they spoke at length, sharing examples and attitudes with me. At this point learners had clearly forgotten about the video-taping and were expressing overwhelming examples of *praising* and *scolding*. They were also expressing their feelings towards these. On comparing the three classes I interviewed, I realized that the responses were more or less similar. The heightened emotional state of the learners led me to assume that most of

their responses may be genuine rather than artificial. I have attached these responses in the appendices as well.

3.4.3.2 Interviews with educators

These interview schedules followed the same pattern as stated above, the only difference being that they were not video-taped. They were one-on-one conversations in which I asked semi-structured questions and probed the respondents into expanding on their responses. The questions were based on the teachers' perspectives on and understanding of gender equity and whether they felt they implemented it in their classroom interactions or not.

This triangulated with video recording of lessons. Also, I hoped to find out the exact words they used for *praising* and *scolding* learners and to which learners, whether male or female. I also wished to find out from them what effect they thought their discourses might have on the learners they teach.

The transcription of the verbal interviews is found in Appendix A. A more detailed discussion of the educators and the lessons follows in Chapter 4.

3.4.3.3 Limitations

As stated in Rudwick (2006: 164), it can be very risky to depend on data from one particular area without looking beyond the greater national circumstances. The findings of this study can in no way be generalized since the study aimed to elicit specific ethnolinguistic data on a specific target group, the Umbumbulu rural community. The specific conditions previously highlighted in this study cannot be compared to other township or suburban areas. I believe, however to a certain extent, that they can be replicated in other rural settings.

3.5 Methods of data analysis

3.5.1 Introduction

This section outlines methods of analyzing data obtained from six educators, three male and three females in this study.

3.5.2 Identification and classification of *scolding* and *praising*

My analysis follows that of Brophy (1981) as discussed previously, where I examine transcripts to locate instances of *praise* and *scolding* (criticism). I then categorize them, firstly, according to Brophy's (1981) classification of *praise* as *reinforcement*, secondly. Kamins and Dweck's (1999) *person praise* and *process praise* and *criticism*, as well as Sunderland's (2004) *damaging discourses* which she describes as defining, degrading and stereotyping women as well as rendering them as potentially invisible (Sunderland, 2004; 192)

3.5.2.1 Praise as reinforcement

In his study Brophy (1981) identifies *praise* which acts as *reinforcement* but argues that such *praise* can turn out to be negative. I prefer to call this kind of *praise* "praise that raises self-esteem".

Examples of *praise* and *scolding* (criticism) which act as *reinforcement*

The following are examples of *praising* that raises self-esteem, which Brophy (1981) maintains acts as reinforcement:

1. *Umsebenzi wakho muhle, sengathi ungahlala unje* (Your work is beautiful, keep it this way) - Male educator to all learners.
2. *Kuyasho ukuthi wena uyisihlobo sami.* (It shows that you are my relative)- Female educator to all learners.
3. Good; very good; excellent; keep it up; marvellous; good work- Both male and female teachers to all learners.

These are the examples of *scolding* that encourages learners to work harder.

1. You will do better next time – Female teacher to all learners.

2. You are lazy; don't forget to study – Male teacher to all learners.

3. Ask questions when learners do not understand) - Male teacher to all learners.

4. Wake up! - Male teacher to all learners.

5. Stick to your work- Male teacher to all learners.

6. Be active (when learners are not participating in class) - Male teacher to all learners.

7. Don't be shy (when learners don't ask questions if they don't understand) - Male teacher to all learners.

8. Keep on trying (when they give a wrong answer) - Male teacher to all learners.

3.5.2.2 Person praise/criticism versus Process praise /criticism

A teacher can say, "*Umsebenzi wakho muhle. Sengathi ungahlala -unje*." (Meaning your work is beautiful. Try to keep it this way). This type of *praise* is the kind which Kamins and Dweck (1999) refer to as *'Process praise'* where the effort the learner puts into performing a task is *praised* instead of the person who administers the task in question. In the above example it is not the person that is being *praised* but the process (that is how the work was done/ the act itself) that is being *praised*. They argue that this type of *praise* encourages better grades than *person praise*. It also encourages neutral gender constructions.

In the example, '*Kuyasho ukuthi wena uyisihlobo sami* (it shows that we are relatives)', it is the person that is being praised and not the process, hence *person praise*.

The above analysis has been looking at two examples of *praising* uttered in isiZulu. Examples in English such as, 'good, very good, excellent' do not clarify whether it is what the person says that is good, very good or excellent, or the person him/herself. However in 'good work', it is clear that it is the work or process that is being praised. Based on my experience as an educator, it seems like it has always been accepted as a

norm that the above examples of *praise* refer to work done, however, an in-depth study on this would be worthwhile.

It has been noted though that while Kamins and Dweck (1999) claim that *process praise* encourages better grades, it has been observed in this study that learners feel more proud of themselves if the person him/herself is being *praised* or *criticized*.

A learner may feel encouraged even when *scolded* or criticized. This is seen in the following example by a female educator to both male and female learners when they failed a test, "You will do better next time." This is an example of *person criticism,* however, it is noted that even though it is the person that is being criticized, learners feel more encouraged to better their grades. However, *scolding* such as 'You are lazy, don't forget to study' may be viewed as discouraging learners when in the actual sense it encourages others. This should depend on the attitude of the teacher uttering the *scolding*, whether it is a male or female teacher, as well as the attitude of the learner toward the teacher.

3.5.2.3 Praising and scolding which acts as damaging discourse

Sunderland (2004) argues against discourses which may be damaging to the learners' gender identities. Even though the examples she gives differ completely from the instances in this study, it has been noted that there may be instances of *praising* as well as *scolding* which may be damaging to the learners' gender identity construction. In a situation where a teacher asks a question, for instance, and all learners raise their hands to give an answer, an utterance such as, '*Nesinedolo ke namhlanje siyayazi lento* (even the oldest granny today knows the answer) may be damaging to the learners' gender identities even though it is intended as *reinforcement praising*. The educator here states that both male and female learners are like an old granny (female). This is degrading for male learners in particular who may view themselves as men and stronger than females. Female learners, too, may feel that they are weak and unable to do better to improve their grades. Such an utterance also encourages withdrawal from a learner who does not always give answers in class.

A similar example is where a teacher *praises* learners for passing a test such as, '*Kuyafana nje nokuthi awukenzi lutho* (it's like you haven't done anything yet)'. The learner has passed the test, but is told he has done nothing, implying that the learner has not really worked hard to pass. This may cause partial or even total withdrawal from any class activity.

The following types of *scolding* (criticism) may have negative results that may be detrimental to the construction of learner gender identities.

- You are not serious, *kufanele usiyeke isikole* (you must leave the school) – male educator to a male learner.

The learner may feel that he is useless and he may withdraw from participating in class activities, and eventually leave school.

- *Awuyazi into ozoyenza la esikoleni* (you don't know why you are here) – a male educator to a male learner.

In this example a learner is told that he has no reason for being at school. The implicated message is that he should rather leave school.

- You are stupid – a male educator to a male learner.

The implication here is that the learner is stupid and therefore cannot cope with being in class or at school.

The above three examples construct neutral gender identities but perpetrate inferior and low self-esteem in male learners.

- *niyimishaqane* (you are nothing) – a male educator to both male and female learners.

This implies that all learners in this class are useless. They will never make it.

This is directed to all learners and not to any specific gender.

The following examples are gendered.

- *Sewaphupha wena* (you are no longer clever) – a male educator to a female learner.

The learner is told she is not clever anymore. The effect of the words is so powerful that it discourages the learner from any further participation in any class activity.

- Get out of my class – a male educator to both male and female learners.

These learners are deprived of an opportunity to learn.

- *Izintshebe zoze ziphume ngamawindi* (your beards will grow until they come out of the windows) – a female educator to male learners.

The implication is that these male learners will never pass until they are very old.

This chapter has discussed methods of data collection and analysis. It started by giving a description of the environment in which the investigation took place and then gave detailed information on participants in this study. The chapter then discussed methods of data collection encompassing this study which include ethnographic informal observations, video-taped lessons and learner group interviews as well as one-on-one interviews with educators. This has been closely followed by the discussion of methods informing data analysis where instances of praising and scolding (criticism) have been identified and classified according to Brophy (1981) and Kamins & Dweck (1999). Finally, instances which have damaging effects on identities of learners have been discussed.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter analyses instances of *praising* and *scolding* as produced by teachers in class while they were teaching, as well as those captured in the interviews of learners and teachers. The data consists of transcripts of these instances uttered by six teachers, three male and three females, as well as those captured in interviews with learners

4.1 Classification and interpretation of data

This section of the research classifies the discourses used into two categories. Brophy (1981) identifies *praise* which acts as *reinforcement* but argues against such *praise* and claims that even though it may be intended as *reinforcement*, it can turn out to be negative, while Kamins and Dweck (1999) further classify *praise* and *criticism* into *Person* and *Process praise* and *criticism,* claiming that the latter encourages better grades than the former. Sunderland (2004) on the other hand identifies *damaging discourses* which she ascertains damage the learners' self-esteem and identity. These are discourses believed to be having a hindering effect on the construction of an individual's identity. This is the format that this study utilizes in classifying *praising* and *scolding*.

4.2 Male educators

This section will analyze and interpret data collected from three male educators. A table showing a summary of frequency and percentage for each instance for each male educator will be included. I will also highlight the frequently used type of instance for each educator.

Guide to abbreviations:

RP -   Reinforcement Praise

PP -   Person Praise

Pr. P - Process Praise

DP -   Damaging Praise

ME-   Male Educator

FE -   Female Educator

Table 4.1: Praise that acts as reinforcement

FREQUENCY (F) AND PERCENTAGE (%) FOR EACH TYPE OF PRAISING									
	RP	**%**	**PP**	**%**	**Pr. P**	**%**	**DP**	**%**	**TOTAL**
ME1	5	50	3	30	2	20	-	-	10
ME2	3	50	-	-	3	50	-	-	06
ME3	6	50	4	33.3	2	16.6	-	-	12

Table 4.2: Criticism that acts as reinforcement

FREQUENCY (F) AND PERCENTAGE (%) FOR EACH TYPE OF CRITICISM									
	RC	**%**	**PC**	**%**	**Pr.C**	**%**	**DC**	**%**	**TOTAL**
ME1	5	50	5	50	-	-	-	-	10
ME2	5	35.7	5	35.7	01	07	3	21.4	14
ME3	4	33.3	4	33.3	-	-	4	33.3	12

4.2.1 Male teacher 1 (ME1)

Male teacher 1 (ME1) is a school principal who has been teaching for 17 years. He is quite familiar with gender equity. He claims he tries very hard to implement it in his class. In the lesson that is recorded, he is teaching Geography using map work. His class is a group of 35 learners, 10 males and 25 females. When I enter the class he is introducing the lesson by asking questions. ME1 attempts to involve all learners, both male and female. It is observed that both male and female learners are attentive to the lesson, but it is mostly the female learners who respond to any questions he asks. He finds himself having to probe male learners for answers. The educator again directs another question to male learners. They keep quiet until one of the female learners whose hand was up responds to the question. ME1 is seen to be using a lot of praising but it is noted that it is mostly female learners that are being *praised* because they are more active in the lesson than males.

He uses a lot of *praise* to reinforce participation from all learners particularly boys. He uses both *Person Praise* and *Process Praise*.

Table 4.2 above shows that his most frequently used type of *praise* is *Person Praise*:

- "Very good"- Male educator to a female learner.
- 'Excellent" - Male educator to a male learner.
- "Keep it up!" - Male educator to a female learner.

Scolding or criticism seems to be directed to male learners who are not as participative as female learners. Some examples captured during video-taping were:

- "No, no, no!" – Male educator to a male learner.
- *"Hhayi, hhayi, hhayi*!" (No, no, no) – Male educator to male learners
- "*Musani ukubheda*" (do not mess up) – Male educator to male learners.

Most of the examples of scolding are captured in the interviews where ME1 elaborates on how he deals with learners' unresponsive behaviour in the classroom. For instance, if the learners, males or females, are not participative several times during the lessons or if their performance is bad in written tasks, ME1 claims he identifies the problem: if it is the learners', he tells them they are lazy. The educator seems to be very careful here. Instead

of merely judging learner performance, he first investigates the particular problem, and then expresses his feeling or opinion regarding it. He further encourages non-participative learners to 'study their work' in order to pass. The following examples of *reinforcement criticism* or scolding were noted in educator interviews:

- "Identifies the problem, if it is theirs I tell them they are lazy."
- "Don't forget to study."
- "Ask Questions."
- "Stick to your work!"
- "Wake Up!"

These are said to all learners, both male and female, for non-participation in classroom interaction.

Even though these examples are part of scolding that ME1 uses, they are very encouraging to learners and in no way seem to be derogatory or degrading to learners.

It is observed in this lesson that ME1 is mostly friendly toward female learners, hence their continued participation in class. Female learners appear to enjoy his lessons more than male learners do. It is assumed that his position as school principal may perhaps be intimidating to the learners, particularly male learners. Even though he attempts to make both male and female learners interactive in his class, it is mostly female learners that are quick to respond to questions. Hence female learners are the ones that get to be *praised* and *scolded* more than male learners. It has been noted in this lesson that ME1 does apply the principles of gender equity by equally involving both male and female learners in the interaction. However, it is mostly the female learners who participate in his lesson. The male learners in my study get *scolded* only for being non-participatory in the classroom.

4.2.2 Male Teacher 2 (ME2)

Male teacher 2 (ME2) has been teaching for 10 years. He claims that he is familiar with gender equity but still believes a man should be dominant in the household. He differentiates between the workplace and a household and maintains that gender equity is more applicable in the household than in the workplace.

The lesson under observation is an Agricultural lesson where the class is revising for the final year examination. The learners appear lethargic and not eager to participate in the

discussion. He insists, however, that they take out their previous exam papers so that they can answer questions orally with him. In this lesson the male educator attempts to involve all learners, both male and female. It is, however, clear that the learners do not appear to be keen on participating. He starts by asking a question, and he points at a female learner. This learner has been identified by all teachers as being very intelligent. When he points at her calling her by name, she just smiles and does not answer. He then says,

- "*Wena*, Rose, *sewaphupha* (Rose, you are now no longer intelligent." – Male educator to a female learner.

The learner simply smiles and looks down. He then starts looking at the male learners who just talk to each other and laugh, for instance, when he says

- "*Niyimishaqane nje* (You don't know a thing) – Male educator to all learners.

He then seems less encouraged to continue with the lesson. He looks at me and I ask him to continue. He says to me, "*Ayi suka abafuni ukukhuluma laba* (These people don't want to talk anymore). The educator at this point appears to be angered as well as discouraged by the fact that learners are not responding.

The above are examples of *person criticism.* Looking at the first example of captured interaction the teacher responds, "*Wena*, Rose, *sewaphupha* (You are no longer intelligent), he means that the learner was intelligent but is not anymore. This is a male teacher interacting with a female learner. Previous research on gender and language has highlighted and confirmed the presence of patriarchal gender understandings which place women in an inferior position to men. This could mean that women are still perceived by society as weak, accepting, apologetic, etc. In the case of this situation, it is a male teacher interacting with a female learner. Teachers are in a position to use language or discourse to shape the learners' identities. In her discussion of language playing a role in power and powerlessness, Sunderland (2004) maintains that discourse has the ability to create or remove power from individuals engaging in an interaction. The teacher's responses have been noted to also discourage boys to participate while lowering both male and female learners' self-esteem. Even though the learner (Rose) may have looked

up to ME2 for guidance, she may be resenting him now and already admitting to failure regarding her learning.

Damaging discourses may construct inferior gender identities which may be defining, degrading and stereotyping women as well as rendering them as potentially invisible (Sunderland, 2004; 192). The above examples of *scolding* are discouraging in the sense that learners may no longer be eager to participate. The teacher concerned may not even realize the depth of the damage created but may only realize it when the learner in question has disappeared from the school environment.

The second example, "*Niyimishaqane nje nina* (You don't know a thing) may pre-suppose that these learners are like this at present as a result of words such as these that are always being uttered to them whenever they fail to attempt answering a question in class. This does not only affect the learners, both male and female, concerned but also the teacher himself who now is "too disillusioned to continue with teaching" as he confessed later in an interview.

The fact that the educator points at one female learner who does not respond and the rest of the class is non-participatory reveals some underlying factor about this class. The minimal use of examples of *scolding* shows that learners, both male and female, are not willing to participate. The absence of *praising* in the whole lesson, however, reveals a more serious underlying problem in this class. The learners may be discouraged from participating in the lessons by previous discouraging remarks by the educator.

Educator interviews revealed these factors. When the educator *scolds* he uses the following examples:

- "*Thula uyisilima*!" (Shut up, you are stupid!) –Male educator to male and female learners.
- "*Ayikho leyonto*." (That does not exist) – Male educator to male and female learners.

It is noted that when the educator says, "*uyahlanya* (you are mad)" he severely damages the learner's identity. The above examples could be partly to blame for the current non-participatory mood of learners in classroom interaction.

In the above examples, it is the educator that seems to discourage learners from participating in the lesson. However, ironically it is him again who is 'disillusioned'. The above example illustrates how educators may unwittingly impart destructive gender discourses to learners, resulting in the construction of inferior learner gender identities. The attitude of both the learners and the educator (ME2) is negative even though the male learners find it funny.

In teacher interviews, ME2 claims that he does not know how his learners feel after being *scolded*. The reaction of the learners, however, reveals that they are being discouraged despite the fact the educator may not realize this.

4.2.3 Male Educator 3 (ME3)

Male educator 3 has been teaching for 14 years. He teaches Mathematics. He is familiar with gender equity but believes it applies only in the workplace and certainly not at home, as he maintains, "My house is my domain". When he starts his lesson all learners seem delighted to see him. For instance, they laugh and make a noise until he quietens them down. When he interacts with learners he is able to involve both male and female learners respectively. The following examples of *praising* are noted:

- "Very good" – Male educator to both male and female learners.
- "Excellent" – Male educator to both male and female learners.
- "*Awuboni-ke*" (That's it) – Male educator to a female learner.

Since ME3 is asking questions during the lesson, it would appear that he praises learners for effort or ability to answer questions. This is what Kamins and Dweck (1996, 1999) call '*person praise*'. This type, however, does not yield fruitful results since it

concentrates on the person himself rather than on the learning process (Kamins & Dweck, 1999).

Teacher interviews revealed the following examples of praising:

- "Very good, *bantabami* (my children)" – Male educator to both male and female learners.
- "Marvelous" – Male educator to a female learner.
- "Keep it up!"- Male educator to a female learner.

These examples may fit in well with both *person* and *process praise*. This is because when a teacher says, "Very good, marvellous or keep it up!" he could be referring to what the learner has done during classroom interaction, basing this on my experience as an educator and to the fact that he participates. Then, secondly, it can refer to *process praise* which reinforces the process (work done).

4.2.4 *Person criticism* vs. *process criticism*

In educator interviews it was highlighted that ME3 uses the following examples of *Criticism*:

Person Criticism

- "You are not serious, *kufanele usiyeke isikole* (you must leave school)." – Male educator to a male learner.

In this example, a male educator tells a male learner he/she has to leave school since he/she is not serious. As a male educator, he is trusted and looked up to by learners in his class. When the educator now becomes a 'judge' that gives a global evaluation (Kamins& Dweck, 1999) of the child, this may create an impression that the learner is unfit to be in the classroom, whereas the child himself may perceive him/herself as fit.

- *"Awuyazi into ozoyenza la esikoleni* (You don't know why you are here)" – Male educator to a male learner.

This example insinuates that the learner does not know why he/she is at school. For a learner who puts his/her trust in the educator, he/she is dismayed at the educator's response. He/she realizes he/she may never be able to impress the educator.

- "*Ngiyamxosha aphume ekilasini* (I chase him/her out of class)"- male educator to a male learner.

The learner is chased out of class because the teacher is angry. He misses out on the whole lesson.

- "You are stupid!" – Male educator to a male learner.

The learner is informed that he is stupid. In other words this means he cannot pass.

These types of utterances position the educator as powerful and the learner as powerless. The learner is placed in a position where he has to accept what the educator says.

The above examples may be hindering to the construction of identity of the learner. This is because a learner is made to perceive him/herself as worthless and unable to do better. When the learner leaves school, the educator may not realize that he is the reason for this.

Comparing the attitude of the educator to that of the learner, it may be deduced that the educator has developed a negative attitude toward the learner. This in turn reproduces negative attitude in the learner concerned as well.

In conclusion, therefore, it may be seen that the type of discourse used by the educator has a great potential to either positively construct learner gender identities or detrimentally construct them, resulting in inferior gendered identities. The choice of discourse that educators opt to use in class when *praising* or *scolding* learners has the ability to construct or destroy the gender identities of learners. When the educator comes to class, learners may be passive, as was seen in ME2's class, due to the fact that they are continuously subjected to *person criticism* and *damaging discourses*.

4.2.5 Comparisons concerning the three male educators

The comparisons made are based on lesson observations as well as learner/ educator interviews. All the three male educators are familiar with gender equity and implement it to varying degrees in their classroom teaching. The three male teachers use *praise* as

reinforcement. The Table 4.1 illustrates that the three male educators use equal percentages of *praise* (50%). It is noted, however, that ME3 uses the highest percentage of *person praise* (33.3), while ME1 uses about 30%. ME2 does not use it at all.

It is noted also that ME2 uses the highest percentage of *process praise* (50%) compared to ME1 (20%) and ME3 (16.6). It is interesting to note that no *damaging praise* is used by these educators.

With regards to *criticism,* Table 4.2 shows that ME1 uses the highest percentage of *reinforcement criticism* with ME2 at 35.7% and ME3 at 33.3%. ME1 is noted to be using a lot of *person criticism* (50%) more than ME2 (35.7%) and ME3 (33.3%).

4.3 Female educators

I will now analyze and interpret the data collected from the three female teachers. I will present a table showing the summary of the frequency and percentages for each instance for each female educator. I will also highlight the most frequently used type of *praise* or *criticism* for each educator.

Table 4.3: The frequency and percentage of praise acting as reinforcement.

FREQUENCY (F) AND PERCENTAGE (%) FOR EACH TYPE OF PRAISING								
	RP	**%**	**PP**	**%**	**Pr. P**	**%**	**DP**	**%**	**TOTAL**
FE1	2	50	-	-	2	50	-	-	04
FE2	3	50	3	50	-	-	-	-	06
FE3	2	33.3	2	33.3	-	-	2	33.3	06

Table 4.4: The frequency and percentage of criticism (scolding) acting as reinforcement.

FREQUENCY (F) AND PERCENTAGE (%) FOR EACH TYPE OF CRITICISM								
	RC	**%**	**PC**	**%**	**Pr.C**	**%**	**DC**	**%**	**TOTAL**
FE1	3	37.5	3	37.5	-	-	2	25	08
FE2	2	40	3	60	-	-	-	-	05
FE3	2	40	1	20	**1**	20	1	20	05

4.3.1 Female educator1 (FE1)

Female educator 1 (FE1) has been teaching for 19 years. She is very familiar with gender equity and implements it in class. She is the Head of Department for Commerce and teaches Accounting. What has been observed is that she is very popular amongst her learners, both male and female. She has a powerful voice and is very vibrant. When I

enter her class I catch her off-guard as she is not expecting me to come at that time. When I come in she continues with the lesson in which the learners take it in turns to go to the chalkboard to complete a balance sheet. Although learners are taking turns, they compete because she is checking each answer and gives a little beating with a small stick behind the back if a learner gets the answer or a particular step wrong. Examples of *reinforcement praise* are:

- "Very good" – Female educator to a male learner.
- "Good" – Female educator to a female learner.

Even though FE1 uses only these two kinds of *praising* it is noted that she uses only *process praise* which marks her class different from other classes. She involves her learners all the time in classroom activities. When she teaches she asks them to repeat what she says. When she utters "good" or "very good", therefore, she *praises* the effort that the learner puts into doing the work. I observe that every learner is busy and there is not any unnecessary noise in the class. She *praises* both male and female learners equally.

The attitude of learners, both male and female towards the educator as well as learning itself, is positive. This is observed in the way they handle themselves in her class and the effort they put into their work. They are very attentive and participatory right through the lesson. Her work is always done and up-to-date, hence she obtains 100% pass in Matric in Accounting every year.

It may be concluded with regards to the findings above that, as Kamins and Dweck (1999) have maintained, *process praise* and *criticism* do encourage learners to work harder. It is perceived, therefore, that educators who use more *process praise* and *criticism* may be very successful in their classes due to the fact that their learners' gendered identities are positively constructed.

4.3.2 Female educator 2 (FE2)

Female Educator 2 (FE2) has been teaching for 13 years. She is familiar with gender equity and implements it in class. She teaches Mathematics and is very friendly towards her learners. When I enter her class, the learners are talking and looking happy. She is in the middle of her lesson and they do not mind my sitting down at the back of the class. They are doing Equations and she is busy writing some examples on the chalkboard and asking questions at the same time. When a learner responds correctly she says,

- "Very good" – Female educator to both male and female learners.
- "Good" – Female educator to both male and female learners.
- "*Kuyasho ukuthi wena uyisihlobo sami* (it shows that you are my relative)"- Female educator to both male and female learners.
- "*Awuboni- ke*! (That's it!)" – Female educator to both male and female learners.

The above are examples of *person praise*. It is noted, however, in this lesson that when the educator praises both male and female learners, they are gratified. Their faces beam with excitement. This could be because as an educator, one is a role model and learners feel gratified when they are told that they are related to the educator. *Person praise* is seen to be very motivating for these learners. During the learner interviews, the learners revealed that FE2 is very friendly toward them. They said when she is angry she just throws a piece of chalk at a learner and marches out of class, but this is very rare. Both male and female learners enjoy her lessons. She does not differentiate between male and female learners. They are treated equally.

The attitude of both the educator and learners is positive.

4.3.3 Female educator 3 (FE3)

Female educator 3 (FE3) has been teaching for 19 years. She is aware of gender equity and implements it in class. Even though I observed her lesson I could not obtain much of the instances except for the ones I obtained from learner interviews. This was because the educator was revising and in a rush, hence her lesson was short. The examples of *praising* I obtained from learners were:

- "*Kuyefana nje awukenzi lutho* (You still haven't done anything)" – Female educator to all learners.

This is *praising* which she utters when a learner has passed a test. Even though learners claim this is the kind of praising she utters when they have passed a test, this does not sound like praising. This could mean that she scolds them even when they have passed her test. This proved to anger learners because they felt like whatever they do was not recognized.

- "*Kuphase ngisho nodondobela* (Even the worst learner has passed)" – Female educator to all learners.

This made learners feel as if they are stupid. Those who are intelligent feel they are not praised for the effort they put into doing the work.

According to the learners, mostly females, they are never praised no matter how hard they work.

Examples of **criticism** were:

"*Izintshebe zoze ziphume ngamafasitela* (you beards will grow till they come through the windows)". – Female educator to male learners.

This means that male learners will keep on failing until they are old enough to be fathers.

Both male and female learners felt like quitting school. Male learners even suggested that they were not returning to this school the following year. The attitude of learners toward the teacher was found be very negative. Both male and female learners' gender identities were found to be degraded. This educator was found to be using the highest percentage of *person criticism.*

In a comparison of the three female educators, FE1 and FE2 used equal percentages (50%) of *reinforcement praise*. FE2 was found to be using a lot of *person praise* (50%). Only FE1 used *process praise*. FE2 was found to be using the highest percentage of *person criticism*. Finally, FE3 was found to be using *damaging discourses*.

Classification of instances of praising and scolding in terms of Gender

TABLE 4.5: Frequency and percentage for each type of praising

	Female Learners	**%**	**Male Learners**	**%**	**All Learners**	**%**	**TOTAL**
ME1	02	28.5	01	14.2	04	57.1	07
ME2	-	-	-	-	04	100	04
ME3	03	50	01	14.2	03	50	07

The above table illustrates that two out of three male educators *praise* all learners equally.

Only one of the three educators *praises* female learners separately.

TABLE 4.6: Frequency and percentage for each type of scolding

	Female Learners	**%**	**Male Learners**	**%**	**All Learners**	**%**	**TOTAL**
ME1	-	-	03	37.5	05	62.5	08
ME2	04	66.6	-	-	02	33.3	06
ME3	-	-	05	71.4	02	28.5	07

The above table illustrates that two out of three male educators do not *scold* female learners at all. Only one male educator has the highest percentage of *scolding* of female learners.

TABLE 4.7: Frequency and percentage for each type of praising

	Female Learners	%	Male Learners	%	All Learners	%	TOTAL
FE1	01	**50**	01	50	-	-	02
FE2	02	40	-	-	03	60	05
FE3	-	-	-	-	01	100	01

The table above shows that two female educators are not gender biased. Only one educator *praises* females and does not *scold* males.

TABLE 4.8: Frequency and percentage for each type of scolding

	Female Learners	%	Male Learners	%	All Learners	%	TOTAL
FE1	-	-	-	-	03	100	03
FE2	-	-	-	-	01	100	01
FE3	-	-	01	20	04	80	05

Table 4.8 shows that all three female educators *scold* both male and female learners equally.

Comparisons of the six educators

Five out of six educators *praise* both male and female learners equally. Only one educator *praises* females only, and *scolds* male learners the most.

Four out of six educators scold all learners. Two out of six educators do not *scold* females.

This could be because female learners are active during classroom interaction. It may mean that some degree of gender bias or sensitivity exists with certain educators. Only one out of six educators *scolds* males the most. This could mean that male learners are

inactive during classroom interaction. Also, one educator does not scold male learners at all. Again this could be as a result of inactivity on the part of male learners.

The responses of teachers in teacher interviews showed that the teachers had some awareness of their behaviour with regards to gender, but the interview seemed to be the first experience during which they could be thinking the issue through.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the findings from the data analysis in this study.

All the six educators in this study are familiar with both the Constitution of South Africa and its contents, and the concept of gender equity. They all aim to implement the principles of gender equity in class; however, they do so differently. For instance, Male educator 1 believes it is imperative that all people be treated equally, irrespective of their gender. He therefore emphasizes the need to teach learners and his own children new trends in order to be in line with the Constitution. Male educator 2, even though he knows the principles of gender equity, still believes in the patriarchal gender understandings which view the man as a potentially strong leader at home and in the community. Even though this educator claims to implement gender equity in the classroom, his beliefs which he shared in the educator interview, seem to prevail even in the classroom situation. His remark to a female learner, "*Sewaphupha wena*, Rose," claiming that he believes that the learner is no longer intelligent, portrays that he does not show respect to the female learner. As an educator who has been fully trained by the Education Department, he is obliged to implement principles of gender equity in the classroom. The attitude of the female learner toward the male teacher appears to be negative as well. Even though she smiles, she does not respond to the question asked. The response of male learners to the criticism by laughing also seems to affect the female learner negatively. Male educator 2 directs another criticism at the male learners in his classroom, "*Niyimishaqane nina,*" meaning they don't know a thing. The same male learners that have been laughing now appear to be discouraged as well because they do not respond to his question either. In the end it is observed that the male teacher discourages both male and female learners from participating through his degrading *criticism*.

Male educator 3 emphasizes that even though gender equity should be implemented, it should, however, be implemented at the workplace, but certainly not at home where he is supposed to be a leader in his family, "My home is my domain". In the classroom he seems to be criticizing male learners more than female learners. It is observed that his

belief that he is a leader in his home seems to be perpetuated in his teaching in the classroom. This is because he chases male learners out of the classroom more than female learners. He seems to believe that males should be taking harsh punishment compared to female learners. He seems to be affected by the female learners' crying when they are *scolded*. This may imply that he has a sensitive nature toward females as he perhaps perceives them to be weak.

Female educator 1 implements the principles of gender equity for all her learners. For instance, she punishes both male and female learners equally (my observation). She does have a reservation though that God's Constitution in the Bible which places men as heads of families clashes with the principles of gender equity. Both male and female learners respect her. No underlying patriarchal gender understandings are observed here.

Female educator 2 is familiar with gender equity and aims to implement it in class. She, too, seems to treat both male and female learners equally. All learners take her *criticism* positively, therefore.

 Female educator 3 is familiar with gender equity and applies it in class equally to male and female learners. She seems to be applying it differently, though, since both male and female learners maintain she cares less about their feelings and hardly *praises* them. Male learners seem to be taking her criticism negatively.

The above findings clearly indicate the different perceptions under which Gender equity is perceived and implemented. They also show that even though principles of gender equity are known and partially implemented, traditional gender understandings still prevail in communities such as the one under investigation. They show that it is not only the communities that are traditional, but also the learners as well as some teachers. They also illustrate that even though educators have been duly trained by the Department of Education and are expected to implement this, some still uphold traditional gender understandings of male dominance. It is noted also that to mostly male educators in this study, the workplace differs altogether from the home environment in that they still

uphold the belief that gender equity only applies in the workplace and certainly not at home. This reveals the strength of existing patriarchal gender understandings in these participants.

The six educators differ greatly in the ways in which they use *praising* and *scolding* with regards to male and female learners. For instance, Male educator 1 never uses *damaging discourses* when *praising* and *scolding* learners. Even when *scolding* learners, he does it in an encouraging manner, e.g. 'identifying the problem and encouraging them to study'.

Male educator 2 *praises* learners encouragingly, but when he scolds them he seems to discourage them. *Damaging discourses*, for instance, '*sewaphupha wena* (you are no longer intelligent); *uyahlanya* (you are mad); and '*thula uyisilima*' (shut up, you are a fool), are used by this educator. Learners, however, think he is funny and enjoy his lessons. This may be due to his attitude toward these learners. His facial expression allows them to detect the mood which he is in when he *scolds* them. They can detect that even though he uses these words, his attitude is, however, positive and they in turn love his lessons.

Male educator 3 *praises* learners a lot. He uses *praising*, for instance, 'good, excellent, etc.' However, when he *scolds* them he uses derogatory words, for instance, 'you are not serious, *kufanele usiyeke isikole* (you must leave school); and '*awuyazi into ozoyenza la esikoleni* (you don't know why you are here)'. This is taken negatively by learners. Even though learners love him, he maintains some female learners cry and they become withdrawn and will not participate in class activities. Male learners, on the other hand, are also discouraged from participating. They seem also to fear ME3 very much.

Female educator 1 does give learners a little beating behind the back. Even though it may be expected that these learners should hate this educator because of the stick, they love her. It is noted that if the attitude of the educator is positive and learners understand why they are being punished, they do not seem to have a problem.

Female educator 3 seems to differ from the other five educators. It has been noted that she never *praises* learners during her lessons. Data from classroom observation and learner interviews prove this. Learners claim they become afraid of her and then want to leave school. This seems to be having an effect on the great decrease in the number of learners currently in this school.

The study indicates that some discourses used by educators to *praise* and *scold* learners do have a detrimental/hindering effect on the construction of gender identities of these learners as well as on the development of their personalities. 50% of the teachers use derogatory words to *scold* learners, and 50% do not. It was also noted that even though one other teacher uses derogatory words to *scold* learners, they did not have any intention of leaving the school, but they withdraw from participating in classroom interaction. Results show that this type of discourse hinders the construction of learners' gender identities.

It was noted also that the other percentage of positive *praising* greatly gratifies learners and encourages them to perform better. One male educator (ME1) noted that his learners even competed in class during interaction.

The above information illustrates a great percentage of *praising* that is enabling to the construction of equitable gender identities of learners. It also demonstrates that a larger percentage of *damaging discourses* for instance such as was seen in some examples of *scolding*, has been constructing inferior learners' gender identities. This has been noted in the number of female learner dropouts that have taken place recently and that are continuously taking place even at present.

Looking at the overall rate of *praising* and *scolding* instances, the highest number and percentage of *praising* and *scolding* that raises the learners' self-esteem and encourages them to work harder came from male teachers (40%) rather than from female educators. It was also noted that the highest number and percentage of *damaging praising* and *scolding* came from female educators. Only 2 (25%) instances of *damaging scolding* was

found to be coming from male educators to all learners, and again 1 (20%) of *damaging scolding* came from male educators to female learners.

Since the highest number of damaging *praising* and *scolding* came from female teachers to all learners, this was found to be degrading the learners' gender identities. These learners maintain that they, therefore, feel discouraged and belittled. They are discouraged to do better in their studies. Male learners feel that if they are being belittled, they are not men enough since women are not supposed to speak to them anyhow. As one learner puts it, "*We are discouraged by such words and feel like there is nothing good that we can do for these teachers. Quitting school seems to be only option.*' Belittling words like, "*You'll never amount to anything*" and "*Your beards will grow until they come through the windows*" have led to a large number of learners leaving school before they reach Matric. This consistently angers learners. Male learners complained and said such remarks make them feel small. This clearly indicates that there still are some underlying patriarchal gender understandings amongst male learners who seem to refuse to take criticism from female educators.

A few learners, both male and female, felt that the remarks that were made depended on the teacher's attitude. If the educator is friendly, they don't take it seriously. Most of these learners further added that one female educator was over-discouraging them. One female learner even said, "She never *praises* us, no matter how hard we try. If the answer is wrong, she says, *'Nesigxiza amathe ke lento siyayazi*' (Even the most stupid person with water coming out of his mouth, knows this). If the answer is correct she says, 'H*awu! Nesinedolo ke namhlanje siyayazi lento'* (even the oldest granny suffering from knee-problem knows this today). This appeared to have a detrimental effect on learners. They seem to have developed low self-esteem. They confessed that they know they are never going to pass her subject. Even those who passed said she would always say their marks were not good enough. For male learners, being likened to an old lady who cannot walk properly seemed doubly insulting. This could be because they believe they are being weakened when in fact they believe they are males and strong, or they are being likened to women who have traditionally been known to be weak and different from men. Both

these understandings reveal that some underlying patriarchal gender understandings are still present amongst male learners in this study. This becomes problematic for female educators who have to teach under such circumstances.

Male educators were not altogether exempted from these comments. Even though most of them were loved by both male and female learners, some learners particularly females, complained that certain male educators were aggressive and overpowered them so much that these learners were afraid to freely participate during their lessons in class. Learners claimed these male teachers never even try to be friendly toward them and learners therefore, found their subjects difficult. They maintained that this created a great divide between them and learners.

The above discussion reveals that some learners were either *scolded* or negatively *praised* for passing with low marks or with a lower percentage than that expected by the teacher. What frustrated them most was that, even when they failed, they were negatively *scolded* again. These learners were given the perception that they could not do enough or that they are good at nothing. These types of comments result in negative learner behaviour. For instance, they feel belittled, hopeless about their future, start developing feelings of despair, becoming aggressive and unfriendly towards teachers, failing their subjects, and finally ending up leaving school.

The above discussion shows that the discourses used by both male and female educators can affect the gender identities of learners. If educators use negative discourses, then learners are likely to develop negative attitudes toward them. If educators respect learners, they are then likely to show a similar attitude towards them as well. Learners look up to these educators as role models but the same educators sometimes seem to discourage them.

The study conducted found that children who got more *praise* were mostly female learners who were active during classroom interaction with teachers, as well as when answering questions asked by educators. Learners, who got *scolded* more frequently,

were mostly male learners for giving the wrong answers, as well as for being non-participatory during lessons. Other lessons revealed that both male and female learners were equally *praised* and *scolded*. There was, therefore, no gender differentiation here.

It has been noted that even though some positive gender identities are created through most of the instances of *praising* and *scolding* in this study, some inferior gender identities have also been created through the *damaging praising* and *scolding* used by educators. Male learners themselves appear to have strong underlying patriarchal gender perspectives since they seem to take criticism from female educators poorly. Some discourses used by educators seem to be perpetuating these traditional gender roles. Some instances have shown, also, some female learners who resist criticism from a female teacher.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

South Africa has undergone immense political and social transformation since 1994. This has placed a huge demand on the people of this country and the new education system. Educators are required by the Constitution to be familiar with issues such as gender equity and these have to be implemented in the classroom. As stated before in this study, Clause 187 the Constitution stipulates that:

"The commission for Gender Equality must promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality". It furthermore "has the power, as regulated by national legislation, necessary to perform its functions, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby, advise and report on issues concerning gender equality".

The implication is that in their duty of educating the child, educators need to be informed by these new developments and continuously strive to align themselves with these and then carefully implement them in their classroom interaction.

This makes it even more imperative that when educators employ *praising* and *scolding* in their classes they may have to bear in mind that discourse 'subject positions' individuals (Sunderland, 2004). This 'subject positioning' may be constructive or detrimental to the identity of learners. It may, therefore, be compulsory for them to carefully select the type of discourse in relation to the context in which the interaction takes place, and not according to how the educator may be feeling at the time. This will ensure quality and effective 'subject positioning'. Since educators have been perceived to be 'global evaluators' of learners' effort (Kamins & Dweck, 1999), they need to be aware of the impact of their position and influence on learners.

This makes it even more necessary for the actions of teachers to be in line with the Constitution and for them to see to it that they implement it.

This study has investigated instances of *praising* and *scolding* in both isiZulu and English in a rural secondary school and ways in which these contribute to the construction of learner gender identities. I have examined the teaching behaviour of three male and three

female educators in a classroom situation while they were teaching, and conducted interviews with them after the lessons. I have also studied the examples of *praising* and *scolding* given by learners themselves during the interview sessions I had with them.

Since this study focuses on language, gender and identity I started by reviewing previous research on the role of language in gender and identity construction. This offered me useful insight into understanding how language can be used to express the concepts of power and powerlessness, where for instance language may be used to overpower and to create inferior individuals as well as to express culture and social identity of individuals as well as groups.

I then followed Kamins and Dweck's (1999) classification of *praising* and *scolding* which classifies these as *Person and Process Praise and Criticism.* The classification scheme as utilized by Mkhize (2003) was used to classify in categories and frequency of the instances of *praising* and *scolding*. Definitions of concepts such as 'discourse' by Gee (1996), *Person and Process Praise and Criticism* were made to provide a clear understanding of what these mean (Kamins and Dweck, 1999).

Even though this study is limited in scope, the findings are hopefully going to make a contribution which may add valuable insights to the study of discourse used by educators. The eight tables (Table 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6; 4.7 and 4.8) which were used in my analysis, portray the types of instances of *praising* and *scolding* frequently used by, firstly, male educators and, secondly, female educators respectively.

What also makes this study invaluable is that the educators under investigation teach different subjects or learning areas, therefore the choices they make regarding instances of *praising* and *scolding* makes a different yet interesting contribution to the study of teacher discourse in the classroom.

> "While the past few decades have seen an improvement in the treatment of females in classroom methods and curricular materials, it would be premature to declare victory and dismiss issues of gender bias. Today, our girls and boys

remain the victims of gender stereotypes in text and resource materials. They are also victims of unintended or sexist behaviours by educators. Often teachers reflect varied expectations for children, based on a student's gender, class, race and ethnicity. Most teachers are confident that they treat all their students the same. However, many teachers who analyze their own attitudes and behaviours discover the subtle and pervasive nature of gender inequity in the classroom." (Gender Equity in the Classroom, 1998; viewing guide).

In line with these patriarchal gender understandings still exist even after gender equity has been instituted and supposedly implemented. It is noted, though, that even though many educators believe that they treat students equally and in the same way the same educators are generally unaware of the biases in their behaviour, which may mean, therefore, that their different treatment of genders may even be unintentional.

The study indicates that educators attempt to treat male and female learners the same and attempt to implement gender equity in their classroom interactions. The findings, however, indicate the existence of both similarities and differences in the way in which male and female educators issue instances of *praising* and *scolding* to both male and female learners during classroom interaction. The study does highlight the existence of patriarchal gender understandings amongst teachers, as well as improved new gender understandings.

The study also indicates that learners, too, have some underlying patriarchal gender beliefs. Male learners are seen to have a problem taking *criticism* from female teachers because they respect male educators more.

It has been indicated earlier on in this study that females in the community are expected to marry and bear children rather than to be educated. Female learners in this study seem to perceive themselves as inferior to male learners. Even though other educators try to implement gender equity in their interaction with learners, there seem to be some who still perpetuate inferior gender complexes amongst female learners during classroom interaction.

With regard to language and identity construction, this study confirms to some extent what other studies have found. For instance, the perception that identity is fluid, continuously constructed and multiple identities may be constructed through time (Sunderland, 2004). Identities have been seen to be continuously constructed and changing through the different discourses utilized by educators (Gee, 1996). These various discourses and practices have been seen to create multiple identities of learners under investigation. (De Kadt, 2005).

Even though this study somewhat confirms what Brophy (1981) has suggested that *praise* does work as, and that *Process praise* and *criticism* is more effective than *Person praise* and *criticism* (Kamins and Dweck, 1999), it does, however, differ where these studies have claimed that *Person praise* in particular does not motivate learners. This study has found that even though educators who used more *Process praise* and *criticism* achieved better results, educators who use mostly *Person praise* and *criticism* do also achieve good results. This was found to be dependent upon the attitude of the educator toward learners as well the attitude of learners toward the educator concerned. For instance, an educator may utter a *criticism* which sounds negative to the learners, but if he/she utters it in a friendly manner, it may be taken positively.

This study further indicates the significance of the educator's choice of discourse when *praising* and *scolding* learners in the construction of gender identities of learners. Educators may not even be aware of the direct or indirect impact their *praising* and *scolding* has on the learners that they teach. The findings suggest that educators may need to be very tactful in their selection of instances to ensure the constructive creation of gender identities of learners as these may negatively affect these learners in the long run.

As an educator I believe that educators have a salient duty to create self-reliant, well-directed, well-focused and responsibility-driven, self-esteemed individuals who have a positive outlook on life. It is problematic if educators create replicas of inferior identities where, for instance, individuals were subjected to inferior positioning as envisaged by the previous Apartheid era and through patriarchal gender understandings which may still

exist in the society today. The aim of educating the child is to undo the injustices of the past, thus creating individuals, both men and women, who are ready to tackle the world and face the future fearlessly.

Current studies on gender inequality suggest that gender inequalities in the classroom still exist even in the mist of the implementation of gender equity (Smith, 2007; Hargreaves, 2008). For suggestions on improvement, I recommend that teachers as well as researchers question more what types of discourse, for instance, *praising* and *scolding*, differ between male and female learners. They should look beyond the classroom as there may be other likely factors affecting the imbalances upon male and female learners' identities as well as attitudes to learning and expectations or hindrances of these learners.

For further research I would concentrate more on *Person* versus *Process praise* and *criticism* as these have stimulated my interest. It would be worth investigating the educators' use of these currently and how these benefit learners. It would involve a large-scale investigation where I would increase the number of participants and schools. It would be worthwhile to compare and contrast township schools and multi-racial schools to investigate if educators differ in their utterances of *praising* and *scolding* and how these affect learners in both types of schools respectively, as well as finding out if these have a contributory factor into the way these types of schools perform.

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APPENDIX A

1. When did you start working?

ME1: Since July 1989. It is 17 years.

ME2: 10 years

ME3: 14 years

FE1: 17 years

FE2: 16 years

FE3: 19 years

2. Which Subjects are you teaching?

ME1: Geography and Afrikaans, Grades 8-12.

ME2: Mathematics and HSS

ME3: Biology and Agriculture

FE1: Business Economics and Accounting

FE2: Mathematics

FE3: English

3. How is the learners' attitude toward your Subject?

ME1: Good, but negative toward Afrikaans.

ME2: Positive.

ME3: Not sure.

FE1: Positive

FE2: Mixed, partly because they love Math but they fail.

FE3: Not sure.

4. Do you think learner attitude would be different if you were an opposite gender, perhaps?

ME1: According to culture males are highly respected than females. So, yes, I definitely think it would be different.

ME2: Yes

ME3: No, I don't think so.

FE1: I don't think so.

FE2: Definitely. They become serious when it's a male.

FE3: Not sure.

5. What types of praising and scolding do you use in class?

ME1: **Praising:**

➢ Good!

➢ Excellent!

➢ Keep it up!

  Scolding:

➢ I identify the problem, if it's theirs, I say you are lazy;

➢ don't forget to study; ask questions;

➢ look for information;

➢ be active;

➢ Wake up!

ME2: **Praising:**

➢ Excellent; marvelous; keep it up!

  Scolding:

➢ You are not serious, *kufanele usuyeke isikole* (you must leave school).

➢ *Awuyazi into ozoyenza la esikoleni* (you don't know why you are here).

➢ *Ngiyamxosha aphume ekilasini* (I chase him out of class).

➢ You are stupid!

ME3: **Praising:**

➢ Good; very well!

  Scolding:

➢ I don't scold anymore. The new laws are preventing us from scolding.

FE1: **Praising:**

➢ Good.

Scolding:

> *Uyahlanya wena*! (You are mad).

> *Ngiyamshaya nje!* (I just use a stick)

FE2: **Praising:** Good; *nazo-ke* (that's it)

    Scolding: none

FE3: **Praising:**

> none

    Scolding:

> *usangene* (you are mad)

6. How do you think learners feel after being praised and scolded?

ME1:

- They feel good- their facial expression shows.
- They create competition amongst each other.
- They can see accept their mistakes.

ME2:

- They feel good, encouraged; results are good.
- With *scolding*, they feel bad, sometimes girls cry.
- Others become withdrawn.

ME3: They feel indifferent

FE1:

- They feel good when praised.
- They become afraid!

FE2: They feel good!

FE3: I don't know.

7. Do you use any scolding that may be degrading to the learners when you are angry, perhaps?

ME1: No. No words which are degrading are used.

ME2: Yes, sometimes.

ME3: Not sure.

FE1: No.

FE2: No.

FE3: No.

8. How do you feel after scolding the learners?

ME1: I don't use any derogatory names.

ME2: I don't feel bad because it's what I am feeling at the time.

    I tell myself it is over, I was angry at the time.

ME3: I don't feel bad because it's what I am feeling at that moment of scolding.

FE1: I don't feel bad at all.

FE2: I do feel sad that I scolded them, but what can I do? It's another way of disciplining them.

FE3: Not at all. Why should I? They were wrong at the time, so why feel bad?

9. How were you raised as young man/woman? What sorts of beliefs were installed in you?

ME1:
- If you are a boy, you must behave differently.
- The chores were differentiated according to gender.

ME2:
- If you were a young man you had to have lots of girl-friends
- You should be physically strong
- You were not supposed to show emotions
- Boys had to do well at school
- You were told: Tigers don't cry!

ME3:

- A man has to hunt.
- He is in charge of the family.
- He should protect the family and women.

FE1:

- We had to cook, wash, iron and clean the house.
- We had to fetch firewood and water from the river.
- We were not expected to be educated.

FE2:

- We had to learn to cook, wash, and clean the house.
- We were expected to marry and have children
- We had to take care of husbands.

FE3:

- I had to learn to do all household chores.
- You were prepared for your own family.

10. Do you still uphold these beliefs?

ME1:

- No. After the Teaching Diploma I learnt that people should be treated the same.
- Opportunities should be equal.
- After Democracy the Constitution requires Gender equity.

ME2:

- I am married now. I don't have any girl-friends.
- I still believe men should be strong.
- I still don't show my emotions in public.

ME3:

- Yes. A man has to the man in his home.
- We will never be equal.

FE1: Yes, I do.

FE2: Partly, because of modern life things change.

FE3: Yes, but we are modernized now.

11. Are you familiar with Gender equity? Is it applicable today? Do you apply it in the classes that you teach?

ME1:

- I am familiar with it. It should be applied; it is a requirement by the Constitution.
- I try by all means to apply it in class.

ME2:

- I am familiar with it. It is applicable in the workplace but not at home. I expect my wife to be an obedient housewife and mother.
- My home is my domain; I don't expect my wife to a leader.
- I still maintain my Christian principles- A man is the head of the family.
- If we are all equal, who is going to pick up the papers?

ME3:

- I am familiar with it, but it is inapplicable in our Black society.
- The society still believes in male domination. You cannot change society.

FE1:

- I am familiar with it. I try it all the time.
- I punish all learners equally.
- I treat them in the same way as well.

FE2:

- I know about it.
- I try to apply it but sometimes as a female teacher one tends to be more lenient toward female learners.

FE3:

- I am familiar with it. I treat all learners the same.

12. If you have children, what would you teach them?

ME1:

- I would definitely teach them new trends because I don't want to be in trouble with the Constitution.

ME2:

- I would teach them the principles of the Constitution, but let them know about God's principles as well.

ME3:

- I would teach them both principles of the Constitution and of society.

FE1:

- I would teach them the principles of the Constitution and teach them respecting the elders as well.
- They should know that rights go together with responsibilities.

FE2:

- The principles of Gender equity.
- God's principles
- Laws of society.

FE3:

- God's principles come before everything.

APPENDIX B

Examples of discourse used by male and female educators to praise learners
(Captured in interviews with teachers

Male Educator 1 (ME1)	Male Educator 2 (ME2)	Male Educator 3 (ME3)
1. "very good"- all learners	1. "good"	1. "very good *bantabami* (my children) – all learners
2. "excellent" - all learners	2. "*umsebenzi wakho muhle, sengathi ungahlala unje*." – all learners	2. "*awuboni –ke*" (can you see how good you are) – individual learner
3. "keep it up" – all learners	3. "don't be shy"	3. "excellent" –all learners
4. monitors progress	4. "keep on trying"	4. "marvelous" – all learners
5. open to listening to their problems		5. "keep it up" – all learners

Female Educator 1 (FE1)	Female Educator 2 (FE2)	Female Educator 3 (FE3)
1. "very good" 2. "good"	1. "Good, *kuyasho ukuthi wena uyisihlobo samii*" (it shows that we are relatives)	1. "*nesidolo –ke namhlanje siyazi*" (even a granny who suffers from knees knows this" – all learners 2. "*kuyafana nokuthi awukenzi lutho*" (it's similar to that you haven't done anything yet" – all learners

Male Educator 1 (ME1)	Male Educator 2 (ME2)	Male Educator 3 (ME3)
1. identifies the problem- if it's theirs (learners'), tells them they are lazy. 2. "don't forget to study" 3. "ask questions" 4. "stick to your work" 5. "be active" * Directed to all learners.	1. "*niyimishaqane nina*" (you can't do anything" – all learners 2. "*sewaphupha wena*"- to a female learner who used to intelligent.	1. "You are not serious, *kufanele usiyeke isikole* (you must leave school" 2. "*awuyazi into ozoyenza la esikoleni*" (you don't know why you are here") 3. "*ngiyamxosha aphume eklasini*" (I chase him out of my class" 4. You are stupid" *Directed to all learners.

N.B. The table above illustrates the discourse used by teachers to scold learners

APPENDIX C

Examples of praising and scolding given by male and female learners in Learner interviews

MALES	Positive Praising given by male educators	Positive Praising given by male and female learners
ME1	Very good Excellent Keep it up!	Yes Good
ME2	Good *Umsebenzi wakho muhle, sengathi ungahlala unje* Your work is good, keep it this way)	*Ehe*! (Yes) *Nalokho –ke kuseyikhona* (That is also correct0
ME3	Very good, *bantabami* (my children) *Awuboni –ke* (that's it) Excellent! Marvelous Keep it up!	Good *Ya,ya,ya* (yes,yes,yes)

TEACHERS	**Scolding as given by male educators** *Negative*	**Scolding as given by learners** *Negative*	.
ME1	Identify the problem- if it's theirs, I say you are lazy Don't forget to study	No,no,no *Hhayi,hhayi,hhayi* *Musani ukubheda* (Do not be foolish)	
ME2	*Niyimishaqane nina* *Sewaphupha wena* (You are no longer good) Don't be shy Keep on trying	*Uyahlanya* (You are crazy) *Thula uyisilima* (Shut up, you are a fool) *Ayikho leyonto* (Nothing like that exists) Wrong!	
ME3	You are not serious, *kufanele usiyeke isikole* you must leave school) *Awuyazi into ozoyenza la esikoleni* (you don't know why you are here) *Uyamxosha aphume ekilasini*	*Ayi bo*! (No) *Ngithi hhayi bo*! (I say, no.) *Jesu Mkhululi wezoni* (Jesus, Redeemer of sins)	

FEMALE EDUCATORS	Positive *Praising*	Positive *Praising*	
FE1	Good Excellent	Good Excellent	
FE2	Good *Nazo –ke* (that's it)	*Kuyasho ukuthi wean uyisihlobo sami* (it shows you are my relative)	
FE3	**Negative scolding regarded as praising by educator** *Nesinedolo ke namhlanje siyazi* (even a granny suffering from knee problem knows today) *Kuyafana nje awukenzi lutho* (you still haven't done anything)	**Negative scolding** given by learners Hu hu *Akakaze asincome* (she never praises us)	

FEMALE EDUCATORS	Examples of scolding given by the educator	Examples of scolding given by male and female learners	
FE1	*Ngiyabashaya* (I beat them)	*Niyahlanya* (you are mad) *Niyabheda* (you are messing up)	
FE2		*Ukushaya ngoshoki* (she throws chalk at you) Stamps her feet and leaves the class Throws a duster at you	
FE3		*Ushaya ideski* (she hits the desk) *Asincinze emadlebeni* (she pinches us in the ears)	